

**New England Jesuit
Oral History Program**



**Rev. Herbert J. Cleary, S.J.
Volume 83**

© Society of Jesus of New England
2009 All Rights Reserved

Editor: Richard W. Rousseau, S.J.
Associate Editor: Paul C. Kenney, S.J.

Assistant Editor: Joseph V. Owens, S.J.

ISBN 1-60067-077-6

April 2009

Oral History Program
Campion Center
319 Concord Road
Weston, MA 02493-1398
781-788-6800
info@jesuitoralhistory.org
www.jesuitoralhistory.org

AMDG

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HISTORY

Oral histories are the taped recordings of interviews with interesting and often important persons. They are not folklore, gossip, hearsay, or rumor. They are the voice of the person interviewed. These oral records are, in many instances, transcribed into printed documentary form. Though only so much can be done, of course, in an hour or some times two, they are an important historical record whose value increases with the inevitable march of time.

For whatever reason, New England Jesuits, among others around the world, have not made any significant number of oral histories of their members. Given the range of their achievements and their impact on the Church and society, this seems to many to be an important opportunity missed. They have all worked as best they could for the greater glory of God. Some have done extraordinary things. Some have done important things. All have made valuable contributions to spirituality, education, art, science, discovery, and many other fields. But living memories quickly fade. Valuable and inspiring stories slip away.

This need not be. Their stories can be retold, their achievements can be remembered, their adventures saved. Their inspiration can provide future generations with attractive models. That is what Jesuit oral history is all about.

Publications

1. Fr. George W. Nolan
2. Fr. John F. Broderick
3. Fr. Joseph S. Scannell
4. Fr. Joseph G. Fennell
5. Fr. James F. Morgan
6. Fr. John V. Borgo
7. Bro. William J. Spokesfield
8. Fr. Lawrence E. Corcoran
9. Fr. John J. Caskin
10. Fr. William F. Carr
11. Fr. Alwyn C. Harry
12. Fr. John F. Foley
13. Fr. Leo F. Quinlan
14. Fr. Patrick A. Sullivan
15. Fr. John J. McGrath
16. Fr. Victor F. Leeber
17. Fr. Charles G. Crowley
18. Fr. Wilfrid J. Vigeant
19. Fr. James T. Sheehan
20. Fr. Francis X. Sarjeant
21. Bro. Italo A. Parnoff
22. Fr. Dudley R.C. Adams
23. Fr. Martin P. MacDonnell
24. Fr. Robert E. Lindsay
25. Fr. Ernest F. Passero
26. Fr. Walter M. Abbott
27. Fr. James P. McCaffrey
28. Fr. Aram J. Berard
29. Fr. Joseph F. Brennan
30. Fr. James W. Skehan
31. Fr. Joseph P. O'Neill
32. Bro. Calvin A. Clarke
33. Fr. Edward J. Murawski
34. Fr. Paul T. McCarty
35. Fr. Anthony R. Picariello
36. Fr. Joseph H. Casey
37. Fr. Joseph E. Mullen
38. Fr. Joseph A. Paquet
39. Fr. William G. Devine
40. Fr. Philip K. Harrigan
41. Fr. John J. Mullen
42. Fr. James B. Malley
43. Fr. John F. Devane
44. Bro. H. Francis Cluff
45. Fr. William J. Raftery
46. Fr. John J. Mandile
47. Fr. John W. Keegan
48. Fr. William A. Barry
49. Fr. Robert G. Doherty
50. Bro. Edward L. Niziolek
51. Fr. Albert A. Cardoni
52. Fr. David G. Boulton
53. Fr. Alfred O. Winshman
54. Fr. Paul J. Nelligan
55. Fr. Edward F. Boyle
56. Fr. John F. Mullin
57. Fr. John J. Donohue
58. Fr. Richard W. Rousseau
59. Fr. Francis J. Nicholson
60. Fr. Arthus H. Paré
61. Fr. Richard T. Cleary
62. Fr. Gerard L. McLaughlin
63. Fr. Francis J. O'Neill
64. Fr. Neil P. Decker
65. Fr. Joseph R. Laughlin
66. Fr. John J. Karwin
67. Fr. Paul T. Lucey
68. Bro. Edward P. Babinski
69. Bro. Vincent M. Brennan
70. Fr. James J. Dressman
71. Fr. Lawrence J. O'Toole
72. Fr. William J. Cullen
73. Fr. Thomas Vallamattam
74. Fr. Edward J. Hanrahan
75. Fr. Donald L. Larkin
76. Fr. Paul A. Schweitzer
77. Archbp. Lawrence A. Burke
78. Fr. William C. McInnes
79. Fr. John B. Handrahan
80. Fr. Stanley J. Bezuska
81. Fr. Henry "Harry" J. Cain
82. Fr. William D. Ibach
83. Fr. Herbert J. Cleary
84. Fr. Martin F. McCarthy
85. Fr. Francis A. Sullivan
86. Fr. Robert J. Daly
87. Bro. Cornelius C. Murphy
88. Fr. Robert D. Farrell
89. Fr. James F. Bresnahan
90. Fr. Raymond G. Helmick
91. Fr. William J. Hamilton
92. Fr. John J. Paris
93. Fr. Donald J. Plocke
94. Fr. Joseph F. X. Flanagan
95. Fr. James J. Hosie
96. Fr. Robert R. Dorin
97. Fr. Michael A. Fahey
98. Fr. James W. O'Neil
99. Fr. George A. Gallarelli
100. Fr. Francis R. Allen
101. Fr. Walter R. Pelletier
102. Bro. Paul J. Geysen
103. Fr. Joseph T. Bennett

