

# Cemetery at Marist College

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Besides the Brothers listed in this monument, there were memorial plaques for Postulants who had died: John Graham, who died in 1924 and J. Hanley who died in 1911, and Juniors, Gerard Bouffard who died in 1927 and Leo Arsenault who died in 1937. These were buried with their natural families.



The cemetery at Saint Ann's Hermitage was started when Brother Charles Camille died in 1909, the year after the Brothers purchased the Bech property. It was located at the southern border of the property, just north of the property owned by the New York Central Railroad and not used by the railroad, so formed a natural bucolic backdrop for the cemetery.

The original wire fencing was replaced with a white wall, and each grave was marked with an iron cross and a small plaque indicating years of birth and death and years as a Brother. The cemetery was located in rocky ground, which made expansion impractical. Under the supervision of Brother Mary Andrew, Provincial Treasurer, a new cemetery was planned on the Brothers' Esopus property. By adding clean fill, a space was developed for up to 300 burials.

After the purchase of the seven acre NY Central parcel, the college accepted clean fill to raise the level of the ground, so that eventually the cemetery was almost 20 feet below the level of its surroundings. About 1973, when the McCann center was planned for construction south of the cemetery, the initial plan was to relocate the Poughkeepsie graves to the Esopus cemetery. However, legal counsel warned that effecting this



might take up to two decades of legal activity; this advice was based on counsel's experience with a similar Old Dutch cemetery near Saint Francis Hospital. The decision was made to leave the graves intact, raise the level of the cemetery to the new level, erect a new monument and have the college warrant that no construction would be done above the original cemetery.

The college officials took great care not to allow the expansion of the McCann Recreation Center to impinge on the location of the cemetery. When the cemetery was covered, Brother Nilus Donnelly marked the location on a topological map, but in the 35 years since, the map has been mislaid or destroyed.

Brother Don Kelly, who still teaches mathematics at Marist College, took it upon himself to pinpoint the exact location of the cemetery. In his own words:

*"There have been many different opinions where the 47 Brothers and the Chaplain for Mount Saint Michael high school were actually buried here at Marist College. This was due to the fact that the landscape has changed over the years. A few weeks ago (early in 2011) an article appeared in the Poughkeepsie Journal newspaper stating that the bodies of the brothers had been removed some years ago from their graves. I knew this wasn't true and felt that I had to document where the exact location was before this knowledge will be lost forever.*

*"Thus I decided I would find out for myself with their final resting place was. On Thursday, 26 February 2011 I went to the Town and City offices in*

*Poughkeepsie and the people there in turn sent me to the County Office of Real Property at 22 Market St where I was to meet Betsy Mark. After a little conversation and looking at a couple of different types of maps that they had, I purchased two aerial photos of Marist College for a total of eight dollars (the photos were from 1936 and 2004). The 1936 photo had a great shot of the road leading down to the cemetery and the cemetery itself which I was familiar with because as Scholastics we walked down after dinner each evening to this area.*

*"I then took the two pictures and overlaid them making sure they matched up perfectly. I proceeded to put four holes in the corners of the cemetery plot in the photo of 1936 thus creating markings on the underlying picture of 2004. By pulling a 1936 picture off I discovered where the cemetery of the Marist brothers existed on the present-day campus of Marist College. A small part of the cemetery lies on the baseball field but most of it lies on the foul area down the right-field line about 250 feet from home plate"*

The monument itself has been moved several times, but remains close to the actual burial grounds.



This photo shows a group of lacrosse families celebrating a game in March 2010. It may seem sacrilegious to some of us, but I remember that when I traveled in Switzerland and Italy, it was customary for families to visit cemeteries for lunches near the graves of their departed ones. The monument is located on the plaza in front of the McCann Center, and is passed by students on their way into the center for basketball games. This location is often visited by students and visitors to

campus, and stands as a permanent reminder of those Brothers who were instrumental in bringing into being the College and the other operations of the Brothers throughout the United States.

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