

Poughkeepsie Area

Saint Ann's Hermitage, Poughkeepsie, New York

St. Ann's Hermitage, now Marist College, is a hundred acre property which was purchased by the Marist Brothers in 1905 and 1908. It consisted of two properties: the Godwin estate; and the Beck estate; both limited on the west by the Hudson River, and on the east by North Road, Poughkeepsie, The name St. Ann's Hermitage was suggested by Brother Zephiriny (who negotiated the purchase of the properties) to honor his special patroness, St. Ann and his Mother Province, Notre Dame de l'Hermitage.

Immediately after these properties became Marist possessions, several buildings on the properties were renovated for community life and for classrooms. The first community to be established there was the Juniorate in 1906 on the Godwin property. Within four years three other communities were established on the adjacent Beck estate: the novitiate (1908); and the scholasticate (1910); and the faculty of nearby St. Peter's Grammar School.(33.) Lastly, the American Provincial House was established at the Juniorate building in 1911.

This training center also provided the Province with a community cemetery. The first to be interred there was Brother Charles Camille in 1908. Twenty years later the cemetery property in the southern-extremity was walled in beautifully. The last grave, the forty-eighth, was filled in 1953. Since that time deceased brothers have been buried in the Marist cemetery in Esopus, New York.

Saint Ann's Juniorate

St. Ann's Juniorate was the first house of studies opened in the United States to train young boys in the higher grades who wished to study for the Marist brotherhood. From a group of thirteen boys, this Juniorate for the next thirty-six ears (1906-1942) helped to prepare hundreds of boys for the novitiate.(34.) During these years the Juniorate was directed by four successive masters of juniors.(35.)

Because this Juniorate could not provide adequate room for the increasing number of juniors, a second juniorate was opened in Tyngsboro, Massachusetts in 1924.(36.) Eighteen years later the Provincial Council decided to close St. Ann's Juniorate, and the juniors were then transferred to Marist Preparatory, which was opened in the summer of 1942 in Esopus, New York.

Saint Ann's Novitiate

For forty-one years. a three story frame building at St. Ann's Hermitage housed the Marist novitiate which was opened in 1908, with nine postulants and Brother Boniface as master of novices. On July 26th, 1908, the feast of the patroness, St. Ann, these young men were invested as the first group of Marist novices in the United States. Until 1949 four successive masters of novices trained four hundred and eighty-five young men for the religious life at this Novitiate.(37.)

Here as in the other houses on the Hermitage property, there was insufficient room for the growing number of applicants. Money being scarce, a new building was never constructed. Therefore the brothers themselves added a small frame dormitory near the main building in 1941.(38.) After World War II the increasing number of candidates seeking admission to the Institute made a large building imperative. The Provincial superiors then decided to transfer the Novitiate to the Tyngsboro Juniorate during the summer of 1949. The vacated house was then turned into a juniorate which replaced the Tyngsboro Juniorate, and was closed three years later. Presently this old novitiate building is used as a summer residence for brothers working on the constructions under way at Marist College.

St. Ann's Scholasticate

The first American scholasticate was opened at St. Ann's Academy in New York City in 1895. The students were a group of French brothers, who were tutored by members of the Academy faculty. In 1909 a regular scholasticate was inaugurated there by Brother Mary Florentius for the young professed brothers who had finished their novitiate training. This arrangement proved unsatisfactory, and the scholasticate was transferred to the Hermitage property in Poughkeepsie in 1910.

Seventeen years later during Brother Leo's administration (1921-1931) plans to establish a junior college were entrusted to Brother Emile Nestor, Master of Scholastics (1927-1931). With the help of the Jesuit Fathers, a two year college affiliated with Fordham University was organized ;; in 1928. This normal school was known for eighteen years as Marist Training School.(39.)

Ten years later Brother Paul Stratonic, Provincial, (1937-1942) opened negotiations to provide the Province with a four year college. To this end he appointed Brother Paul Ambrose as master of scholastics (1943-195?) and entrusted to his care the success of this venture. The latter won the interest and services of Dr. Roy J. Deferrari, the Secretary General of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C. to guide the work. After specific requirements were met, the Board of Education of the University of the State of New York awarded a provisional charter on September 20, 1946, to what became known for thirteen years as Marian College.(40.) The Provincial became president of this College and Brother Paul Ambrose, the first dean.