Interview with Fr. Herbert J. Cleary, S.J.
By Fr. Richard W. Rousseau, S.J.
October 9, 2008

EARLY YEARS

RICHARD ROUSSEAU: Welcome to our conversation. We're going to proceed chronologically. So let's begin at the very beginning. When and where were you born?

HERBERT CLEARY: I was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, February 18, 1931.

RR: When did your parents settle in Melrose?

HC: I think they moved there after they married in September 1929. It was right before the stock market crashed. I understand that they lived in an apartment in Melrose until about three weeks after I was born in 1931. They then they rented an apartment in Winchester.

PARENTS

RR: Could you tell us something about your father and mother? Let's begin with your father.

HC: His full name was Herbert John Cleary. I'm a junior, and my full name is Herbert John Cleary, Jr. While we were growing up during the Depression, he was

lucky to have a job. He was collecting insurance for Prudential in the Reading-Woburn area.

I remember him as being a kind, loving father, who would do anything for my brother and myself. My brother Richard is also a Jesuit and was Provincial of the New England Province some years ago. He and I, from the very beginning of our lives, were aware of our parents' love.

RR: I understand your father was always interested in sports?

HC: Yes. He didn't play much athletics himself, but he always had us outdoors playing baseball. And, as far as other sports were concerned, we just played with the neighborhood kids. He also liked fishing, so we also fished at various ponds, rivers, and lakes.

RR: Did he later move on to work in another company?

HC: Yes. He left Prudential and shifted around in various jobs. He did his own thing, working on his own. For example, he invented a coat hanger that could be hung on the back of a door, but it didn't bring in much money. And, if I remember right, for a while he also sold insulation on his own during World War II. A friend of the family was a boss at Gillette and got him a job in Gillette right after the war. He worked there for about twenty-five years. He was always able to provide for us. Then, in 1967, he retired

HIS MOTHER

RR: Tell us more about your mother.

HC: Her name was Theresa Irene Moore. During World War II, my mother went to work at Raytheon. And it turned out that she continued to work there for some twenty years. She was one of eight children, four of whom died in childhood. She was the youngest by ten years. I don't know much about her early life except that her father was not a very nice man. He was an

alcoholic and was hard on the boys as well as on my grandmother. So eventually, my oldest cousin Tom moved her out to Franklin Square House to live as a single woman. He wanted to get her away from her father.

She was a very simple lady. She never finished high school, but through the years she gave us her love. So I loved her as well. She died prematurely in 1968, just at the time of my ordination and first Mass.

RR: Oh, I'm sorry.

HC: Because of her sickness, I was ordained early, on May 25, 1968. She died on June 16, the day after my first Mass. But I had been able to say Mass at home during the week before my first Mass.

RR: What about your father?

HC: He died in 1984 at the age of 82.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND TOWN

RR: Would you like to say something about your brother and your stepfamily?

HC: I certainly would. My brother has been the support of my life. He has always been there for me in good times and especially in bad times, of which I have had many. I love him dearly as my brother and as my best friend.

My step family has been wonderful to me. After my mother died in 1968, my dad was very lonely, so it was no surprise when he remarried in late 1969. His new wife had lost her husband. It was a perfect match. Ann Gillen had a large family, so my father inherited many grandchildren. This was great for him, as we (Dick and I) obviously didn't give him any. Dad loved children. Ann's children and grandchildren have been my best friends through the years. I love them all dearly.

I would also like to say a word about my other friends through the years. They are from my Navy

years, my high school teaching days, my hospital and nursing home work, and my time spent at the Institute of Living in Hartford, Connecticut. They were and are wonderful companions in my path though life. I love each one of them so very, very much.

