

The first Marist year 1942 - 1943

This narrates the experiences of several of us who were in Esopus in the first year. I based the narrative on my own recollections, but these were amplified by the oral and written suggestions of : Gene Connolly, Bernie Garrett, Peter Foy, Brother Chanel Lambert, Brother James Brady, and hopefully others who may have thoughts to add when they read this essay. Please send your thoughts and corrections of fact to me at foy@telutopia.com or Richard Foy, 717 Washington Ave, Chappaqua, New York, 10514, (914) 238-8001.

Esopus staff 1942 - 1943	
<u>B. Linus William Hall</u>	Director, Master
<u>B. Joseph Cadroes</u>	SubDir., Infirmarian
<u>B. Edmund Alphonse</u>	Treasurer
<u>B. Kieran Thomas Brennan</u>	Teacher
<u>B. James Bernard Elliott</u>	Teacher
<u>B. Richard Alban Surprenant</u>	Teacher
<u>B. John Patrick Caffrey</u>	Prefect
<u>B. Marie Feliciani</u>	Garden
<u>B. George Robert</u>	Work
<u>B. Mary Anthony Scheh</u>	Work
<u>B. Ulrich Chanel Lambert</u>	Chef

Juniors during 1942-1943		
Juniors	Sophomores	Freshmen
Joe Baumann	Ray Burke (Joe's brother)	Rich Foy
Jimmy Bree	John Finn	Gerry Gorsuch
Joe Burke	George Flemming	John Griffith
John Colbert	John Flemming	Arthur Lee
Gene Connolly	Peter Foy	Bobby O'Sullivan
Bernie Garrett	John Paul Frank	Willie Raymond
Al Hobson	Eddie Garneau	John Michael Ryan
Bryan Leech	Thomas Grogan	
Jack McTiernan	Jimmy Horan	
Eddie Vollmer	John (?) Kenny	
Tommy Vollmer	Paddy Long	
Frank White	(?) Maloney	
	John McQuade	
	Jimmy Monahan	
	Joe Morrissey	
	Dennis Murphy	

	Richard Nestler	
	John Quann	

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The first Marist Esopus year signified two important cultural changes. Superiors in Europe distrusted American culture, and were reluctant to pass authority into the hands of the American brothers, particularly those with no background in French language, which gave the European superiors some measure of comfort. Prior to 1942 most positions of authority were assigned to native Frenchmen, Canadians from Quebec province, or French Canadian brothers from New England. Brother Linus William was a distinct break from that pattern, and I learned afterwards that he had insisted on a new faculty composed of younger, more effective teachers.

Previously the recruiting pattern was to approach those in Marist schools, mostly elementary schools, and to canvass eighth grades in other schools. That pattern was soon to change. My freshman class was the third last group of freshmen to enter.. The Brothers were phasing out most of their elementary schools and recruiting moved to secondary schools. Eventually this evolution inched up to the point today where prospects to the Marist Brothers now are expected to have completed their college and spent one or two years working with youth before being accepted into the official program.

The deed transferring the property from the Protestant Episcopal Mission Society to the Marist Brothers is dated 1 August 1942. Several Brothers including scholastics, worked on the property during the month of August. The Esopus Juniorate was officially opened on August 25, 1942.

My brother Peter and I arrived at Esopus just before lunch on Thursday, September 3, 1942. Brother Gabriel Vincent, the New York recruiter drove us from our home in the Bronx. Previously Brother Joseph Damian had spoken to our eighth grade class at St. Francis of Rome, and I signed one of the cards he left off. I heard nothing until mid July, when Gabe appeared at our door. I was in bed with pneumonia, and my brother in the other bedroom with the mumps. My aunt told Gabe to wait until she straightened the room; Gabe told her he had to get the movie camera. When my aunt came out of my room, there was no Gabe. He had moved right in to my brother's room, shown him the movie of the Juniorate, and signed him up. My aunt told him he spoke to the wrong person, so Gabe trotted into my room and repeated his performance.

On arriving at Esopus, we were the tallest and smallest of the students; my brother at 6'4" and me at 4'11" and 12 years old.. Peter had spent a year at Regis, a Jesuit scholarship school, but was turned off with its concentration on language skills; I was scheduled to attend Mt St Michael.

We were among the first of the 'newcomers' and we were introduced to the 'oldtimers' who had moved earlier from the old Juniorate in Poughkeepsie and we were welcomed at the beginning of lunch. For the first month or so,

we ate at the super's house, now Holy Rosary. The Episcopal Church had operated a convalescent home on the property and had set up a kitchen and dining room in that house. Later we would move to the mansion, after the kitchen in that house had been modified to feed a larger group of students.

For several days I kept looking for the pool I had seen in the movie. Finally, John Paul Frank, an oldtimer, took me aside and explained that the movie had been filmed in Poughkeepsie.

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The River

The first afternoon we all went down to the river to swim. Brother John Patrick was the prefect. We changed in the boathouse and then jumped off the dock. I was happy as a lark, for my aunt had given strict instructions that I was not to swim, yet nobody stopped me. Later, Bro Gabriel Vincent told me he came down to the dock, saw me in the water, realized it was too late, and forgot to issue the warning to the authorities.

Nobody told me the Hudson River was a tidal river. I jumped off the center of the dock and was carried upstream when I fully expected to go downstream. I spent what seemed like hours struggling to reach the center of the dock where there were two ladders. I was too proud to ask for help, and did not want to swim to shore above the dock, as we had been warned about snakes on the rocks.