As the number of scholastics increased, Brother Paul Ambrose was relieved of the duties of dean in order to more effectively train the young religious and to direct the building program for the College. In 1955 he replaced the Provincial as the College president.(41.) Three years later upon his election as Assistant General for the American and Chinese Provinces, he was replaced as president by Brother Linus Richard.(42.)

Since 1949 several buildings have been constructed on the campus to provide the needs of the scholasticate. The first of these was a gymnasium-utility building. It was erected by the brothers under the direction of Brother Francis Xavier, a member of the College faculty. Three years later Brother Nilus Vincent, another member of the faculty, was given charge of a twenty year building program. The first building to be completed-was a chapel to honor Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom. It was dedicated by His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman in May 1954. Four years later this prelate returned to dedicate a dining room-study hall building, an administration building and a dormitory.(43.) He also dug the first spade full of earth for the construction of a classroom building which will house the Spellman Library. The latter building, now known as Donnelly Hall, is almost ready for occupation (1961). It is circular in form and has a capacity to seat 1500 students and to accommodate 200 in laboratories, a cafeteria and the library.(44.)

These new facilities, constructed by the brothers have allowed for the increase in the number of student-brothers, and for the admission of lay students. Since 1950 many brothers from foreign lands have attended Marist College to obtain American degrees. These included brothers from Canada, Mexico, China, Philippine Islands, Spain, Germany, Cuba and Brazil. The present enrollment consists of 660 students and it is anticipated there will be an increase of 200 next year.(45.)

In March 1961 the Housing and Home Finance Agency of the Federal Government helped the expansion program by awarding a t.;5659000 loan to the College. This loan, the first, will facilitate plans for the construction of a dormitory for 120 students. It is expected that the building will be completed by September 1962.(46.)

The College in recent years has gained a prominent place in the religious, academic and civic life of the mid-Hudson area. It is the only Catholic men's college between New York City and Albany. As a result it has been able to offer such additional services as private retreats, refresher courses, special courses for nurses at St. Francis Hospital nearby, and released time instructions for the students in the local public institutions.

The College is also the scene of-much study on the life of the Blessed Virgin. In temporary quarters, Our Lady's Library begun in 1950 by Brother Cyril Robert, contains 10,800 volumes on Mariology. In the near future a special building will house this valuable collection.(47.)

At the division of the United States Province Marian College was assigned to the Poughkeepsie Province. The new Provincial Council of this Province is pursuing a progressive policy to offer the services of the College to both religious and lay students. Brothers from the two Provinces help to staff and attend this scholasticate. In the spring of 1960 the name Marian was changed to the permanent title of Marist College by the Provincial Council.(48.) This Council also received an additional piece of property near the College from St. Peter's Parish. The future development of the College both academic and physical is quite promising.

St. Ann's Hermitage Provincial House

The Provincial House community was established at the Poughkeepsie Juniorate in March 1911. The community consisted of the provincial administration, a few retired brothers, the faculty, and several brothers assigned to manual work. A director general was appointed to direct the various communities on the Hermitage property, to supervise the development of enterprises such as the dairy farm, gardens, orchards, printing and tailor shops.

The wish of Brother Ptolemy, the first American Provincial, was to build a provincial house separate from the other buildings. Unfortunately, as mentioned in Chapter III, this was not possible, and additions to the juniorate building had to do instead.(49.) In 1950 a building program in Esopus, New York enabled the staff of Marist Preparatory to vacate the "Mansion" which became the Provincial Residence.

When the United States Province was divided in 1959, the Provincial House in Esopus was assigned as the headquarters of the Province of the same name. Poughkeepsie was assigned as the center of the other Province. For almost two years the Provincial administered the Poughkeepsie Province from Marist College. But in 1960 the Provincial Residence was transferred to Nicholas House at Marist Hall, Cold Spring-on-Hudson, New York.

St. Peter's School, Poughkeepsie, New York

In 1908 the Marist Brothers were invited to teach in St. Peter's School in Poughkeepsie by Monsignor Joseph Sheehan, Pastor. Three brothers were assigned to this school in September of that year. They made their residence in a cottage at the Hermitage property.

In 1927 Brother Joannes Marius, Principal, introduced a high school department in this school. Four brothers composed that faculty. Four others taught the higher grades of the Grammar School.(50.) After a very conspicuous beginning the high school was discontinued because of financial difficulties, the result again of the depression of the early thirties. Attempts to obtain support from the Poughkeepsie parishes to provide a Central Catholic High School at St. Peter's proved futile. So in 1936 the brothers withdrew from the parish after twenty-eight years of service.