RR: Could you tell us a bit more about the town and people of Winchester?

HC: Winchester was a nice town. The neighborhood as well as the neighborhood kids were all nice. My mother had a round of rheumatic fever for about a year in 1940. Mrs Donaghy, our neighbor, who lived to be 95 or so, was the kind of person you don't see much of anymore. She used to come in and clean the house, cook meals, and bake pies and cakes for us. She did just about everything for us when my mother fell sick. Her son, Kenny, my brother, and myself were best friends growing up. We stayed in touch with Kenny, even when he moved to Florida. So the neighborhood was nice.

The town itself was very Yankee-oriented. St. Mary's School was fine, but high school was another matter. The town was split between the old-money people and the ethnic people in town. There were a lot of Italians and Irish, as well as a few Greeks. So there were splits in high school. And when I went to my school's 50th reunion, I could still see the splits.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL

RR: How about your grammar school?

HC: Grammar school was fine. One of my first memories during the first grade was a girl named Rita Halligan, who lived next door to me. Later she was in the third grade with me. I believe that she is still alive. She took me by the hand up the stairs of St. Mary's School for the first time. Since we started school when we were five years old, we graduated from high school younger.

We had the Sisters of St. Joseph. They ran a wonderful grammar school. I have only good memories of them.

RR: I assume that they're long gone,?

HC: That's right. They're all gone. My second-grade teacher died about eight or nine years ago. My fourth grade teacher, Sister Wilfrieda, was still alive when I was working at Bethany, their retirement home in Framingham. She's now dead, I'm sure.

HIGH SCHOOL

RR: Where did you go after grammar school?

HC: I went to Winchester High School. It was about three-quarters of a mile from my home. We didn't have school buses in those days. Winchester High had that split I mentioned earlier. As a matter of fact, I didn't do much studying in high school. So naturally my grades weren't that great. I never could have gone to college at that time with those grades. I took some commercial courses, like two years of typing. This stood me in good stead when, later on, I was in the Navy. Now, of course, I use a computer keyboard. My only sport was cross-country running.

I remember some wonderful teachers there at Winchester. This was despite the fact that it had an anti-Catholic direction. I would say that only three teachers at the high school were Catholic. The rest were from Yankee-English stock. However, they were good teachers. That's just how the town was in those days.

RR: Did your family move out of Winchester at some point?

HC: No. We stayed in Winchester. However, we did get evicted from the house that we had lived in since 1931. I was in high school at the time. We then moved to another apartment. It wasn't a very nice place, but the rent then was only \$16 a month. Then around 1953, when I was in the Navy, they moved to another rented apartment, which was much better.

ON TO BENTLEY AND THE NAVY

RR: Did you go to college after high school?

HC: No, I went to Bentley School of Accounting and Finance, where I continued to get mediocre grades. I wasn't what you could call a motivated student then. I managed to graduate, and Harry Bentley himself, who was still alive, spoke at our graduation. The school was on Boylston Street up by Gloucester Street.

RR: So then you were interested in a business future?

HC: Yes, I wanted to do accounting, which is why I went to Bentley. I believe that it is now called Bentley College. I then got a job with Stuart, Watts and Bollong on State Street in Boston. I became a junior accountant doing inventories. They had a lot of cotton and woolen mills as clients. We had to count the cotton and woolen bales physically, and I remember climbing over the bales to do that. Then the Korean War came along, and, since I was 1-A in the draft, I enlisted in the Navy.

RR: As I understand it, the Navy became an important part of your life?

HC: Yes, it was a very, very important part of my life.

RR: Could you give us some details about your time in the Navy?

HC: I remember leaving on May 14, 1951 from the Custom House in Boston. I was with probably twenty-five or thirty others from Boston. We were driven to the boot camp in Newport, Rhode Island.

My first memory there is a rather funny one. As we got off the bus we were met by a grizzled old chief. So I said to him, "Can you tell me where the men's room is?" And he said, "Men's room? Men's room? Here in the Navy we call it the 'head!' You had better not forget that!" [Laughter] That was my introduction to the Navy. And, as a matter of fact, I never did forget that!.

From there, I went to boot camp, and it was fine. The people were not only from the Boston area, they were from all over New England. There were also a few from the New York-New Jersey area. There were even some from upstate New York, especially Elmira and Buffalo. I became a squad leader there. It mainly meant that I was in the first row of our marching.

SEEING THE WORLD

RR: How long did your boot camp last?

HC: About ten weeks. After graduation and before our two-week leave, we received our assignments. Mine was to a destroyer, the USS Waldron.

RR: What did you do on the ship?