Swimming in August carried worries and joys. One worry was the amount of seaweed or grasses which accumulated and moved up and down the river. One tried to avoid swimming into these. A fun thing was when the Hudson River Dayliner passed by, making a large wake. It was "everybody in for the rollers". Another trick was swimming underwater, and we ran contests to see who could swim furthest. I remember Eddie Vollmer diving off the dock and not surfacing -- Brother John got very worried. Finally he surfaced about 200 feet offshore. After that the contests were forbidden.

The Hudson can be dangerous. Sometimes we could see a thunder storm coming down the river. Later I understood Washington Irving's stories of the men bowling in the Catskills, as thunder arose very suddenly. When lightning got close, we would all take shelter under the eave of the boathouse, or inside the boathouse, and watch as the storm came down river and finally past us.

During one of these sudden storms, Brothers Chanel and Richard Alban. had taken a rowboat out and got caught by the storm. They each took an oar and had only a tin can to bail out the boat. The dock disappeared from view, and they disappeared from our view. When the storm passed they were down by the Holy Cross Monastery. (source: Bro Chanel)

This reminds me of another more tragic event in May 1970 when several students from Marist College rented canoes from a place just south of Kingston. One of the canoes overturned, and Tom Ferrara, a freshman from the football team and a good swimmer, drowned.

There was a gazebo on the southern part of the dock. If you weren't swimming, you could sit there in the shade. Picnics used the gazebo as a buffet place. Often Brother Joseph Cadroes would come down to watch us swim. If the picnic was in the evening, we would build a fire, and Brother Francis Xavier, from Poughkeepsie, would regale us with spooky stories. The one I remember most was about the phantom of the opera, probably appropriately sanitized to eliminate the romantic elements. That story was so scary it took two nights to finish. With only a flickering fire to light us, the setting was perfect. -- until it was time to walk up the hill to the dormitories. Brother John would have the only flashlight, and if you straggled your imagination would quintuple the fright.

Often when we sat on the dock, we watched LST's go down the Hudson. They were manufactured at Rondout Creek in Kingston or in Athens NY, and the trip down to New York City was a trial run as well as a delivery. We also saw sand and gravel barges heading downstream. We could see freight trains moving along the East Bank. One recreation was to count the cars, then compare the count with our fellow students to determine who was right. Peter Foy remembers watching lightning strike the river on the East side and being leery to go in the water afterward. In 1945 we went down to the dock to watch the train carrying President Roosevelt's body to Hyde Park. If you went upstairs in the boathouse using a circular staircase, you could walk out on a little porch which looked south over the dock.

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The Faculty

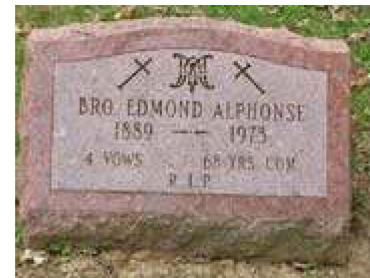


Brother Linus William came to us from the house of studies at Catholic University, where he studied for a masters in mathematics. He had a flair for the dramatic, and a temper to match. But he was also genuinely considerate of us all. He had grown up in the Irish section of Harlem and well understood the backgrounds of lower middle class boys like ourselves. Brother Linus' room

was in the southeast corner of the second floor, probably Payne's master bedroom. Linus had set up a bedroom but a small office there. Usually you weren't called to meet him there, because that almost always meant you were in trouble...

Brother Edmund Alphonse was a model of propriety. He was always well dressed, and when he drove off campus was dressed in his clergy suit with never a hair out of place. He drove a large black auto which had been donated by Archambeault, the undertaker in Lowell, Mass, who was very friendly with the Brothers.

Gasoline being at a premium during the war, trips were made only when necessary: every day to pick up the priest from Mt St Alphonsus for Mass, and otherwise to purchase groceries and other items needed to run the place. Brother Edmund was the treasurer who had to run the place on a very limited funds, so we considered him a pinchpenny. He was also a fine organist, and taught us singing. We had singing in the oratory, the room in the southeast corner of the mansion which had lost its character (I



later found out because the fine woodwork had been ordered painted over by Harry Payne Bingham's wife.) We would prepare the singing for Sunday's High Mass, and special items for Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, and other feast days. He lived in the mansion, with a large room in the northeast section of the second floor. The room was so big he used it to store non-food items; occasionally we would be sent there to pick up a can of cleanser or a mop and we would marvel at the size of the room.

Brother Joseph Cadroes was a native Frenchman whose history reflected the establishment of the Brothers in the United States. In 1892 several brothers were brought to the USA to teach at St Jean Baptiste, the French parish at 76th street in New York City, and soon at St. Ann's Academy across the street. There were many Brothers teaching in Quebec province, which reflected the French character of that part of Canada. In 1905, France enacted a law which forbade religious to teach school dressed in their cassock garb. The Brothers had the choice of remaining in France and teaching in mufti, or leaving France to work elsewhere. Many of them chose to leave and come to other countries including the United States, where they opened several schools in New England, which had a large French speaking population of citizens who emigrated southward from Quebec towards the New England mills of Lawrence, Lowell, and Haverhill. Brother Joseph must have left France when he was about 21 years old. When World War I began, France took the position "once a Frenchman, always a Frenchman" If Brother Joseph did not return to France to join the French Army, he would be arrested as a deserter if ever he set foot on French soil, even though by then he was a US citizen.. This meant he would never be able to visit his mother and father and siblings. As an alternate, Brother Joseph joined the United States Army and served as a medical corpsman in France. He was a very quiet man, and once told me the story that he stood in a town while some of the natives joked disparagingly about the Americans. He listened for several minutes, then joined in in perfect French, embarrassing the local citizenry.

