

**Bernard Curtin**

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

Transcribed by William Dougherty

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Transcript – Bernard Curtin

**Interviewee:** Bernard Curtin

**Interviewer:** Gus Nolan

**Interview Date:** 7 June 2012

**Location:** Marist College

**Subject Headings:** Curtin, Bernard  
Marist College Alumni  
Marist College (Poughkeepsie N.Y.)  
Marist Brothers  
Marist College History

**Summary:** Brother Bernard Curtin speaks about growing up in the Bronx near old Yankee stadium and attending Marist then Marian College to become a Brother. He also talks about his time teaching in the US before embarking on mission. Those missions brought him around the world, mainly the Philippines and Mexico. Bernard continues with his return to Marist, and ends by reflecting on what it means to be Brother and a student in an increasingly connected world.

[00:03](#) **GN:** Today is Thursday June Seventh. We have an opportunity of introducing a Marist Brother. A Marist Brother who is actually the dean of the Marist Brothers of the United States. Brother Bernard Curtin good morning.

[00:16](#) **BC:** Because morning. Good afternoon.

[00:18](#) **GN:** As the case maybe we're going to ask you a number of questions for our archives. And we want to get a historical picture of what you were there at the time. Might remember. But to start. How about a few words about yourself. A brief statement of your early years. Where were you born, and church you went and so on?

[00:44](#) **BC:** I was born in the Bronx. Hundred sixty second Street Melrose. Not far from the stadium. I went to St. Peter and Paul School and church. Also, and not far but in the opposite direction, and we grew up very well until we moved hundred sixty-nine street. And I went to St. Augustine's with the La Salle Brothers and was there that I had the idea of becoming a Brother were so good and my cousin my first cousin Neil Sullivan O'Smite was a La Salle Brother and he died a La Salle Brother.

[01:26](#) **GN:** What years were this now. Do you recall?

[01:30](#) **BC:** That was around nineteen twenty-eight a something like that. Twenty-nine.

[01:36](#) **GN:** And then after St. Augustine did you go to high school?

[01:42](#) **BC:** No, I stayed St. Augustine to finish elementary. And then in the eighth grade. I had met. Frederick Charles recruited for the Brothers Marist, and he talked me into going to Poughkeepsie so the brother at St. Augustine could have choked me. Because they were sure I was going to Barrytown. In the past said given up on me because I told them I didn't want to be a priest. I wanted to be a brother that. So, I said no I'm not writing any letter of recommendation for you. I show I don't need that. I was nine years. I was about eleven going on twelve. But I don't mind my own. I wasn't shy about saying what I wanted. My mother always said you have a tongue, use it.

[02:36](#) **GN:** Ok. Now. That would be about nineteen thirty-one.

[02:40](#) **BC:** No, that would be about nineteen thirty-one thirty-two.

[02:45](#) **GN:** Ok let me talk a little bit about those years. Do you recall those years in grade school where their movies radio what was the social life of those days?

[02:58](#) **BC:** I was social life was unknown, but we had a lot of sports. I had a team. Baseball team and I was captain the pirates that was our t-shirt. We had no equipment except a couple of gloves and a ball and a bat we use to play in Macombs Dam Park next to the Stadium. Yes, the old stadium. And we'd played pick up teams from there. And when were finish we go home, or we wait till the game was over in the stadium and we say hi to the big shot players like Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, and Tony Lazzeri, all our heroes of that time.

[03:36](#) **GN:** I'm going to give you a date and see how good you could remember it November twentieth nineteen twenty six. You were a ring bearer.

[03:47](#) **BC:** Oh, at buddy Sullivan's mother's wedding.

[03:52](#) **GN:** OK you got that exactly right.

[03:54](#) **BC:** She was a wonderful lady. Margert O'Brien. And I know her mother very well. Mothers' sister Aunt Mary. And she had two sisters. Veronica and Alice. Both very nice people. I remember well as a kid. They were a little older but as little kids they stayed with us in our house. I see. Till the mother got organized after she kicked the husband out because he was a drunken Irishman.

[04:26](#) **GN:** Strange that happens every now and then but it does happen.

[04:30](#) **BC:** After a year or two they had stayed with us we had six kids already in the apartment and these three girls came in, but they were introduced to us as our sisters. These three girls very close to Moggridge and Veronica and the other Alice. And we always thought of them as much more than cousins.

[04:50](#) **GN:** And I see. All right let's move back to moving into the junior eight. You came to Poughkeepsie then?

[04:56](#) **BC:** Yeah, and I would suppose to graduate in January. And I told Frederick Charles. I can take all those tests now you know January test June test regions we had region I can take them now don't worry about that. But I'd like to go now rather than wait another the year. So, he finally gave in my mother told him don't argue with Bernard he's bold as a grass monkey so off we went in May early May I guess it was to Poughkeepsie in his little car. Rumble seat in the back. The two of us went off to Poughkeepsie and my mother and my aunt Kate. My favorite Aunt Kate was waving from the sixth-floor window I see and, after I got after I came back years later Aunt Kate was telling me about the departure. And at that time no tears you know. But she said five minutes after that car was gone. The rivers flooded.

[06:00](#) **GN:** Well. Well, get it one more out of the house was not so bad that then was specially with conditions of the times.

[06:06](#) **BC:** I still remember getting to Poughkeepsie and the first junior I met was Burnet Flood. Burnets Gregory biggest boy I was about. Four feet six and he was about six feet two but a nice guy. We had a very good junior aide. That was May nineteen thirty-two.