HC: Well, I was first assigned to the first division. This meant swabbing the deck, chipping paint, and painting the sides of the ship. Then, when we got to sea, I found it to be a wonderful cruise to Northern Europe and the Mediterranean. It was my first experience away from home for any length of time. And it was my first time in Europe.

We went up by Newfoundland and then down to England and Ireland. We were about three weeks in Derry, Northern Ireland. From there we went to Plymouth and Southampton in England. We found ourselves right in front of the *Queen Elizabeth I*. Since we were on a small ship, we were able to go down the Seine River in France. I remember people coming out of their houses and waving at us from the bank. It was all very interesting for a young kid like me. We went down as far as we could to Rouen, where we stayed about a week. We also visited Germany at Bremerhaven and Hamburg.

LIFE IN THE NAVY

RR: What was the war status at that time?

HC: The Korean War was on. We then went down through the Mediterranean and visited Naples, Venice, and Trieste. At that point, we went back to the States. Of course, everything about the ship was new to me. I didn't take as much advantage of things as I probably should have. I was then only an E-2, or seaman apprentice.

RR: What did you do then?

HC: When I got back to the US my training in accounting was seen as useful, so the Navy moved me to the supply division. Over the course of that year I advanced to DK seaman and dispersing clerk. I then made third class, then second class. In ASA we had to type a certain number of words per minute with only a certain number of errors. I remember when I was going for DK-2 at sea, while the ship was going up and down and side to side. I was in the ship's supply office, trying to successfully pass what was needed to become second class. This also involved a written test.

My years in the Navy were really enjoyable. I have a Navy autobiography that I wrote for very limited distribution to people on the ship. They are the ones that I meet at reunions. It was published in a newsletter. I had so many wonderful experiences in the Navy. I made some wonderful friends, with whom I have stayed in contact over the years, though some have died. I really enjoyed it, so much so that I nearly stayed in the Navy.

RR: How many years were you in the Navy?

HC: I was in the Navy four years. I loved being at sea and never got seasick. Those experiences at sea were wonderful. At night, of course, you can see zillions and zillions of stars, because it's so dark on the sea. I really remember that. My general quarters station was on a director for a 40-millimeter gun. We used to just fire at sleeves [targets pulled behind airplanes]. We did get

over to Korea, where we fired at sleeves and sent up drones controlled by radio.

Merle Sloyer was the telephone talker. He was a kid from Connecticut, and I spent many hours up there with him. It was just the two of us at the director to aim the 40-millimeter gun right behind us. So we had some wonderful conversations. He died a couple of years ago. He was from another division, so I didn't know him that well. But I did go out on liberty with him, and we had some wonderful conversations.

There were some interesting things that happened when I was on the deck force during our Northern European cruise. My job was cleaning the in-board passageway. It was there so we didn't have to go outside. The officers used to go down through that midship passageway. This one day, the bosun's mate said to me, "The Captain wants to see you." So I said, "Oh, my God, what did I do?" So I went up to see Captain James C. Shaw, who was a wonderful captain. He was from New Hampshire. He just said something that the Jesuits don't do that much of: "Shipmate, that passageway is the cleanest that I've ever seen, and I want to congratulate you on it. Keep up the good work." And that meant a lot to me. That's one of my strongest Navy memories. I kept in touch with his widow for years. She died about three or four years ago.

BACK TO SCHOOL

RR: What did you do when you finished that trip?

HC: When that was over, I went back to school, and it was there that I first realized that I could really succeed academically. I don't know just what my motivation was, but I went to DK school and won the class honors. I was even on the stage at graduation. So I said to myself, "I can do it if I really want to."

RR: So then you decided to leave the Navy.

HC: I was really torn about leaving the Navy. I had trouble deciding whether to stay or leave. In four or five years, I would have probably made chief petty officer. At the time, my brother was in the seminary. So when I was home on leave, I visited him up at the old Shadowbrook. That started me thinking about things. I grew up in a religious family led by my father and mother. So my thoughts were torn, going back and forth. My grades had been so lousy in high school that I didn't know whether I would be able to get into college.

Eventually, however, I decided to try the priesthood. Since I didn't have any Latin, I went to St. Philip Neri School in 1955-1956. I had left the Navy in May 6, 1955 and that summer I worked at tarring state highways. I was now highly motivated, as I hadn't been in high school, and got excellent grades at Philip Neri. Frank Ennis, a Jesuit, was my French teacher. Fr John Chapman also taught me. He was a real character; I was really impressed by him. Fr. Ed Murray was the head and old Tim McCarthy was the spiritual father there. We were visited every week by recruiters from various religious orders. In those days, vocations were plentiful.