Brother Joseph was the infirmarian, with the infirmary at the southwest corner of the second floor of the mansion. There was his bedroom, then a small dispensary, then another room with two or three beds for the very sick. I never made it to stay overnight there, but visited often for cold remedies. Sometimes the line would be ten or twelve long, but he treated us all kindly.

Brother Joseph was also a walker. Early in our stay there were limited outdoor recreation facilities, and Brother Joseph would lead the crowd in hikes through the property and also across route 9-W in the dense woods which made up the bulk of the Payne estate. Bernie Garrett remembers how Brother Joseph would tramp through the grass fearlessly, while the rest of us would tread fearfully, remembering the presence of so many copperhead snakes.

Brother Joseph taught geometry, Latin, French, and junior religion. He died in Fall 1945 at the age of 63. We always thought he was much older. When he was buried in the cemetery in Poughkeepsie, there was a military honor guard.

Brother Kieran Thomas appeared on the scene with Brother James Bernard at lunch time when we were still eating in the super's house. He had a fierce look for his slight build. Probably he and James Bernard were furious and dismayed at being exiled to the Juniorate from a regular high school, but they were part of Linus' drive for young, superior teachers. He taught English to all



three classes, and coached us for reading in the dining room, making us practice beforehand so that we knew the words and could pronounce them and hopefully read them aloud intelligently. He also acted as the basketball coach.

Brother James Bernard taught me

freshman algebra. He was very quiet and we enjoyed a relaxed atmosphere. He may also have taught history. One week Brother Vincent Dominic, Brother Linus' blood brother, came to Esopus and taught the algebra class. Vincent was the diametric opposite of James: loud, excitable, demanding, but exciting. We learned a lot during that week, probably because we saw the same things from different perspective.



Brother James was also my prefect or director of residence for my first dormitory. He had a room just next door, near the north archway.

My most vivid picture of Brother James was during early spring. The ball fields were not ready, and we were tired of being cooped up inside after a long winter. Somebody invented the game Caesar and Gaul. We broke up into two teams, with the freshmen and juniors being Caesar and the sophomores being Gaul, with one of the sophomores being Vercingetorix. We would roam through the woods looking for leftover snow and engage in fixed and running battles. Brother James would follow us dressed in cassock, overcoat, and carrying a shovel over his shoulder. Brother Linus William disapproved of this game, and threatened that if anyone got hurt by a snowball, he would not be taken to a hospital. This never happened, although when captured, we would be inundated with snow by some of the enemy troops. I soon learned to hang around the stronger juniors for protection.

Brother Richard Alban was the youngest person on faculty. He seemed to be mid thirties, but in retrospect must have been only 22 or 23. He taught me civics and biology, and was the sacristan. The biology lab was on the south side second floor of the mansion next to the much larger physics lab. One of my labs was to dissect a frog. I started well, but after I opened the frog up, it squirmed out of its ropes and leaped on the floor. That ended my career as a biologist. As sacristan he used his biology background ingeniously. On August 15 we had an altar covered with peonies, even though the season for peonies was June. He had clipped several dozen from the garden and placed them in the refrigerator, then took them out and let them bloom in mid-August.



Brother John Patrick was our prefect, which meant he was in charge of us whenever we were not at prayer or class or study. He ruled our recreation and dormitory and employment activities. He had grown up on the lower East Side of New York City. Baseball was his passion. As a teenager he had played semi-pro ball for

several teams in several leagues, and this love carried over to us once we had ball fields. Today a lot of instruction involves teaching mechanics of batting, fielding and pitching. Brother John concentrated on the mental aspects of the game. If you were sitting on the bench, he never gave you a rest. Depending

on the number of men on base and the number of outs, he would quiz you: what should the shortstop do if the ball is hit to his left? to his right? what does the third baseman do on a bunt? No time for daydreaming.

Brother Marie Feliciani was the gardener. He was a small man, who also had come over from rural southern France shortly after 1905. He governed the greenhouse, which at that time consisted of two bays of the original greenhouse. The center dome bay and the two western bays were gone. He tended flowers but mostly vegetables, which were destined for growing in the field across the road from the greenhouse. We also grew potatoes in the field where the pool is now situated, but Brother Anthony took care of that field.



Brother Felician used a time honored method of clearing fields -- burning. He would start a small fire, but too often it would get away from him, and the years of leaves deposited on the ground would fuel a large fire which drifted whichever way the wind was blowing. One Sunday a messenger broke in to our gospel lesson from Brother Master. He whispered something in the Master's ear, and we could see him groan. We were all sent to fight the fire. Armed with shovels, rakes, and pickaxes we would move out to the location of the smoke and spend an hour or two stopping the fire. We enjoyed this activity, and sometimes dogged it to be sure that we were not brought in to study. But remarkably the fires were put out by lunch time.

Brother Felician grew fond of me, and he hoped that I would have spent more time learning what he know about flowers and vegetables. This worked well during early spring, but when good weather arrived, the lure of baseball drew me away from my incipient career as a gardener. My only further work in that direction was weeding in the garden when assigned there.



Brother George Robert is a bit of a mystery to me. I don't remember him the first year, but he did teach us history in my second and third years. I think he was not well in 1942-1943 and we didn't see much of him.

Brother Mary Anthony, called "Herbie" because of his resemblance to Herbert Hoover, was the jack of all trades. He was expected to keep all the systems going. This meant monitoring the water supply, drawn from the river and stored in a water tower north of the English Village. More importantly, he had to keep the furnaces going for heat and hot water. This meant transporting coal to the mansion, the English Village, the super's house, the gardener's cottage, and the gatehouse. In this he was assisted by the biggest boys in the group, which included my brother Peter and Jimmy Bree and others. Peter remembers delivering coal to the mansion through a chute in the yard behind the mansion. One time the coal in the bin suffered spontaneous combustion and the boys had to tote the coal out of the cellar to spread it out on the ground until the fire was completely out. Peter also remembers that we got the coal from a railroad car, but he was not one of the lucky ones to be sent out to the railroad to unload it. The usual means of transportation was Molly, an old dump truck, which broke down about as often as it ran. Brother Anthony was the mechanic and the plumber.