[06:31](#) **GN:** Which house was that it was a junior eight and when you here was it the provincial house or?

[06:37](#) **BC:** It was in the old Poughkeepsie mansion. Everything was there the junior aid classrooms shape living room, dining room.

[06:47](#) **GN:** Was the pool constructed yet? Was the swimming pool in operation yet?

[06:51](#) **BC:** No, we helped clean out the lake. When we were postulants and novices. I remember that very well. But going back to the junior eight. Brother named pipe down. Use to drive me every day to the St. Pete in Poughkeepsie to take the June test or the January test And I took the June test in hermitage, but my diploma comes from St. Peter's to Brothers used to run. St. Peters, I told him don't worry about me I'll pass all those test I very cocky kids yeah nope no humility.

[07:33](#) **GN:** Well eventually you'll learn that with the Marist Brothers they taught you to be meek and humble and live hidden and unknown.

[07:41](#) **BC:** We had a great time first summer getting acquainted you know with all the kids Tommy Brennan, Kevin Dominic and O'Berry and those guys.

[07:51](#) **GN:** Brennan is that Kiran Thomas?

07:53 **BC:** Kiran Thomas and Luke Briscoe. There were a wonderful bunch of kids. Yeah, and we had big kids like Cletus was so much bigger than we were good athlete and Pinard was both came from Tyngsborough. And we were assigned one each to help them with their English. And get them over the hump of getting into the new place. So, I was given a Pinard, Father Augustan and he was a wonderful kid.

08:28 **GN:** He became a great teacher. In years to come.

08:32 **BC:** He was telling me when he was dying. I was lucky I got to ride up to Lorange to see him. And he said you know. He was crying. Thinking of said, "we were together seven years in Poughkeepsie, so close you know so friendly. And we never were together after that," I went here he went there. You know how the appointments went. And I went to the missions.

09:00 **GN:** OK, I want to come back to the junior eight. After you finish the junior eight went right into novitiate right?

09:07 **BC:** But a junior eight. I remember so well because the roads. We had a main road from the big house. Yes. Right out to Route Nine right. And some days when Roosevelt was coming. Yeah, we would be out to meet him and greet him and he would be a big wave you know. Especially when he was running for his for his first her term as president. We were good friends we used to send him birthday cards and spiritual bouquet at Christmas and things like that and he appreciated that.

09:37 **GN:** I'm sure he did. Now. When you went to the mission who was your master of novices?

09:43 **BC:** I am still in the junior aid the junior aid I was John Philip Frenchman. He died in France. Years later. But very good to very fatherly all our teachers were very good. All our masters were excellent. And I look back and we talked about it among ourselves how lucky we were to have such good men teachers and masters. But the Junior eight was very memorable because we used to have the cherry trees lining all roads lined with cherry trees in the spring when they bloom, they would bloom they would be beautiful then when they were filled with cherries. We used to go out and pick cherries all day. And they say, Ok the first ten minutes you eat as much as you want. After that we pick. But we use to have to beat of the birds the birds used to come

10:46 **GN:** And did you do anything with the cherries were they preserved in any way?

10:50 **BC:** They preserve many of them in the we had to big hollow bowls, where we use to have Apple picnics for three days. We pick apples we were up the owner would invite us to come the whole joiner aid and we had a truck and with fill the truck and we would fill the truck and would bring it home and then we put in the cab whole they would last till through the spring. Yeah. And the same with the plums another owner would have plum trees. He wouldn't know what to do with so many plums. So, he would invite us to come. And we pick plums. Till we got tired of it. But they were good. Good apples, good plums and they lasted for months.

11:30 **GN:** Ok let's move on to the novitiate I want to get to the mission add who was you master of novices?

11:35 **BC:** Oh, our master was a saint, Adolf Leo, Frenchman. And he died in our novitiate year middle of the year. And that was a disaster because the one who replaced him was Henry Charles and we didn't click with Henry Charles at all...

11:52 **GN:** He had been the provincial wasn't he?

11:53 **BC:** We didn't care who he was we didn't like him. The only man we didn't like. He saw us, In the last five months of the novitiate year we had him. He only saw us in the direction once. I remember this, then he

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gave up. And we were just as happy no more and then we got scholasticaid was very good.

[12:15](#) **GN:** I tell you a secret I had Henry Charles as master of novices.

[12:20](#) **BC:** God help you.

[12:21](#) **GN:** I know what it is. I will tell you one little story when after he left here, he went to Archbishop Molloy High School, and he was in charge of maintenance and my father had volunteered to work there. And he said I only had Henry Charles for one year, but he had him for three. As supervisor of his work in Molloy.

[12:42](#) **BC:** We had him for five months and we had enough. But we were lucky we got rid of him. But he couldn't stand us because we would ask him direct questions or answered him very flatly. And I'll never forget Walter, Walter Edward. Yes. He was a character you know. I remember straight poker face. And the master was giving directions, and he would take a breath and Walter would walk away "oh yeah, yeah." Walter would apologize you know, "I thought you were finished Brother Master, yes Brother Master, yes Brother Master," and we're watching this played. Oh and Penal was the same, and Nadow was not shy at all Dominick.

[13:26](#) **GN:** Give me a rundown of the schedule in the novitiate hat time did you get up and how did it go

[13:33](#) **BC:** The junior eight was regular and the novitiate as very much the same morning pray very much the same. Morning prayer. Office spiritual reading religious study. Night prayer.