INTO THE SOCIETY

RR: That's right.

HC: I applied first for the Archdiocese of Boston. Then, about two weeks later, I decided, "Well, I might as well try the Jesuits, too." So I did apply to the Jesuits, and, surprise of all surprises, I was accepted because of my grades at Philip Neri and despite my high school grades.

I entered the Society at Bellarmine College in Plattsburgh, New York, because it was the summer after the Shadowbrook fire on March 10, 1956. My

final vows were at 411 Beacon Street in 1979.

RR: I was wondering if you were affected in some way by the fire.

HC: It meant that incoming New England novices had to go elsewhere. I was assigned to Plattsburgh for my novitiate. The others went either to St. Andrew-on-Hudson in Poughkeepsie, New York, or Wernersville, Pennsylvania.

I really enjoyed my two years at Plattsburgh. Novitiate customs there were different; for example, we didn't have to address each other as Brother. This seemed astounding to many in those days. Also we had a room to ourselves, because we were in an old hotel. Bellarmine College was right on Lake Champlain. We were with New Yorkers, who are somewhat different from New Englanders. [Laughter] And most of my good friends there were New York Jesuits. Over the years, I have stayed in touch with them. However, a lot of them left the Society. In any case, I really enjoyed my two novitiate years at Plattsburgh as well as my novice master, Fr. Andy Brady.

TO SHADOWBROOK, STUDIES AND FRIENDS

RR: Where did you go from there?

HC: After I took my vows there August 15, I began juniorate. Then on November 20, 1958, three months into my juniorate, we all moved to the new Shadowbrook. That was a very sad day for the guys there, because we loved Plattsburgh so much. When we arrived, we discovered that construction was not yet fully finished. Tiles were falling from the ceiling. It was the end of November and the grounds were muddy. Grass had not yet been planted. We were simply brought back too soon. But I guess they wanted to get us away from those evil New Yorkers. [Laughter]

I finished my juniorate there. It was a kind of cultural shock when we were told to start calling each other Mister. I remember Fr. Larry Langguth, the rector at the time, coming in our classroom and announcing the change. Those of us who had been at Plattsburgh were very upset. However, we adjusted to it and used Mister as well as first names.

RR: At this point we have come to the Jesuit course of studies. It is huge and something that we are all familiar with. So I'd like to ask you to give us an overview of the course rather than lots of details.

HC: Generally speaking, I had to study hard, because I wasn't the brightest light on the planet compared to those from BC High. I did well enough in my studies, but it was a struggle. I was put into the short [more basic] course after the *de universa* philosophy exam.

With Bill Finneran I wasn't able to really make contact him for some fifteen minutes, because he mumbled his questions—and it was all in Latin. So I had a difficult time during those fifteen minutes, as I wasn't always sure what he was saying. But I wasn't really bothered by it.

I also made many wonderful friends throughout the course. I'm still in contact with Fr. Dave Travers, S.J., who was a Navy chaplain for twenty years and is now out in Hawaii. I talk to him on the phone once in a while.

I have also kept up contact with some who left. Francis Walsh, a regent with me up at Cheverus, is now a diocesan priest and was a Navy chaplain over in Japan. And there were a number of others.

REGENCY

RR: How about your regency?

HC: When the annual list of assignments came out on July 31, I found myself assigned to teach at Cheverus along

with Dick Lynds and Ed Boyle.

RR: How did you like Cheverus?

HC: I really enjoyed teaching during regency. I especially enjoyed the kids in Portland, even though they were more rough-and-ready than the kids in Boston. There were seven seniors in a non-college, general course. The administration was phasing it out during my regency. As often happened in those days, I was told to teach that course two weeks before I was to start teaching it. I was to teach business law and, fortunately, I had studied some of it at Bentley. However, they had no textbook to give me. So I got books from the library and got the classes up day by day.

They were wonderful kids, who wanted to become firemen and policemen in Portland. One of them, though, went in the Army and retired as a colonel. Those seven kids in that general course were just wonderful, wonderful kids. We used to call them the seven blocks of granite, because you'd go in there every day and "chip away." It was my most enjoyable class in regency.

EARLY ORDINATION

RR: Then theology, of course. Your ordination must have been a very great experience for you and your family?

HC: Yes, I was due to be ordained on June 8, 1968, but we found out in February that my mother was terminally ill with cancer. She was given four to six months to live. Still, she worked on the invitations. She worked until she couldn't do it anymore. It soon became clear that I needed to be ordained early, if she was going to take part.