To supplement the coal, we used wood from the many trees felled on the property. These were fat logs. Here again Brother Anthony was aided by the stronger young men among us, including my brother. Years afterward, Brother confided to me how difficult it had been. The lads would often miss the wedge with their sledgehammer, which resulted in a broken handle. New handles were impossible to purchase, so Brother Anthony would fashion them out of the limbs of fallen trees. Sometimes three or four handles would get broken in an afternoon's work period.



One other fire supplement deserves mention. We inherited a Protestant Bible from the former owners. This book was larger than an unabridged dictionary. Out of reverence for the word of God, the boys were told to burn it in the furnace. Instead of tearing it up into little pieces, they threw the entire book in at once. During the night it put out the entire fire, and the dorms were extremely cold the following morning.

Brother Ulrich Chanel was only about 18 years old, but his strong physique and gentle manner made him look older. The official nomination published in August listed Brother James Thomas as chef, but the only chef I remembered was Brother Ulrich Chanel Lambert. He tells this story about the change:

"I was one of the lucky ones on July 27th, which was the day after taking our first vows and the day on which many of my group were sent out on cooking, or gardening or other work assignments for the year. I dodged the bullet and was slated to begin my college at the scholasticate. Brother Louis Omer had just been named Provincial. He was very athletic, and loved to play baseball with us. On day after a game, he said he wanted to see me. When I got to his office, he said: 'This is my first month as Provincial, and you are going to be my first appointment. Brother James Thomas hurt his back and cannot lift pots, so you will replace him as chef in Esopus.' I had visited Esopus with my family on July 26th. I got a lot of help from Brother Mary Anthony and also Brother Edmund who as procurator did all the purchasing. I would rise at 4:00 am to get the coal stove going, then get to Mass, then rush back to put out breakfast."

Brother Chanel gave us a taste of what was to come when he began ice skating with us, together with Brother Richard Alban, on the pond behind the English Village. He was from New England, and skated rings around any of us. We soon realized that when we went to the Novitiate we would be completely overmatched in hockey by the boys who had such a long winter to practice, in what we later learned was an abandoned quarry. Our only hope was to beat them in basketball.

Twice in the fifties, Brother Linus, then the Provincial, asked Brother Chanel to help out in Esopus. One summer Chanel and another brother repaired the damage the dock sustained when a tugboat and barge moored and then pulled away without releasing the hawsers. They had to work whenever the tide was low. Another summer, just after Chanel had returned from Europe, he was asked to repair the drywall along route 9-W. That time in early August, Brother Linus met him and told him to go home for a few days; Linus would call him. Chanel waited all month for the call. Then one day his sister called

him to tell him his name appeared in the Lawrence papers as having been assigned to CCHS in Lawrence. So he reported directly to Lawrence.

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Academics

Our first classrooms were in the mansion on the second floor. While the servants quarters in the west part of the building were being renovated into three classrooms, I was in a small bedroom in the middle of the east facade. Brother Linus' room was at the southeast corner, the junior class was in the classroom at the northeast corner, and the sophomores were in a large room on the south side, which later became the physics lab. After about two months, we moved into the new classrooms. These were separated by moveable partitions, so that one Brother could supervise study halls. If Brother Master gave a talk, the juniors would move up to the front room which was occupied by the sophomores. We freshmen were in the middle room.

The school week was on the European system. Thursday afternoon was recreation time (congé in French), but there was school on Saturday mornings. I learned to budget my time, because only two hours were reserved for study. In each written work hour, we had two subjects on a rotating basis. For the non-written study hour, each subject was given ten minutes. Grades were given each month. If you achieved an 85 average, you were allowed to take out books from the library which you could read at night before lights out; else you could only study your course work.

Brother Kieran taught English to the three classes, and religion to the freshmen. Brother James Bernard taught freshman algebra. Brother Linus himself taught intermediate algebra, and Brother Joseph Cadroes taught geometry to the juniors. Brother Richard Alban taught physics, biology and civics. In other schools Latin was taught in freshmen year, but at Esopus we were taught French by Brother Joseph Cadroes. Here we were joined with any newcomer sophomores, so that was the largest class I took -- about 23 students. Brother Joseph was famous for preparing his classes to the exact minute, and kept to that schedule as much as possible. One method he used was to ask us to repeat a phrase in French as we entered the classroom, such as "Je viens d'arrivé!" He would give you a broad smile, and hand you a dollar or two of school money, to be used later at the Christmas auction.

One year later Bro Joseph had my big brother in his class. Peter was normally sloppy, and his by now 6'6" gangly frame stuck out from under the desks -- an affront to Brother Joseph's love of neatness. For homework Brother Joseph would ask you to solve a geometry problem several ways. One day Peter suggested a solution. Brother Joseph wanted to move on, but Peter had another solution. When Peter came up with a third and fourth way, Brother Joseph's timetable was ruined. Brother Linus came to the rescue by sending Peter outside to rake and dig up saplings during geometry class for the last two months of class. Peter still got 100% on his regents.