[13:44](#) **GN:** Classrooms though were you had regular classes in the novitiate

[13:49](#) **BC:** Oh yeah, we were the first group. To have third year in a junior eight. They never had that before. So, they split our group. Half went ahead, the older half like Herbie Domont and John Baptist I can remember their names went ahead for intended shared. And the younger half like Walter, Pion, myself. Now Dull stayed in the junior aid for one more year, so we are caught up with them the next year. I see. Yeah. But it was a blessing for the province because getting a thirty year in the junior eight. Meant we could finish high school in a postulate. We got a regent's diploma and all that as postulants.

[14:35](#) **GN:** That's the same I went through that same program.

[14:37](#) **BC:** Yeah, but that was the first.

[14:40](#) **GN:** How big was group do you remember? How big a novice group were?

[14:46](#) **BC:** Our group was only about ten, and the group ahead was about fifteen.

[14:52](#) **GN:** I see. The silence at meals and reading and all of that.

[14:59](#) **BC:** Oh yeah, I remember the master apologizing. Because we had a big bowl of fruit at the table. Every meal. And he said, "you know God has given us all these pears and apples and peaches." We had orchids all over the property. We took care of them. And we picked the fruit, and we ate it so and we shared with scholastic and the journey. But it was very very good. And he says a little old Frenchmen apologizing because the rule said would have fruit only once a day. And we had fruit three times a day.

[15:38](#) **GN:** Well, that's not so bad move on from the novitiate then. Oh. July twenty sixth nineteen thirty-seven.

[15:46](#) **BC:** No July twenty sixth nineteen thirty-six. I took the habit. Ok. And then I supposed to be there. Nineteen thirty-five. But we were kept back one year. So, when I got to the novitiate, master was telling me,

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“Oh if you had come with the right time, you could have had your own name.” James Bernard took it. Bernard James is my name, And I said all Jimmy is all right. But Herman, my father where did they get the name Herman, and Edwin is British and my father and mother were British subjects when they came to this country from Ireland. So, he said oh those names are terrible, they had no choice. Just given the names and that's it.

[16:32](#) **GN:** OK. Then you go on to the scholastic eight.

[16:35](#) **BC:** Well first I got to tell you. In the junior eight we did reading at meals and every shared we did. And at night after supper. Everything was in French. We walked down to the cemetery, and we had conversation was it had to be in French and then we said some prayers in the cemetery for the brothers who were buried there. And then we came back to the new shade house. The old two-story house know it. Yeah. I was in that house. Yeah, yeah, and I remember when winter was coming we use seal the windows with wrapping paper and homemade glue. You know it's starch a water. And we seal up the edges of the windows. Keep the breeze out because the windows were very loose.

[17:26](#) **GN:** Yeah. All right let's move on now to the scholastic what was the were their college courses then?

[17:34](#) **BC:** Yes, we had college. We were first to have college courses full time. In the scholastic aid with Adrian August and I don't remember all the teaches we had.

[17:47](#) **GN:** Frank Xavier was he there then?

[17:49](#) **BC:** No, he was there he was there but he was working.

[17:51](#) **GN:** Ok, and Adrian was?

[17:55](#) **BC:** Master.

[17:56](#) **GN:** He was the master.

[17:57](#) **BC:** He was a science teacher. I forget the others the names not come if I took longer, they would come but...

[18:07](#) **GN:** Did you have Jesuit coming down teaching ethics?

[18:11](#) **BC:** No, they use to have to come for mass. Thats all and then once in a while a judge would come for direction. Personal direction you know we had that and a junior aid.

[18:26](#) **GN:** Was the courses were they based on a Fordham Universities.

[18:37](#) **BC:** Yeah, they were based on Fordham's curriculum. And I remember Emal Ester was a fabulous, best teacher I ever had Emal Ester died young, but and wonderful.

[18:49](#) **GN:** He had a doctorate I believe.

[18:52](#) **BC:** Very fine men. He was our philosophy teacher, and you couldn't beat him. I still think of him as the best teacher I've had, and I went to Columbia and Fordham.

[19:05](#) **GN:** Well, where did you get your degrees your education degrees.

[19:11](#) **BC:** Well after the scholastic eight, added two years Fordham except all our units. So, we entered thirty

in Fordham, and we were part-time teaching and going to school during the week. Going to school Saturdays, so it took three or four years to finish. Galdrid was there Cletus and myself and Arnold Dameon a lot of monks.

19:38 **GN:** Now where did you go what was your first assignment when you left the scholastic aid.

19:43 **BC:** Well. I was a lucky kid. My first assignment was Savannah Georgia. Pinch hitting for a monk who was sick. That was like April of thirty eight or so thirty nine. Thirty nine. And it was a great experience for me the trip down. I was in black suit roman collar. Three men were in a car with me looking me over when we first got on a train in Grand Central, and I knew they wanted to ask who the hell is this guy. So, once we got going on the train. Something came up and we started to talk and then they said. "What are you are you a priest or what you're to young?" I was eighteen. And I look fifty. So, I told them who I was and what I did and they were very friendly guys a treated me too a nice dinner in the diner and Washington they got off. So, I had a booth alone. All the way to Savannah.

20:55 **GN:** Did you ever get to the Masters golf course at Savannah.

21:02 **BC:** Oh you mean that in Augusta at ten, Yeah.

21:04 **GN:** Says we had a guy so yeah well that's all I have the wrong place.