I was the first one to take the oral exam. We got a bachelor of divinity at that time, a BD. Everybody was very nice to me, especially Fr. Phil Donnelly. He was setting me up with these easy questions to answer and

guiding me along the whole way. It was the week before I was to be ordained. He kept saying, "Oh, excellent! Excellent!" He got up and he shook my hand after the questioning. He was just a great guy. I really appreciated that, because I had a tough time with some of the other professors.

I was ordained by Archbishop McEleney in my parish on May 25, 1968. Everyone in my ordination class was there. We also had a choir arranged by Dick Lynds. He got some BC High kids to help. My mother wasn't doing well. She had cancer of the liver and pancreas and was all jaundiced. But she got to the ordination. We then had a reception at the house afterwards. When she got home, despite her illness she still went downstairs to meet her guests. It was really wonderful. Then I said Masses in our home for about a week, which was wonderful, wonderful.

She died on June 16, 1968. My first Mass was scheduled when she was in a coma. So when I got back, I whispered in her ear, "The first Mass is all over and it went well." The next day she died. She was just about to retire from Raytheon with a pension. My father was a basket case from her death.

BACK TO THE NAVY AS A CHAPLAIN

RR: All right. After returning to Cheverus, you went back in the Navy?

HC: Yes, I was at Cheverus in 1968 and 1969, right after ordination. I would later return there off and on. During 1968-1969 I decided I'd like to join the Navy as a chaplain. However, it didn't turn out to be what I really expected. I'm not sure just what happened.

The head chaplain at Norfolk Naval Station, where I was assigned, was a Protestant chaplain, and he was a different kind of person. He would send me out to inspect piers, among other things, or to test the clean-

liness of the buildings and so on. I felt that had nothing to do with chaplaincy. I was very frustrated and told him so. After about eight months of this, I resigned from the Navy. Maybe it was a mistake, I don't know. Maybe I should have given it more time, but I was really frustrated at the time. He seemed to be somewhat anti-Catholic. I know it's tough to say that, but that's what it seemed like to me.

WORKING IN THE PORTLAND DIOCESE

RR: When you left the Navy then, did you go back to Cheverus?

HC: Yes, I went back to Cheverus to teach, and in a short time I was sent to get a master's in counseling at the University of Maine in Portland/Gorham. It's now the University of Southern Maine. I attended classes on the Gorham campus and eventually got my degree. However, I still wasn't sure just what I wanted to do in the Society.

Though I had enjoyed my years there in Portland in 1971-1974, I decided to seek incardination in the Portland Diocese. I left Cheverus and went to Presque Isle, where I was for two years. I had a wonderful pastor there and enjoyed the two years, but I hated the winters there. We had 215 inches of snow and 40-below zero in the mornings.

RR: How did the incardination process work?

HC: You have to be approved by the bishop of the diocese. But I shouldn't have used the word "incardination," because I was just testing it out. Eventually I could have applied for incardination into the Portland Diocese. After two years up there, I was assigned to St. Mary's in Westbrook, Maine, which is just next to Portland. There, again, I was very much involved with going to see the Cheverus basketball games.

RETURN TO THE SOCIETY

RR: Cheverus was nearby?

HC: It was in the next town over, just a few miles away. After three years, I went to talk to the bishop, and he agreed with me that I was still basically a Jesuit. So I came back to the Society, without any incardination. At the time, my brother was the New England provincial.

CANTERBURY SCHOOL

RR: Where did you go next?

HC: There was an opening in the Canterbury School. It is a boarding school in New Milford, Connecticut. It's about two-thirds boarding and one-third day. I went there for an interview and was accepted. Everyone was saying to me, "You have a brother as the provincial. That's why you got that cushy job." [Laughter] But it wasn't really a cushy job. It was a place where you worked from morning to night. Though I lived in one of the dorms, I didn't have to do any prefecting, because I was the head of the theology department. I taught theology to seniors as well as to freshmen and sophomores.

I also did some coaching of the girls in cross-country running and track, which was new to me. It was really wonderful. But it wasn't like coaching boys. Boys can usually play with an injury, but not girls. I would get letters from their mothers saying, "She can't participate in sports any longer."

In my first year coaching there, the cross-country girls lost every meet but one. [Laughter] We beat the Suffield Academy girls in the last meet. I can still remember the girls jumping up and down and shouting, "We won! We won! We won!" I had a good time with them. They were really lovely people. So I enjoyed my three years there.

TO ST MARY-OF-THE-WOODS COLLEGE

RR: Then you went to St. Mary's?

HC: I then went for a year to a woman's school called St. Mary-of-the-Woods College near Terre Haute, Indiana. But I don't think I was qualified to be teaching the humanities and philosophy program that I was given. I was preparing classes just before I went in the classroom. But once again, I made many friends there. Every summer I go out to Indiana to visit those friends.