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The Library

Our library was located on the northeast corner of the first floor and was absolutely beautiful. It was just as Oliver Payne had it built, with wood shelving and wood cabinets under each set of shelves. We started with the books shipped over from Poughkeepsie, but Brother Linus insisted on a sizeable purchasing budget, and we soon had to add free standing bookcases, which while neat, hardly matched the elegant built-in shelves. Brother Kieran was nominally in charge, but three of us students were assistant librarians, one junior whom I don't remember, sophomore Jimmy Monahan and myself. We catalogued the new books, typed the book inserts, used an electric stylus to inscribe the Dewey Decimal number on the spine of the book, and supervised the library when it was open for students and checking out of books. We used the H.W. Wilson index of cards to determine the Dewey Decimal number, but couldn't afford to purchase the cards for the catalog, so we typed the author, title and subject cards as indicated in the Wilson catalog. If a new book were not in the Wilson catalog, we determined our own decimal number and subjects. Brother Kieran would review our work before we completed the cataloging. There were very few magazines.

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Dormitories

Bernie Garrett remembers that the day the oldtimers moved from Poughkeepsie, there were no beds in the dormitories, a fact which did not please Brother Master, who had quite a temper. By the end of the day beds had been installed by the scholastics, including Brother James Damian Brady, who remembers being sent over to "build beds and kill snakes". My dormitory was in the former electric generating room, later transformed into a gym and then a chapel in 1952. The main dormitory was in the carriage room, later to be a recreation room, and currently a dining room. The only sinks were in the carriage room, so we had to rise, get dressed, make our beds, and hurry over to use the sinks. Try as I might, I could never beat Bernie Garrett. I would rush over, and Bernie would be sitting on his bed reading, completely dressed, bed made. I never found out his secret.

The servants rooms on the second floor of the English village were renovated to provide two large dormitories, and we moved upstairs sometime before winter. I slept there until I left in 1945.

We had about 1/2 hour to get washed and dressed, then walked over to the mansion for Mass and morning prayers. Normally we did not get back to the dormitory until it was time to get to bed, except for shower day on Saturday, when we were also expected to fold our laundry, put clean sheets on our beds, and have inspection of the presses which held our clothes.

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Dining

As mentioned previously, we started out in the super's house. Sometime in the fall we moved over to the mansion.

We ate breakfast in silence. Someone read the life of the daily saint and followed that with a book or article which was being read. Except for special occasions, we also ate supper in silence with two or three of us sharing the

reading. The most welcome words were "Benedicamus Domino" to which we answered "Deo Gratias". This meant we were allowed to talk. Although this seems harsh nowadays, it had a good purpose. Each of us was forced to read aloud to the group -- an exercise which prepared us to speak clearly in front of a classroom.

The main meal was at noon. Usually there was soup, meat or fish, potatoes and one or two vegetables. Supper was a little lighter, with soup and a single serving. There was a small table for Brother Master and one other Brother, and the rest of us sat six or seven to a table. Each table had a captain who made sure we ate what was presented and distributed desserts in a fair fashion. The faculty ate in a smaller room, we called it the breakfast room, between the main dining room and the scullery.

This was war time, and luxuries were scarce. The place operated on a very limited budget. The official tuition was \$25 per month, but this was not enforced and many of the parents could not afford this; they paid what they could. The remainder was subsidized by the province on a per diem allowance.

One method we used to cut expenses was to take a week off in Fall to pick apples. The first year we were only allowed to pick up the 'drops' from the ground, and pick only the apples in the tree which we could reach. Pete Foy remembers we graduated to ladders the second year. Our reward was to take home bushels of the 'drops' which usually had to be peeled and cored soon and made into apple sauce. We must have received some good apples also, for this became the staple for desert.

Brother Chanel and Bernie Garrett both remember Easter Dinner. Brother Edmund Alphonse told Brother Chanel that there would be chicken for dinner as he had arranged to get a lot of them. He forgot to mention that they were live chickens. Chanel had to chop off their heads, and Bernie Garrett, John Colbert and Frank White had the unenviable task of "defeathering" them. It is not recorded whether any of these three ate chicken at Easter Dinner.

Sugar was also very scarce. One day Brother Chanel explored some of the rooms in the mansion cellar and discovered jars of jams and preserves, probably left over from the previous tenants. They were in good condition, and he used them to flavor the oatmeal and cream of wheat which were our breakfast staples year round.

Another time, Brother Anthony told Chanel he was going fishing. He returned with barrels and barrels of shad fish. He had made a rectangular net about four foot each edge, tied by four strings to a pole. He went up to Black Creek, just north of our property and spent several hours just pulling up the fish which were running (so it must have been spring). Now I think they were herring not shad, but who cared? Shad sounded more elegant. Chanel had to clean the fish, prepare them for dinner, and perhaps preserve them at least for a few days, as there were too many for just a few meals.

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Special days

The first special day I remember was September 23, 1942, the feast of Saint Linus. This became a special holiday because of the name of our Master, but also because I think we needed a break from studies and lots of work. It was a Wednesday, and the leaves had already begun to turn. Brother Joseph Cadroes took us on an extended walk across route 9-W, across the railroad tracks and into the deep woods. I can still hear the crackle of the leaves underfoot. When we finally reached a clearing, there was a picnic, with hot cider, not a brilliant choice considering that we had to hike back. There were many detours along the way when nature called.

The next big day was the feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday in October, the 25th that year. We sang in parts at the Mass ("Christus vincit"), but more important it was open house. Our parents and the neighbors were invited. Mrs. Josephine Murphy, Brother Joseph William's mother, was a caterer in New York City, and she brought two cooks with her to cater the buffet. Apart from our pride in having brought some order to the abandoned property and buildings, my greatest surprise was the presence of several white-robed monks from Holy Cross Monastery. Before that day I never knew that religions other than Roman Catholic had monasteries. I spoke with several of them, men in their late twenties, and they were most gracious. It set me on the route of ecumenism long before that word became commonplace.