21:08 **BC:** You know that I know we closed the school. Yeah, yeah. We had a big banquet from to be shipped. Gave us each a gold, Elgin Curve-X, Wristwatch a fountain pen, pencil set he was very sorry to see us leave. But he didn't want to contradict is a superintendent of schools. I said well I decided he could save money, getting rid of the brothers and having his sisters take over the elementary. I see which was a big mistake because that Marist to elementary Marist Boys was the best supply of priest for the Diocese of Georgia. Better than any other school, and what the Bishop knew that. So, he said "Brothers as soon as I can I have another school for you. I don't know just way yet." So in the next two years or so he found a school in Augusta. And that's how I got. Well, now I'm skipping that was scholastic eight. We had a great three years. Two years with Adrian August our wonderful master. And we had a great group, we had our old friends back from years ago you know that the two groups when I was combined. And we were combined again and the novitiate. And I remember going to see the master I said, "what is this book of perfection you know Christian perfection. And I don't believe in half of it." He said, "throw that don't pay any attention to that." And then I said, "they all say we have to make a visit before the after the recreation. A visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Do we have to do that?" "No you don't. and don't do it." So, I was I told you the guy's in my class, these guys ahead of us hoodwinked you know they're following all these old rules and regulations. So we broke away from that. We went when we wanted to go and that's it.

23:09 **GN:** You listened to the spirit.

23:11 **BC:** Yeah, and the master was very understanding.

23:14 **GN:** Now Adrian August was a good music teacher too wasn't he. While he was at, did you have choir with him?

23:22 **BC:** No not with the master. Music teachers, we had in the scholastic eight Attaint Andre a Canadian who was a graduate of the Montreal Conservatory. He was the one trained Stephen Minogue. He was the one who got Stephen all hepped up on St. Anne and Gregorian chants and all that.

23:48 **GN:** All right moving on let's get to your first assignment. You're go you go to Savannah.

23:48 **BC:** And then we closed the school and then I came back north. And I helped out wherever they wanted



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me like in Manhasset or some places like that they say just help out you know they're finishing school there. We finished early in Georgia. So, I did that. And then I went back to college, and I finished my test whatever test I had to take, and after that I went to first assignment was St. Ann's, seventy-six street.

[24:30](#) **GN:** I was with you at St. Ann's academy.

[24:33](#) **BC:** Fourth grade I had. And Kevin I remember and Karen was teaching elementary. And we would exchange classes once in a while I would take his class he take mine. Give them a pep talk on the blessed mother on the rosary. Dominic. Dominic. Kevin Dominic was a great one. Very zealous.

[25:56](#) **GN:** Who was the director at St. Ann's?

[25:58](#) **BC:** I think it was Red Linus. So, my first month there I lost my voice. And he brought me to a specialist and the specialist says all this young Brother, very bad, throat and the worst job for him is teaching and worst place for him is New York. So, Linus I said "If I tell the council your out." So said, "why tell them." So, we needed that we agreed we would say who. And then they took me to another specialist throat, ear, eye and nose, and throat specialist same verdict. So, I said "forget the specialist." So, he took my place in class for one month. And I sat in the class and watched him teach, how he did this and how he did that. And then my voice came back. And I've been shouting ever since. That was ninety thirty nine. And then I had the fourth grade they moved up to fifty great with the same kids. And then middle of the fifth grade. They tell me hold Bernard your good in history your specialist from Fordham in history. And we need a history teacher at the Mount. Because Wiley is coming down to St. Ann's replace Marcy as principal. Marcy is going to Wheeling to replace Frank who broke down as director and principal. So, you'll be the one to go after the Mount. I am nineteen years old now and luckily I had Peter Lewis to help me at the mount. As a guide you know a mentor

[26:49](#) **GN:** Going to teach history at them out now that's high school.

[26:53](#) **BC:** Yeah, third, fourth year. Some kids were older and I was because of war hadn't started yet in America. So, I made out you know you put on a good show good act. And I loved it the kids were good, good very good kids and a good place it was all monks faculty.

[27:14](#) **GN:** Let's come back to you must have come back to St. Ann's academy again, after the Mount?

[27:19](#) **BC:** I came back only temporarily around fifty-five, fifty-four, fifty-five, I was out at the groundbreaking of Malloy. When they were building Malloy, I was there to groundbreaking. That was fifty-five.

[27:38](#) **GN:** Yeah a little later fifty-six maybe.

[27:40](#) **BC:** Maybe beginning at fifty-six say because in fifty-six after the regents I was able to go to the missions.

[27:49](#) **GN:** That's what I want to get to how did that come about how was it decided do you volunteer were there requests to go to the Philippines?

[27:57](#) **BC:** Before they open the mission. The announced the province what they were going to do. And they asked us if you're interested you write a letter to the council and tell them your reasons for going and your qualifications. So, I did that and I remember that Reggie did that Reggie a Reggie Plum, Peter Morris. We all put down that we were willing to go, and we had their master's degrees and we had this and that. So, we didn't hear anything until fifty-six. Maurice James came back from the Philippines on a visit. And he came to the St. Anns. And I had a bottle of Scotch, so we had a little party on our Room. With Red Norvig, Red Silvius, and a couple of the monks, with Jimmy, Maurice James. And he was telling us his problems, he had been up to

Poughkeepsie and Tyngsborough where he saw the provincial and a provincial said there's no more volunteers no more. So, he's telling us this I said he's full of shit. So, I said "my name is there the letter's in the file." And Reggie says the same thing. Says can I quote you. Yeah, you quote us. Tomorrow morning I'm heading back to Tyngsborough. So, tomorrow morning he left Tyngsborough and he saw the provincial and he must have been real angry. And he told them "these monks told me that their names were there. They were volunteers. They're willing going to go." So, Red "said they're crazy but if they're willing to go then ok."

