

The Riordan School

what might have been...

Brother Joseph J R Belanger researched the Riordan School, one of the possible sites for Marist Preparatory when the Brothers were looking for a site near Poughkeepsie to move the Juniorate off campus. His essay follows

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Raymond C. Riordon School, Highland, NY

Raymond C. Riordon was Superintendent of the Interlaken School in Rolling Prairie, Indiana. He is written up in **Who's Who in America**, v.19 [1936-1937].

In November 1912 he wrote an essay on the Craftman Farms in Highland in which he mentions a certain Gustav Stickley who wants a school in Highland. There already was a Gustav Stickley School for Citizenship in New Jersey, which Ray Riordon wrote about in November 1912.

Raymond C. Riordon opened a Roycroft School of Life for Boys in Highland in September 1912 on some 150 acres.

The Craftman Farms School for Citizenship opened 15 June 1913. It actually started receiving boys 9-14 years old in October 1912 and aimed at recruiting about 50. The Craftman Farms bordered Chodikee [pron. Shatikee?] Lake on the west side. It probably is the same as the Roycroft School.

On 17 March 1914 Ella Chambers Riordon and Raymond C. Riordon founded the Raymond C. Riordon School. The school still existed in June 1940. Ray Riordon died probably in 1940. His brother, J. Allen Riordon becomes President in 1940. Students came from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Vermont, and Virginia. A James Skakel from Greenwich CT is listed as graduating [in 1940?].

The property was put up for sale in Fall 1941 and on 26 February 1942 the Marist Brothers in Poughkeepsie received permission from their General Administration in Europe to purchase the property. However, on March 20 the Catholic Chancery in NYC refused permission and suggested the Brothers look into two other properties, the Jacob Ruppert Estate in Staatsburg NY, now Linwood, and the Payne Estate in Esopus NY. On June 26 Cardinal Spellman approved the purchase of 200 acres of the Payne Estate between 9W and the Hudson River, and the Brothers occupied the mansion on July 10. The Riordon "School in the Hills" had beautiful classrooms and residences all built with logs. The Payne Estate had much more solid buildings made of stone.

Later in 1942 a NYC lawyer, Joseph Resnick, purchased the Riordon property as a camp for nearly 200 boys.

The property was purchased by New York State in October 1957 [from Resnick?] and became the Highland Training School for delinquents. It closed in June 1976. At that time part of the property was sold to the town of Lloyd and to the Cabrini Center.

Today [2004] it is a Jewish camp for boys and girls. More information is needed for the years 1976 to 2004.

To get there, take 299 West to New Paltz off 9W about one mile and turn right on North Chodikee Lake Road. Follow this road to its dead end. Chodikee Lake coers about 100 acres. On the East side is now the Hotel Chodikee, and on the West side is the Jewish camp for boys and girls.

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