It turned out that the two cooks who accompanied Mrs. Murphy were hunters, and they were delighted to be invited to return to the property to hunt squirrels. These friendly little animals had taken over the tops of the trees, leaving the ground to the copperheads. There were not many birds visible. After two or three weekends during which we could hear the roar of the shotguns almost every five minutes, they had rid the grounds of several hundred squirrels, and the natural balance between birds and squirrels began to assert itself.

Students were not permitted to go home for Christmas, so the faculty did its best to make it a special day. We had Midnight Mass followed by the réveillon, a French custom of an extended breakfast after the Mass. We ate by candlelight, which gave the whole experience a pleasant aura. Christmas was on a Friday that year, and parents were allowed to visit us the following Sunday. As gifts for my Father and Aunt, I had bid on items at the Christmas auction. For many things we were awarded school money, and we could use it during the auction. Some of the most attractive gifts were plaster wall hangings made by Brother Edmund using rubber molds and then painting them.

January 6, the feast of the Epiphany introduced me to another custom, again probably from France. At lunch we each got a muffin. Inside one was a bean, and another a walnut. The person who got the bean was the King, and the walnut became the Queen. These two would preside over supper, all dressed in royal robes and seated on a throne where the Master's table was normally placed. At any time during supper, the King or Queen could approach anyone and demand he perform. Usually this was in form of a song or perhaps a group song. John Colbert was Queen, but also the only good pianist we had, so she/he had to leave her/his seat often to play for the groups. Tom Grogan and I were usually made to recite a poem, my usuals being *The Cremation of Sam Magee* and the *Wonderful One Horse Shay*, Tom's being *Gunga Din*,

recited in his powerful, deep voice. It was the custom for Brother Master to grant one wish of the Queen. Naturally it was for a day off!

New Year's Day brought another wonderful French custom, that of greeting the neighbors. In this case it was our friends in the novitiate and scholasticate in Poughkeepsie. The rack truck was sent over from Poughkeepsie, and we huddled on the back of the truck for the half hour trip. The truck made two trips for us. We met with the novices and postulants who were known to the oldtimer juniors and sophomores but were new found friends to us, and then went over to the scholasticate to meet the young brothers and finally the provincial house to greet the retired and working brothers. At each place there were cookies and hot chocolate.

Several times each year we put on plays. The master for this was Jimmy Horan, who would write, direct and act in many of the plays. These were held in the tack room, now the brothers' dining room area, where a small stage was set up against what is now the scullery. Jimmy would generally use music he knew, and John Colbert would play the tunes by ear. Jimmy also used all the elements within his grasp. One time he wrote a parody of Simon Legree. He had discovered an opening in the ceiling and hooked up a block and tackle to take Bobby O'Sullivan up to heaven with angel's wings. All went well until the tackle jammed with Bobby halfway up, just out of reach of the other actors but not high enough to grab the ceiling. He began turning blue, but we in the audience thought it was part of the act and laughed hysterically. Finally one of the faculty intervened and got Bobby down. After Jimmy Horan left us he joined the Army; I understand he directed plays for the Army during the late forties.

Towards the end of the year we put on a minstrel, once for our parents, once for the novices and postulants. Now out of favor, the minstrel featured an MC, "Mr. Interlocutor", two end men painted in black face (Jimmy Horan was always one) a chorus, and several song and dance acts. About six weeks before the performance, Brother Joseph Damian came to Esopus and twenty of us were called down to see if we could dance. I tried as hard as I could and was one of the lucky six finalists. I would not have tried so hard had I known that the three shortest finalists would have to dress up as girls! I was totally embarrassed. One year Tommy White looked cute, Billy Vaughan looked like a gangster's moll, and I appeared with muscle-bound calves. The only redeeming feature of the whole thing is that we did not have to sit with the chorus. We spent the time practicing. One year it was an Irish jig, another a parade of wooden soldiers.

My brother Peter was a monotone which excused him from daily choir practice. He was coached privately by Brother Linus William in a secret performance. His was the last act of the show. He came out dressed like a hick, carrying a posy of flowers, and sang *I Ain't Nobody's Darling*. Jimmy Horan jumped up on a chair to face him eye-to-eye. Peter also remembers learning a lot of Gilbert and Sullivan songs during the minstrel practices.

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Sports

"Our early recreation, until a field was cleared, was walks. We particularly like the hike to the boathouse and the one to the other structure north of the

boathouse. " (Ed. note: the coal dock) "When the area was cleared 'flag game' became the interesting pastime " Bernie Garrett

Flag game or *steal the flag* was an ideal game as it could include everybody and could be run a short or long time, especially while waiting for those whose turn it was to wash dishes and serve tables. The two best areas were the rectangle outside the garages in the English Village, as the end lines were the edges of concrete, and the yard behind the mansion, which we used after lunch or supper while waiting for those whose turn it was to wash dishes and serve tables. The attacking team had two guards. Frank White and Bernie Garrett were the best team, but Jimmy Monahan and George Flemming were also good. Brother John varied the sides each time, but everybody was on one side or the other.

By winter time, my original dormitory had been cleared and turned into a small gymnasium, where we could play basketball. At 4'11" I avoided getting involved. The usual best athletes, Frank White, Bernie Garrett, Jimmy Monahan formed the varsity, but this included newcomers Denny Murphy and Paddy Long who had played a lot of ball near Kipps Bay near St Agnes in New York City. Denny's older brother, Dick Murphy, was a big star at Manhattan College and later played on the very first New York Knicks team. Sometimes the scholastics from Poughkeepsie would come over to play us in basketball. Once the Redemptorist seminarians came to play us in basketball. Two of them had played varsity for Rhode Island, and it wasn't much of a contest.