[29:40](#) **GN:** Now who is that, Bimbo who was the provincial?

[29:42](#) **BC:** Oh no that was Red Linus.

[29:44](#) **GN:** Red Linus was the provincial?

[29:47](#) **BC:** Yeah, Red Linus or Tommy Austin one or the other.

[29:50](#) **GN:** Oh Tommy Austin yeah. Red line was my director at St. Ann's fifty-two to about then, oh and then. Oh what's the name of the guy after him who became a priest or Lawrence. Oh.

[30:09](#) **BC:** Johnny Baptist?

[30:10](#) **GN:** John Lawrence.

[30:12](#) **BC:** Oh, John Lawrence oh yeah. He wasn't the one, I liked John Lawrence alot.

[30:16](#) **GN:** Now I had him. He replaced Red Linus, Red Linus became prevention. And then, John Lawrence became director at St. Ann's Academy and then, it was in that time that they closed the academy. Ah Leo Stasia was the treasurer, and we went out to Malloy, and I was in Malloy the first year fifty eight. All right let's go back to the Philippines. Where did you go.

[30:42](#) **BC:** Well, I went there a little bit late, because I had to take care of the regent's test for the seniors and so on, the History tests and English tests. And that brought me almost to the end of June. So Red Linus said, "Make your retreat in Hawaii are someplace like that." I had told him that I had relatives in Hawaii in the Navy. So, I was tickled pink to make my retreat there. And then I went on to the Philippines and I stayed with the oblates the first night or two. I lost my wristwatch the first night, I was robbed. We had no real privacy just ply wood, temporary house. And the next day, one of our Chinese alumni stopped in to see me. George Lee was the great financier. And he told he says, "if you have any dollars I can change them. And instead of two to one I'll give you three to one." Which meant a thousand more. So, I said "sure." I had two thousand dollars in cash. I took that and gave it to him. I said, "this I'd promised to Morris James," who was the superior. So now I have a thousand pesos. I can do what I want. So, the first one I met going south was Alfred George. And he's telling me that he wants to build a statue and put it in the plaza in the jungle I said "how much you need." Oh, he says, "if I could get three hundred pesos. I'd be all set." So, I said ok here. And then he got the statue and put it up in the plaza and was there for many many years. And then one mayor came along and didn't want it there wanted it over on his side somewhere. Not in the middle of the plaza and people didn't like a but they had no say. I was there with Henry, and we said we'll carry it we will take the statue. And we put it in front of the new college building. And it's still there.

[33:59](#) **GN:** Now where did you get those thousand dollars or two thousand.

[33:03](#) **BC:** From my friends. Nobody in the monks in give us anything. You know the mount didn't gives anything.

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[33:12](#) **GN:** Well you used to have bingos for missions.

[33:13](#) **BC:** Well that was after, they were sending out the money directly to the mission. Not to us. That turned out very well.

[33:25](#) **GN:** Where did you go in the Philippines?

[33:28](#) **BC:** And my first assignment was Marvelous Marbel I had to replace Herbs who was gone for a year. Herbet Daniel.

[33:39](#) **GN:** What do you teach?

[33:40](#) **BC:** Oh, I taught anything they needed from philosophy, to arithmetic to French, Spanish.

[33:46](#) **GN:** What was the level of the school was it a high school.

[33:48](#) **BC:** It was a high school. Just getting ready to start college. I was filling out the forms for the Department of Education. All under my first name. Brother Herman Edwin and that went well, and I had a first summer, we had more applications for teaching. Then we had students at college. But we got started anyway. And after that it grew and grew and grew until it became a university.

[34:29](#) **GN:** Do you know Brother McGovern?

[34:32](#) **BC:** Oh yes very well.

[34:35](#) **GN:** Yeah. He's in my class. Yeah, well and...

[34:37](#) **BC:** He was a great P.R. man for us for with government with the Asia Foundation, that was his main work. He didn't work much in the schools.

[34:47](#) **GN:** He worked for the team, and I know I had some conversations with him. I sending him Marist [Inaudible] that was that publication that we had put out for some time. What was community life. How many but how many brothers were in that community and...

[35:05](#) **BC:** Well we had a pretty big community in Marbel. We had Pete Lenard. We had Cassidy, we had Jean, and we had someone else, I forget.

[35:18](#) **GN:** Cassidy was from St. Ann's also.

[35:21](#) **BC:** Peter Cassidy yeah. And Jean, I don't know where is he, New England, but I don't know what school. They're all good men you know working hard. Pete was very independent.

[35:33](#) **GN:** Do you have to learn the language?

[35:34](#) **BC:** No, we talked it over. And then the parents told us, we want English, English, Brother, English. Even I was running catechist, sending them eight different [inaudible] four five kids you know high school seniors. Good kid's smart kids. And I tried to pick them to fit the language of the [inaudible]. Oh somebody goes with this language and that. It's a hodgepodge and it's out because they're all settlers coming from the north. They're not any they think generally they have six different dialects in one town. So, the parents would meet me, at when I've given you know supervision of the Catechism. And they say Brother. Have your boys. Instruct him in English. They know enough dialect they don't need that anymore. And so I told the kids forget

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to dialect. Ok English from now on. And they all went along you know and did very well.