Marist Preparatory, Esopus, New York

During the administration of Brother Paul Stratonic, Provincial, (1937-1942) plans were abandoned for a single major structure to house the various communities in Poughkeepsie at the request of the major superiors in France. They thought the cost of construction materials would soar during the war years. They preferred the purchase of an estate along the Hudson River where several were available. With the help of His Excellency Bishop Stephen Donohue, Auxiliary Bishop of New York, the Provincial located a very beautiful estate in Esopus, New York.(51.) This new property, which is eleven miles from Poughkeepsie on the western shore of the Hudson River, was then purchased from the Episcopal Diocese of New York in the summer of 1942. What had been originally built as the home of the financier Oliver Hazard Payne became a juniorate named Marist Preparatory.

For the past eighteen years (1942-1960) it has served to train hundreds of young high school boys from the sophomore year to senior year. The senior year was introduced at this preparatory school in 1952. Four successive masters of juniors directed the training of the students.(52.)

Every year both brothers and juniors have labored to renovate the buildings and to beautify the landscape which showed signs of neglect. To provide for more adequate accommodations, new buildings were constructed by the brothers in the early fifties. These included a chapel, a gymnasium, a dormitory, a dining room and a kitchen, a recreation hall, and several other necessary units. In 1952 the Juniorate community moved into these new quarters known as the Villa, thereby leaving the Provincial House community the full use of the Mansion.(53.)

Within five years these new buildings, which were meant to accommodate one hundred and twenty-five juniors proved to be inadequate. To relieve the situation the brothers and juniors renovated what was known as Holy Rosary Cottage during the summer of 1957. In September of that year the senior class took a residence in the three story building which they dubbed "the Seniorate".(54.)

In September 1960 the juniors who belonged to the Poughkeepsie Province since February 1959 were transferred to the respective houses of studies of that Province.(55.) With the consequent reduced numbers at Marist Preparatory, it was possible for The Seniorate to be turned over to the Novitiate for use as a dormitory. Other improvements at the Preparatory include macadamized roads, ball fields, a swimming pool, and other facilities.

Marist Provincial House, Esopus, New York

In August 1952 Brother Paul Ernest, Director General of the Provincial House community in Poughkeepsie, moved his community to the Esopus "Mansion". Brothers involved in maintenance duties, and provincial services (tailors, supply distributor) were assigned to this community.

One year later Brother Paul Ernest selected a site near Marist Preparatory in the northwestern section of the property for a community cemetery. It was landscaped; a set of outdoor stations of the cross were erected in the wooded area around the cemetery, and a bronze crucifixion scene was placed in a prominent spot. The first brother, Brother Joseph Orens, was interred in 1954. Since that time nineteen others have been interred there. (56.)

Marist Brothers Novitiate, Esopus, New York

Six months after the division of the United States Province, a separate novitiate was established at the Provincial House in Esopus for the Province of the same name. Brother Peter Hilary was appointed master of novices for thirty-six young college men who entered in September 1959. Because of the proximity to Marist College in Poughkeepsie, arrangements were made with the Poughkeepsie superiors for these postulants to attend daily courses there during the scholastic year 1959-1960. At this time the postulants are given the college courses at the Novitiate.(57.)

In August 1960 the first group of (twenty-four) postulants was invested with the Marist cassock as novices. An increase of thirty-seven postulants during the scholastic year 1960-1961 made it imperative that a dormitory-recreation hall building be constructed. Until the completion of this new structure the Seniorate cottage on the Marist Preparatory section of the property will serve as a dormitory.(58.)

Holy Trinity School, Poughkeepsie, New York

In September 1957 a magnificent modern school building of stone was erected in Holy Trinity Parish in the Arlington section of Poughkeepsie, by Father Leo J. Gregg, Pastor. To this school four Marist brothers were assigned for the upper grades in 1957. Brother Conan Vincent and his community of three brothers resumed the work of teaching in a Poughkeepsie school - a work that had to be discontinued twenty-one years before.

An average of two hundred students a year has benefited by the education offered by the brothers. Notable results have been achieved by the students in scholarship and in athletics. After graduation the students have the

opportunity to continue their education under the Marists, at Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Poughkeepsie.