The winter of 1942-43 was severe. The hill in front of the mansion was great for sledding. But first we had to tramp down the trail. Up and down. Up and down. The run consisted of level spots followed by steep runs. The really good sledders could make it down the hill, turn down the river road, and make it all the way to the dock. My brother Peter spent several days in sick bay due to a sledding accident, which was ironic because he lost a year of school when he was eleven because of another sledding accident. Ice skating took place on the pond near the icehouse. On another hike led by Brother Joseph Cadroes, we walked to Lake Broglio (now Lake Chokadee on current maps). Somehow we were able to clear snow off much of the lake, and the more athletic started a game of ice hockey. Being unsure of myself on skates, I stayed with the group which skated far away from the game, only pausing occasionally to retrieve a puck which would be sent flying off the boundaries of the rink. Mr. Broglio ran a restaurant (currently called Stonehedge) and legend had it that he operated a speakeasy near the lake named after him. We found a small shed with jugs of alcohol hidden away, but the brothers who specialized in concocting liqueurs were unwilling to experiment with the bootleg variety.

Indoor recreation was mainly in the recreation room, the old dormitory. The main games were checkers and chess. We had innumerable knockout and round robin tournaments, and most of us became adept at chess. Al Hobson became noted for his use of knights, Joseph Burke for rooks, and Frank White for his quick all-around game.

When spring arrived, we were able to play baseball on the field west of the super's house which had now been cleared of saplings. There were two ball fields, called first camp and second camp (derived from the French word for field *champ*). Brother John Patrick would choose two captains the evening

before, and they would pick the first camp teams. The leftovers would then have two captains and pick the next eighteen. At 4'11", I was always relegated to second camp. We were only 37 students: eighteen in first camp, eighteen in second camp, Brother Prefect umpired the first camp, and the leftover student the umpire in second camp. The better athletes always wound up in first camp. Bernie Garrett and Jimmy Monahan were the best shortstops, Paddy Long played second base even though he threw left handed, Al Hobson and Denny Murphy were the best catchers, and Gene Connolly and Frank White were the best pitchers.

Baseballs and bats were scarce. If someone fouled off a ball into the woods, the game stopped and both teams scoured the woods for the ball. Bats were often taped up to hide the splits. The Ted Williams bat was very thin at the handle, and soon was broken beyond repair. The Ducky Medwick bat was thick handled, as was the Johnny Mize. These lasted some time.

Sometimes an outside baseball team would visit on Sundays, and play our best nine. One team from Kingston had a fastball pitcher nicknamed "Spider" who brought his girl friend to watch. My brother was known for striking out often, but also for monumental homeruns. When he got up to bat, second camp stopped to watch, because often the ball would come screaming past us. One day we heard a crack of the bat, but Peter had hit the ball to left field. The ball carried over the super's house and was never found. The super's house was 257 feet from home plate, but raised about twenty feet. Knowing how to play the hill was important, because if a ball hit the hill it was an automatic double. If it hit the house, it was a homer. Gene Connolly remarked that he hated to pitch against Pete Foy: it was either a strikeout or a homer, but he always dreaded the possibility of Pete's hitting a line drive directly at him.

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Employments

We students were expected to maintain the property. Every two weeks Brother John would announce new employments, which were scheduled every morning for an hour after breakfast. The worst were the scullery and the dining room. If you were assigned to the dining room, you had to serve a table before and during dinner, then clean the tables after dinner, and set the table for the next meal. Other employments involved dusting and sweeping the mansion and English Village rooms. Harder tasks were distributing the coal to the furnaces.

Saturday afternoon was a work period for two or three hours. This usually consisted of special major projects. When we arrived, the only clear road was that leading from the Mansion to the English Village. We spent many hours pulling up saplings and hoeing the beautiful rock drains. Gradually we began recapturing the lawns from saplings, until today in 2001 the campus has lawns approximating the status when Payne owned the property.

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Miscellaneous

"After we had sawed and split all of the readily accessible fallen trees on the Esopus 200 acre former Payne-Whitney estate, we were looking around for more timber for our heat in the English Village. Here and there, we spotted a few dead pine trees that were still standing, and these were added to the fuel pile.

"Each day when we returned to the English Village in the afternoon, we left the mansion and walked the 3/10 of a mile on the road in the middle of the estate. One day I noticed there were four stately pines just past the parking area in front of the north side of the mansion. They were all without a needle. Soon I had all my tools and was about to start on the first one.

"Brother Linus William, our brother Master, was in his office on that side of the building and had figured out my intention. He came out and informed me that those four trees were deciduous! I had never heard of a deciduous pine before.

"Next spring I watched as a complete crop of fresh green needles came forth on each of those trees.

"Had his office been elsewhere, or had he been elsewhere at that time, or had they been grown in a elsewhere???" -- from Peter Foy (editor's note: these were probably larch or tamarack trees which once covered the entire Shawungunk and Catskill region and were used for tanning.)