However, I was just going from place to place in an unsettled period in my life. I had no permanent home. It was then that I decided to ask the province for something permanent at home. The provincial assigned me to the Mass. General Hospital. The Marist Fathers were established there at the time. I joined another Jesuit, Ray Swords. We worked day and night as chaplains. However, that schedule was not as taxing as it sounds. We staggered schedules so we had frequent nights and days off.

RR: As I remember my month there years ago, it is a huge hospital.

HC: Yes it is. Ray Swords was wonderful to work with. I really admired him. One night he took me out to dinner and said, "The happiest years of my life have been at the Mass. General Hospital." He had been a college president at Holy Cross and had other prestigious responsibilities in the Society, but he was quite happy at Mass. General. While I was there, he was appointed to the presidency at Cheverus, where, unfortunately, he died in about eight months.

RR: Yes, I remember that. People said that it might have been too much for him at that stage of his life.

HC: Right, I really admired him. He was a wonderful chaplain, very dedicated to the patients. But I was still trying to find a permanent position for myself. I was living at 418 Beacon Street at the time, and went to

Bethany Hospital in Framingham, as they called it in those days, for an interview. They now call it Bethany Health Care Center. It's run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston.

I was accepted there, and, except for one sabbatical year, I spent nine years there as a chaplain. It became a kind of permanent place for me, and I felt that I had found my niche at last. I've worked in hospitals and nursing homes ever since I was there in 1981, and I'm still doing hospital and nursing home work.

SABBATICAL IN AUSTRALIA

RR: You went on a sabbatical to Australia, right?

HC: Yes, Bob Manning, recently buried here at Campion, was Provincial in 1987 when I was living at Bethany. On his regular visit, he said, "I want you to take a sabbatical while I'm still in office." I should add that there were a lot of sabbaticals given out by Bob Manning while he was in office. [Laughter] In any case, he passed me on to Joe McCormick, who said, "Go some place where it's warm"

I realized I had never been to Australia, even though I had traveled all around the world when I was in the Navy. That's where I decided to go. It was like a six-month vacation, although I did make my third thirty-day retreat in Melbourne. I did it with Fr. Frank Wallace, who had been tertian master over there for years and years. He was a wonderful man.

I went traveling all over the place in Australia. I went on bus tours to the Great Barrier Reef, Ayers Rock, Alice Springs, and through the Outback. I also traveled though the various cities. I spent most of my time in Sydney, but I got to Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth, and made day tours around those places.

On the tour to the Great Barrier Reef, we had a nightly group, who called ourselves “The Dirty Eight.” There was myself, the bus driver, a couple from Victoria, British Columbia, a cattle auctioneer from Minnesota and his wife, a guy from New Zealand who we called Kiwi, and another couple, one of whom was an indigenous Maori from the North Island of New Zealand. That group was great fun. We bought lottery scratch tickets on the way and we’d scratch them off at drinks in the bar at night. I’m still in touch with most of them and still send them Christmas cards.

I remember that I kept calling Joe McCormick, asking for permission for these things. And he said, “Do whatever you want to do.” I took that as a *carte blanche*, and spent a month in New Zealand. I was on a bus tour there and I was able to have a four-day visit with a friend I had met on one of the Australian tours. I found New Zealand a very beautiful country.

RR: So where did you go from there?

HC: On my way back, I went to Hawkstone Hall in the West Midlands of England. A number of Jesuits had gone there before. There were mainly nuns, with a few priests and brothers. I stayed there for about nine weeks, from May to the end of July for a renewal program.

A PERSONAL SEARCH

RR: You must have had quite a time to settle down when you came back from all that.

HC: Yes, I did. I went back to Bethany, and after a year there I decided that was long enough. After a short misadventure in Indiana, where I had a difficult time psychologically, I went to the Institute of Living for about four weeks, because I was very depressed when I was out there.

My counselor was absolutely wonderful, and there was a priest there who also was absolutely wonderful. There were also a couple of young women, too, and we supported each other. I'm still in touch with those people. One was a nun at the time and is now married. The other one has finally settled down and adopted two Lithuanian children. Being there was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life.

Unfortunately, though I really enjoyed my time there, when you have been at such an institution, it is then very difficult to get back on your feet again. I was honest about myself. But when you tell someone that kind of thing as you apply for a job, they refuse to hire you. Eventually, however, I realized it is wiser to omit such parts.

RR: But you finally broke through, right?