[36:37](#) **GN:** Where there newspapers in English or in dialects?

[36:40](#) **BC:** Whatever newspaper we had was in English. And the very few I don't remember in Marbel if we had no paper in Marbel but we used to get a paper sometimes from Manila or Cebu, the big cities.

[36:57](#) **GN:** Did you have radio and telephones?

[37:00](#) **BC:** No telephone no not telephone for fifteen/twenty years. No running water, no electricity, that cut off a lot of things. But the life was good it was rough. Because Marbel is a very hot place in a valley, and not near the sea. The [inaudible] is near the sea. Jolo is near the sea. Cotabato is near the sea. Kidder Palin as it is the mountains. [inaudible] is near the mountains. But Marbel is in the middle of a valley and hot as hell.

[37:36](#) **GN:** The whole Philippines has developed its own province really hasn't it?

[37:40](#) **BC:** Yes. Now they belong to the Asian province. And Filipino is provincial.

[37:45](#) **GN:** Do you know how big it is do you know how many brothers there are?

[37:48](#) **BC:** I don't know off to an offhand, but it's pretty big. Maybe seventy five or more.

[37:56](#) **GN:** Ok I want to just talk about some random thoughts now about the Marist brothers how life has changed you have been here? Oh sixty-five years I suppose.

[38:10](#) **BC:** A seventy-five. Tomorrow is seventy-seven now.

[38:12](#) **GN:** Seventy-seven years alright. What was in the biggest changes have you seen?

[38:16](#) **BC:** One of the biggest changes I'd say off hand. The community life is much less than it used to be.

[38:26](#) **GN:** So, diversified lots of things happening.

[38:28](#) **BC:** You know we had lots of things happening before, but we still kept a community. And we had the community prayers and we had the habit the habit was very important. And everybody knew us because even in Sulu, with the Muslims. Fred and I were the first monks in that province. Once a new us, we were untouchable. Ah. You know the Martians were so good to us he was embarrassing. But they could spot us miles away know it all the brothers the brothers were always three. I think where we when we were three I see. And even near the oblate were told by the bishop I wonder if a mass. Every day for the brothers. Every school day. Nash and their house. At that time early. So the Appalachian region know. And then after a few days. They used to come early enough to hear us a new office together. Three guys reprint Canadian Filipino and I was sure Mercian couldn't get over it. They said that could never happen with the album.

[39:42](#) **GN:** Now we say that a Latin or English Oh we changed yet.

[39:45](#) **BC:** I had don't remember really didn't matter much. Latin or English. We all had studied Right and. But the head might have been. That was one nine hundred fifty nine. So my that. My that time maybe they had changed things we all just go ahead

[40:01](#) **GN:** change the analysts Yeah. So you would see the life a community life has changed so much that they were in the habit is much now. The deceased of a great diversity and what they do though. Brothers are

involved in all kinds of acts or yeah I've lain activity was cool.

[40:20](#) **BC:** Yeah. And everything was cool. You have activities with parents C.N.N.'s David ease with catechist up like that and sports we ran a sports programs and have the kids. So the monks were all involved with the school. And the kids. So there was no time for anything else. Tell me about the of parents and taking over the house and a soap is. Well I don't know that much about it but I know. The brothers were looking for somebody to take care of the house and the end date for this. And the water supply. And my mother got that from the mother's club. Marist mothers. I see. So she tried to talk my five enter that. And my father wasn't the least for the interest that it was with the fire department yeah I like that. Yeah. So he said, "Oh I can go on twelve twenty five years and still get a better pension" and my mother was insistent so my mother always won. So they went to the sell place to the Gatehouse no yet again house yeah. And then they also stayed for a while in the English village. I don't know why they. Maybe they were fixing something in the other I was. But my father loved it. Woods down to the river every day that he loved the world and to snow and sleet and everything else involved and. You know he got to know all of brothers yeah. He stopped for a cup of coffee on his way back and they all three of them early so used to tell me. They come down to read a pony papers that he got. They didn't get so every over. And John Pat. And I forget the of the monks. George. Oh yeah a large here. Well George. Just drop it on the old drive as you call us guys you know. Became very friendly when my father. Yeah. And I was the truck.

[42:24](#) **GN:** Molly was the truck. Harvey had this truck. What I call him Ali.

[42:32](#) **BC:** Has was a unique and he was like a member of the family. And I remember. So many stories. I guess one time he came in to see my father all excited. He said. There's a hawk of a couple of hawks overhead. How do you know my father's. I saw the shade on a road all my life the language I know I thought it was shocked that he would use it at that word. But heard the it was very natural. Yeah yeah. But I meant I was so funny.

[43:05](#) **GN:** All right let's come back to pick it up see and Marist college now. This is a whole other area. Oh yeah when you look around here now you might shake your head say I don't remember there's...

[43:15](#) **BC:** No I remember only the old days was agricultural said Oh yeah. We had big corn fields, yeah. We had Meadows for the cows. We had gone for the pig. Yeah. We had the lake is the lake was good for skating in the winter has to go skating in Lake Morgan. Rode a couple of miles. And so many things are all a road with dirt roads but they're well more well maintained yeah. And they're all lined with cherry trees. Apple trees. Peach trees. Fruit coming out of jury is and abolition started his garden. I think greenhouse. It was a greenhouse Yeah. And Damasio to tell a smallish kids. Every year in year eight if you go for the apple of sees is sickly so be nice on how we like the man it was very good. And Eve B.C. Giving us a sample of this to made all those and every A was getting bigger and bigger garden. Yeah. And after a while. Well. Twenty years later he had bigger than ever. Yeah. And beautiful. Then you'd of all of you know you know. Yeah. Havel is was a like a Frenchman you know. A massive with the gardens.