"Before we arrived from Poughkeepsie we were thoroughly indoctrinated about the danger of copperhead snakes and most of us were rather scared. Not Joe Cadroes! He hiked up his cassock and led us through the fields that were nearly as high with grass as we were. Nobody was ever bitten, but we didn't relish the hikes" from Bernie Garrett

"A major problem was copperheads. Since the property was vacant for several years, the copperheads had invaded from their rocky nests on the north end of the property. We were warned not to walk in the tall grass, and also to be careful on the roads. One day, by myself I had to walk from the mansion to the English Village. I started on the main road, and encountered a copperhead in the middle of the road. I backtracked, and tried the road leading west from the mansion. There I came across two copperheads. So I backtracked again. By this time the first copperhead disappeared in the grass, so I ran as fast as I could to the English Village." -- Rich Foy

"Even though the work was hard, we spent many hours on scaffolding, cleaning the ceilings, walls and floors of the mansion and other buildings" "We certainly were no worse the wear for our early encounters" - Bernie Garrett

"There were 2 billiard tables in the mansion when we arrived in the area where the classrooms wound up. We didn't know it but the cushions had hardened which gave no bounce. We couldn't fathom 3 cushion billiards as being possible." -- Peter Foy

"There were many large wet cell batteries in the basement of the mansion. We surmised that they were for DC current for use when the power went out from the local supply. Don't recall ever having any trouble there. Not that we could have rigged them up anyway. They were in a portion of the basement that was about 1/2 high with a dirt floor, sort of a crawl hole" -- Pete Foy

Upstairs in the mansion, we found a pile of navigation charts once used by Payne's yacht, the Aphrodite. They detailed harbors of the Mediterranean,

which he visited every summer from 1898 to 1914. They must have been left behind when Payne loaned the yacht to the government during World War I.

The lone remaining connection to Payne was Mister Osberg, who had worked for Payne as an engineer. He and his family lived in the cottages in the English Village, but moved quickly to the Gatehouse until he could find housing in Kingston. He had two daughters, probably in their early twenties, who taught school in local schools. Being Scandanavian, they were easy on the eyes! .

When Osbergs left the Gatehouse, Mr. And Mrs. Curtin moved in. He was the father of Brother Herman Edwin. Martin Curtin, their grandson, visited them often during the summers. One of their nephews was Laurence Sullivan who studied at Marist Prep and later taught for many years at Marist College in Poughkeepsie NY. Mr. Curtin walked each day to the river at the north end of the property and checked out the water pump house, which supplied water to our property and also to the Wiltwyck School across route 9-W.

At night in the quiet of the dormitory, we could hear the trains moving along the West Shore line. We could also hear the trucks groaning their way up the hill on route 9-W; we called it "pain hill" an obvious pun. Normally they had to downshift several times to make the hill.

Random thoughts from Peter Foy

1. Deer running thru the land. Venison being served. Did not eat that time.
2. Split logs all around the 200 acres after school during the winter, mostly behind the green house. Found the wedges and hammer. Would ruin the handle by overshooting the wedge. Fashioned new handles from saplings. Could not get new handles even if we had money. War was on. Wood was used to heat the English Village, where we and some of the brothers slept, as well as to heat the greenhouse. 4 foot logs were fed into the furnaces.
3. Loved riding the snow plow behind Bro Anthony and the truck clearing the roads on the campus that were then in use.
4. Loading shale into the truck at the riverside to repair the holes in the roads during the summer.
5. Broken axle put stop to all truck activity for a long time. War made it difficult to obtain the parts.
6. Truck was used to unload a freight car of coal. Didn't get to do this and was jealous.
7. Left was the hill up to the Supt house. Fielders might play at the top or bottom, depending on the hitter.
8. Second year we got to climb into the trees for the apples. Apple pickings were due to the able bodied men being at war.
9. Saturday pm we cleaned everything. The mansion was waxed from the refectory to the front door.
10. We changed shoes on entering the mansion and wore soft slippers or socks to save the floors from scuffing. If you had guests you could walk in without changing!

Brother Edward Vollmer (P O Box 95, Bellport, NY 11713) was an "old timer" in 1942, which meant that he has spent a year or two at the Juniorate in

Poughkeepsie before coming to Esopus in August 1942. His recollections below are without recourse to any photos, but they are valuable since they cover the August period while the preceding materials are mostly recollection of "newcomers" who did not arrive until September 1942.

In 1942, when the students of Saint Ann's Hermitage returned from vacation, they returned to a new property in Esopus. This piece of land, bonded on the east by the Hudson River, on the west by route 9-W. The size of the property was more than adequate; the living conditions were not. Work toward this purpose was underway for several months.

The property could be divided into thirds: south, middle, and north. The southern third contained a large Romanesque building called "the mansion". The exterior was covered in sandstone while the interior floors were covered tastefully with marble, rich woods and parquet floors. All of this grandeur was waiting for a cleaning and polishing before our occupation.

The second or middle third contained the entrance on the west from route 9-W. On top of the hill, in almost the center was a greenhouse, graced at each end with a sandstone building. On the lower east side was the river road, running roughly parallel to the Hudson River.

The northern third contained the most used portion of all. On our arrival, the Brothers and laymen were renovating the building for useful occupation. For some two to three months the trainees, or juniors as we were called, worked, played and slept among the working men. If you think of this side of the complex as a large "F" with its backbone facing west and the two appendages extending east, you will get a better idea of the shape of the structure. The southern portion of this "F" was a six foot concrete wall of stone quarried from the property. The north end abutted a two story building, formerly used for storing old fashioned carriages. Connecting this structure, in equal width, to a large room about 30 ft by 23 ft x 15 ft was an archway for a roadway going west. The loft of this arch contained a large clock. The large room we described would eventually be used by the juniors to change shoes every time we entered or left the building. The loft of this building was originally used to store bales of hay.

Next to this room was a newly prepared dining room for the faculty. However, it was never used during my time there (1942-1943). Then we came to the western part of the center appendage. This appendage was some 30 ft wide and 45 to 60 ft long and about 15 to 20 ft high. The lower portion was being used as a temporary dormitory for some 45 boys. The second floor would eventually be cleaned and painted as private rooms for three faculty members and about twelve juniors (four to six to a room).

*References: letter dated 25 November from Brother Edward Vollmer
e-mail November 2004 from Laurence Sullivan*

most recent revision: 7 December 2004

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