HC: Yes, I put an ad in the *National Catholic Reporter*, but I was frustrated when I got only a few job offers from Lubbock, Texas, and Regina, Saskatchewan. Finally, the province got in touch with me and sent me to Charleston, South Carolina, to help the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy. I went there, but there really wasn't much to do there as chaplain with fifteen mainly elderly nuns in their mother house. I'd say Mass on Sunday at a local, somewhat derelict parish church. It used to be a white neighborhood but it was now black. Also I worked a few days a week at the local Catholic hospital as a chaplain. It was all rather disappointing.

BREAKING THROUGH

RR: But later you were able to settle down somewhere for several years. Am I correct?

HC: Yes, I left Charleston after a year, went back north, and free-floated for a while. Eventually, I had an interview at Marian Manor and was accepted. I worked with

a wonderful priest, Fr. Joe Kane. He's retired now for health reasons, but I'm still in touch with him and go to lunch from time to time. He's a wonderful person.

As of December 18, 2008, I had been at Marian Manor for fourteen years. It was where I really settled down. Another aspect of my being settled was my connection with the Institute of Living. I found Marian Manor to be a wonderful place, and I'm working there part-time now.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

RR: As we come to the end of our conversation, let me ask you a question: Could you say that despite all these things that happened to you from time to time, there was always something of God's Providence at work in your life, so that things worked out well in the long run?

HC: Yes, they did. I'm still very active as chaplain for a Korean War veterans' group in Massachusetts. I go to ship's reunions every year, and I meet people from other eras of the ship when I wasn't on the USS Waldron with them. And I find them a wonderful, wonderful group. We depended on each other we were aboard our ships. So I naturally feel close to those guys. I just arrived back on Thursday from one of our reunions. This time we met in San Antonio, Texas. I look forward to it every year. It's just a wonderful group of men and their wives. Of course, that doesn't mean that I don't feel very close to many Jesuits.

RR: Thank you for telling us so much about yourself. It's been very impressive and enlightening for all of us. Thank you again and God bless you.

Fr. Herbert J. Cleary, S.J.

Born: February 18, 1931, Melrose, Massachusetts
Entered: August 14, 1956, Plattsburgh, New York,
Bellarmine College
Ordination May 25, 1968, Weston, Massachusetts,
Weston College of the Holy Spirit
Last Vows June 22, 1979, Boston, Massachusetts,
Campbell House (418 Beacon Street)

1944 Winchester, Massachusetts: Winchester High
School - Student
1948 Boston, Massachusetts: Bentley School of
Accounting and Finance -Student
1951 United States Navy
1955 Boston, Massachusetts: St. Philip Neri School -
Student
1956 Plattsburgh, New York: Bellarmine College -
August 14, 1956-August 15, 1958 Novitiate
August 16- November 28, 1958 Juniorate
1958 Lenox, Massachusetts: St. Stanislaus Novitiate /
Shadowbrook - Juniorate
1960 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College of the Holy
Spirit - Studied philosophy
1963 Portland, Maine: Cheverus High School - Taught
Latin, speech, business law
1965 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College of the Holy
Spirit - Studied theology
1969 Portland, Maine: Cheverus High School - Assistant
Director of Education Counseling
1970 U.S. Navy - Chaplain
1971 Portland, Maine: Cheverus High School - Assistant
Director of Education Counseling
1973 Gloucester, Massachusetts: Gonzaga / Eastern Point
Retreat House - Tertianship

- 1974 Portland Diocese, Maine: Presque Isle, Westbrook -
Parish Ministry
- 1977 New Milford, Connecticut: Canterbury School -
Taught theology, coached girls' cross country and
track
- 1980 St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana: St. Mary-of-the-
Woods College - Chaplain
- 1981 Boston, Massachusetts: Campbell House - Chaplain,
Massachusetts General Hospital
- 1982 Framingham, Massachusetts: Bethany Hospital -
Chaplain
- 1989 Sabbatical: Australia and England
- 1990 Framingham, Massachusetts, Bethany Hospital -
Chaplain
- 1991 Weston, Massachusetts: Campion Center -
Assignment pending
- 1992 Charleston, South Carolina:
Mother House of the Sisters of Charity - Chaplain
St. Francis Xavier Hospital - Pastoral ministry
- 1993 Manchester, New Hampshire: Catholic Medical
Center - Chaplain
- 1994 Boston, Massachusetts: Jesuit Community at Boston
College High School - Chaplain, Marian Manor,
South Boston

Degrees

- 1962 Bachelor of Arts, Classics, Weston College-Boston
College
- 1963 Master of Arts, Philosophy, Weston College-Boston
College
- 1968 Bachelor of Divinity, Weston College
- 1973 Master of Education, Educational Counseling,
University of Maine in Portland/Gorham