[44:29](#) **GN:** Yeah. So you see this college Shane now. The other thing of causes that is also. It's a woman's college is was a man's car. Yes and that's been a big difference in the brothers. Teaching. Well even our choice of a lawyer now. While would have the woman a young young ladies.

[44:50](#) **BC:** Well hostile to all was co-ed in the Philippines where they always yeah. Oh yeah. High school college or. They're all coed now.

[44:58](#) **GN:** Ok, while I remember when I change here. You know that when I went here is classic and then. The first years it was just because the men you know.

[45:08](#) **BC:** I remember the bishop telling me. I was directing my bell. And then I go to ask him about a dance and he said don't ask me just do it. Oh how hard the never would send down directives to the big ships that were right out of Spain. I say oh you could ride in a car with a woman who had to have you had. Well you went out. You know I'd call it school was the goat and you know and no such thing. And we were doing all I thing all rose things. Contrary to Manila. Yeah yeah. But the bishop used to say. Burnard don't ask me just go ahead. I thank God I asked you say. The Knights of Columbus sponsored this. Yeah yeah would someone to blame someone else yeah yeah yeah.

[46:00](#) **GN:** I think the yes. It is true that the missionary experience for you was really an opening of a different way to look at the world holier than just you know their program show way here in the USA and...

[46:13](#) **BC:** I was amazed at how friendly the bishops were first. They were in a house often know for supper. Take a main for a drink it and ship Polish air Genoa very slim Pall Mall. Very friendly. And they treated the writers exactly as a trait of the priests. No distinction. And it was always like that from to beginning. All right. And I remember when mother father for the bishop Phil Smith was in the airplane accident. And almost killed. We had in there many island I'm talking with some of the our blades and what if we're going to do what hospitals so we send them. So I said the best hospital for him is the Air Force Copperfield. Air Force hospital and, so they finally agreed to send him there. But then the nurses were fabulous. You know they're very strict but very...

[47:12](#) **GN:** How do you get them into the air force?

[47:14](#) **BC:** Oh they took them to wages of asked him and they said yes yeah yeah OK OK. Like when I rode and I said. I was playing. Here's have to ask and they don't say no. But when the end was coming. We heard of their bills. And the bill was something I can make him pay sauce. So I said that's crazy show I wrote a letter to pages you know type. To the secretary of the Air Force in Washington. I'm my own told him will be shipped Mitch was how much would work you did in the Philippines. In solo and got a bottle. How much of a reputation he built up for the Americans. You know and it was true all of it was true. And I said the American government has done nothing for us. And I want you to give him. Not a single lie of. I want to Grand Slam cancel the whole thing. And they did. So they can swallow whole that whole bill and among everybody what and maced. Yeah yeah. That it worked in the...

[28:25](#) **GN:** Power of the pan.

[28:28](#) **BC:** Yeah what you can do when you put your money would people I know you're talking to a good people and they know you're honest and that made a difference. But when I look back to the mission life was so different you know we were living very poor very simple. Like we did in a junior eight. P.L.U. Whole rotten potatoes. Meddler to high heaven. Yeah. And one way to peel enough off to read the rest is good. And how life out there. We are no running water no light no this. None of...

[49:01](#) **GN:** That was tough for a kid from New York. Bronx to go to...

[49:05](#) **BC:** Bed was a, I cry would you know. No mattress was too hot. But after a month or so you get used to all O'Steen use. Says And you know big pain shining to it that said that

[49:19](#) **GN:** When you have a hungry. Well you have a deprived of food or?

[49:22](#) **BC:** Water pulled was quote very bright every day but we had of age or blows we had the potatoes in the hills and mountains. Cabbage they would grow.

[49:34](#) **GN:** And any make you have chickens or?

[49:35](#) **BC:** We had chicken. Plenty of chicken and fish we had coming out I really is. I don't know we were never hungry. And we had lots of fun. I bet that said they have that we had a very good community spirit. Very good spirit with the people. In fact when a passionate came. I remember the our place had to go. So, they went north in a passionate state in the south. And we stayed in the south and the north. So the people couldn't figure out because they always thought of by says. One with the oblate. And how is it. The oblate cigar and us still here. Well and then we try to explain it to different congregations I don't say yeah. Now we were so close to the oblate. People thought we were one congregation one order. And it was you know the saying Sion a brave priest or brother or the flight that you know

[50:36](#) **GN:** What do you see now is the future of the Marist brothers. I always going to be able to recruit enough to continue the thing on or to actually be joining with other forces. Like unite with the Irish Christians of the Christian Brothers of us the last hour. How do you see the future.

[50:55](#) **BC:** I see the future. From the world point of view. I see it is very good. Africa Asia. We are all doing very well. Europe is like America is very materialistic. Very selfish. Small families. But to me the Immigration is going to change that in the next twenty years. I see the Hispanics will take over the dominate the population. They'll have to plenty of children. And that's where we get vocations not to whites to waste. Over the hill. Even now they say the majority of children born right colors all. Yeah. None of which makes right now I can Haitian. So you have to be optimistic. I say but they're in the States. That's just saying that they have to remember to keep to the spirit of Champagnat a very good. If you don't go ahead. Keep that spirit. Then it's a it's a losing battle. Yeah but I know the African brothers I've lived with many of them I know them quite well. The Asian Brothers where the Malaysia or Philippines or wherever they are they are very sincere very hardworking very jealous. And then not too well off here I think we're a little bit too well off financially. Rights of others on have cause. You know Philippines. We had one car.