Our lady of Lourders High School, Poughkeepsie, New York

For many years after the closing of St. Peter's High School in 1936, serious considerations were given to the establishment of a Catholic High School in Poughkeepsie. A decision was finally reached in 1957 by Cardinal Spellman who purchased the old Poughkeepsie High School building and property.(59.) The Marist brothers and the Dominican Sisters of Newburgh were invited to staff the diocesan school he had in mind in the respective boys' and girls' departments.

The administration of the school was assigned to a former Marist student, Father Matthew Cox (now Monsignor), who became supervising principal. Brother Linus William, Provincial, assigned Brother Florent Augustine as director of the brothers' community, and as acting principal of the boys' departments. The original community of four brothers is being augmented annually so that in 1963 a faculty of twenty-one brothers will supply the needs of that department. A temporary community residence for the brothers was established on South Hamilton Street near the school. At present a modern three story building has just been completed. Today there are thirteen brothers of the Poughkeepsie Province teaching 368 boys.

On May 1, 1960, His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman dedicated the renovated buildings. It is expected that the work of the construction of the gymnasium will be completed in 1962.(60.)

St. Peters School, Haverstraw, New York

The Marist brothers in 1931 opened a community in Haverstraw, New York, a small town in the lower Catskill Mountains. Brother Joseph Albert, Director, and three brothers were assigned to the higher Grades in St. Peter's Grammar School in that city.(61.) Father Maher, the Pastor, who had invited the brothers to teach there, envisioned a high school staffed by Marist Brothers in the near future. Unfortunately Father Maher died before he could carry out his plan, and his successors have found it financially impossible to build this high school. Four brothers are still assigned to St. Peter's.(62.)

For the past nineteen years, the brothers have contributed to parish life by their promotion of various activities. Since 1946 the brothers have been employed by the parish as counselors for a Haverstraw summer day camp. (63.)

Marist Hall, Cold Spring-On-Hudson, New York

After the officials of the Poughkeepsie Province surveyed fifty estates for the location of a provincial juniorate, they selected for this purpose the vacated Cold Spring Institute, twenty-miles from Poughkeepsie,, New York. It was purchased from the Walt Foundation in the spring of 1960.(64.)

During the summer of that year Brother Leo Vincent was assigned as the first master of juniors of what became known as Marist Hall. He was placed in charge of the renovation of the several buildings to accommodate sixty juniors. The latter moved into these new quarters in September 1960 to pursue their high school studies.

The Marist Hall property is a 160 acre estate whose buildings are styled in French provincial architecture. The Provincial House, a few yards distant from the main section, is now known as Nicholas House.(65.) In the near future a classroom-gymnasium building will be erected to complete the facilities for this new house of studies for the Poughkeepsie Province.

Camp Sunset, Plattekill, New York

In 1950 Monsignor Aloysius Dineen, Pastor of Holy Innocents Parish in New York City donated Camp Sunset in the hills of the lower Catskill Mountains of New York to the United States Province.(66.)

This three hundred acre camp, which had been neglected for three years, has been redeveloped since it became Marist property. The camp consists of three residences, a sturdy frame chapel building, a dining room-recreation hall building, and many small bungalows. It has been used for a rest camp for the brothers and students studying at the nearby houses of studies in Esopus and Poughkeepsie. Camp Sunset is now part of the Poughkeepsie Province.

Religious Vacation School

St. Joan of Arc Parish, West Hurley, New York

In 1958 Brother Linus William, Provincial of the United States Province, answered a request for brothers from Father Jeremiah N. emacek of St. Joan of Arc Parish in West Hurley, New York. These brothers were to conduct summer catechism classes for the children in Woodstock, West Hurley and West Shokan in the lower Catskill Mountains.(67.) Three brothers are therefore assigned every summer to the Esopus Provincial House from where they travel daily to teach the boys' section. Three Sister of Charity of Christian Instruction do likewise for the girls there. The sixty to eighty boys ranging from the third and ninth grade levels have little opportunity during the school year to learn the doctrines of their faith. This Marist apostolate, conducted on the church grounds of St. Joan's, is thus a substitute for a Catholic education.

The program conducted by the two religious communities offers one hour classes, organized recreational activities, a short instruction and a Missa Recitata, which concludes the morning session. According to an article appearing in the Bulletin of Studies:

Father Nemesek believes that the school has done much good for the parish. Not only have the children received religious instruction but they have also, in many cases, transmitted what they have learned to their parents. As a result some parents have been brought back to the practice of the Faith while many others have taken greater interest in their religion. To accommodate this latter group the pastor has had to inaugurate a catechetical class for the adults who desire to learn more about their Faith.(68.)