[52:28](#) **GN:** Well back in the early days here at the campus. Paul Ambrose had. Well yes you know again.

[52:35](#) **BC:** When I was here we had one car for the mount. And that's it. Yeah I remember walking into the subway were two or three other monks. Going to school. And we see the Marist mount car go by with the director moving their even give us a look at the could say you know I think that having a sort of subway. With those a good you know you have to laugh and that's the ONLY a solution at all.

[53:02](#) **GN:** You cannot change that alike as only you and the cat any come at any one time with Marty Healy here and telling us that you can get three bottles of Philadelphia. Ski. For ten dollars. Up an eighty six states now what a great wide out yes. And I was this god you know he's a guy who's looking ahead.

[53:22](#) **BC:** I remember taking it Giles Edwin Giles was in the dumps and in a mound and I passed by his room and I saw him at the table at the desk you know. I said "John what's the matter with you alone. C'mon let's go to movies come on come on." So we could take off and go to the movies. Downtown. He says dejection mission. Course not. If it were shocked they might say no. For Walter and I did that once when I came back from second officiate Walter was here. Very good friend of mine from tune radio shade. And he said his talk with shows down at the Wakefield want to go tonight sure that she while the show we were going to see Wiley's a boss. No way home he says you know I'd like to say yes but you know if I say yes feels and don't have half a dozen others coming. If you for the same. I said forget it want to forget it. OK don't worry. So I went outside talking with Walter tomorrow night we go. Who could skate or think so too are and I we just took off. I went to move. Very that was the only solution.

[54:38](#) **GN:** Tell me what's us all what you say. Now you know is. Looking back on your life, or some of the use word success stories are the most satisfaction? What have been the highlights of your career you've taught you've been running things, and sitting for different people.

[55:01](#) **BC:** Highlight. Because I enjoyed all the communities I was in all good. The monks were all good. And a few sour grapes you know but yeah. Nothing much, they didn't effect the community.

[55:17](#) **GN:** Right. And, but I think you were instrumental in taking the sour grapes, out and trying to change the atmosphere and then we had a live. I come out of the academy least we had a lot of fun basketball, the yard, even sarge...

[55:34](#) **BC:** But the thing was we did have fun. Yeah. We enjoyed. Even if we had nothing like we were allowed one bottle of cheap rum a week, And one case of Coke. So, we decided we were five or six in the house there we decided we would kill it Saturday, and after that we'll drink cold water. And I wrote to my sister. To ask money for a kerosene refrigerator. The nun. And she wrote back, to my big sister. She wrote back and she said, "whoever heard of a kerosene refrigerator. Is there such a thing?" So I wrote and told her how it works the heating the insides and I said the mechanics I don't know that all works. So she got me the four hundred dollars and I got a refrigerator. And that was a godsend in the way go see the monks of the Tanjungas and Lego lived in Lego. And we had a house and beverage pretty nice house. And we had at least five monks there were six months. Jerry O'Keefe, Peter Maurice for George, Myself. I forget who else now. But anyway. As we say we had fun. So we sit around. The big brown table. We have a Petromax overhead. I know Alexis tree. And we play and we have bottle of cold water and the glass. Each brace course we have to Saturday night and. No more coke no more rum. Yeah. For a couple of years. The Jimmy. Maurice chain is finally relented on that. I said this is super you know but he was here he was a prevention is acting for visual of a Philip here is how much.

[57:24](#) **GN:** How would you keep him in a cave between why humanity and the other with the wizard train a bus or car how did how did you manage it?

[57:33](#) **BC:** well. Distance is a big you know and erodes a terrible. So yeah we had to adapt. Like we had buses. He used to come. Roaming around town looking for passages. Two o'clock in the morning. You know I'm going on and. I remember the passion is where I used is this nation light. And they came there were like spoiled and days to be furious. And they'd come to the bus and yell at the driver which I did how things are all. Yes father yes father. So as soon as he joined this very good but they after they roam around town collecting. Then they take off. What took about half an hour I wipe lane. Would take fourteen hours. By bus. I threw the hellos and dirt roads. Mud. I remember once coming in down from my bell to the jungle. I think Fred was driving. Another time was reunited or all of a sudden is no more road in front of us. No more dirt road. So we break it you know break the current the whole road was washed out why again has a rainbow come in from the mountains. Yeah. Just took it to get a nice room. Just took the whole thing out. And we had to go around and of thing down. Out. Continue on our way. Yeah. But that's the kind of road you had.

[59:05](#) **GN:** Well you know it's been a great time talking to you with just about Qantas the hour fifty nine minutes and twelve seconds now I tape low and I have to get in and sixty minutes out all why we have. Because a start. So it's good talking to you. We're going to put this in the archives. People will come along on and I was something about the missions. They can hear but I didn't say much and in saying up about the missions but while but it's a whole complex and the are early days here. The beginning of Mary's College. Semantic outta me. And then what I like particularly is your concept of the future. That there is hope in the future. Oh yeah day. It starts to be and gloom. At all You know there's going to be new life. They're going to begin to Gratian. And the life of the Marist brothers will go on. I cry I love you. ok. I wanted to talk about the fields we had big corn fields in the fields.