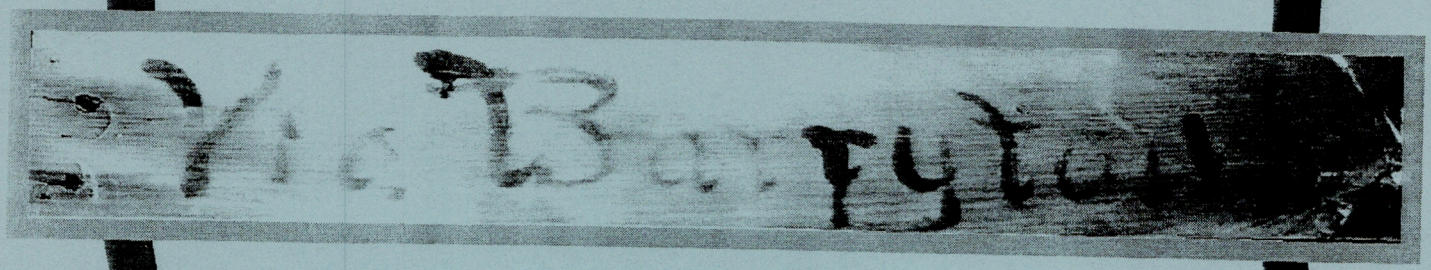

Growing Up In Barrytown
(1931-1951)

by

John J. (Jack) Lewis

This story is for daughters Pamela and Cheryl,
and granddaughter Sara.

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INTRODUCTION

To paraphrase Russell Baker who wrote about growing up in Baltimore, Barrytown was a great place in which to grow up, but it really did not prepare us to live in the 20th Century.

PREFACE

With the coming of the railroad around 1850, Barrytown, New York, a small hamlet in the Town of Red Hook, located on the Hudson River about 100 miles north of New York City, sprang to life and began to prosper. For the next several decades, its economic and social life revolved around the railroad, ice making on the Hudson, shipping, agriculture, maintenance of the river estates and, later, the local institutions of Bard College (1860) and St. Joseph's Normal Institute (1930). St. Joe's—as it was commonly called by the locals—prepared students mostly from New York and New England to become Brothers to propagate the Catholic faith.

Most of what is written in this story was experienced by me. On occasion I make reference to some stories that my siblings shared. Some details are somewhat vague, but I have tried to accurately recollect what took place while growing up in Barrytown. We sometimes have different perceptions of a particular incident. However, I'm sure if I have failed to portray a particular experience or historic fact accurately, my sisters, brothers or friends will inform me.

I recently read a column by Bard Lindeman, who offers advice to the elderly, which dealt with the idea of encouraging our "old folks" to write about their life experiences. Since I believe everyone should do this, I have encouraged others to get involved.

My friend Warren Shaw, formerly of Red Hook, sent a quote which I feel is most appropriate in reference to recording local history. The quote is from a book written by Sharyn McCrumb entitled *The Songcatcher*. Warren, who now lives in Maryville, Tennessee, is interested in history and folk lore. We shared some ideas, and he encouraged me to finish my story after reading the chapter on the local characters. Having known some of them, he was able to appreciate the humor.

The quote from McCrumb's book which he shared with me is as follows:

> *"Each of us is the link between the past and the future, and it is up to us to pass along the legends, the stories, the songs and the traditions of our own families. If we don't, they will be lost, and your children may not be lucky enough to find a bit of their past going for $6.98 in a store somewhere. They may never find it at all."*

I lament the fact that I have nothing in writing from my mother or father and also that I did not question them more thoroughly about their ancestors, their childhood and work experiences. I was not particularly interested in local history when I was younger. Now that I find I would like to learn more about what my community was like in the "old days," there is no one left to answer my questions. The history of Chanler Park is a good example. Only those in their late 80s or 90s remember seeing a baseball game played there. I'm sorry I waited too long to get involved in recording local history.

The story that follows covers the period of my life from birth to the age of 20 (1931-51). When I reflect on the hamlets and neighborhoods (Nevis, Milan, Upper Red Hook, Cokertown, Mill Road area, etc.), I cannot help but feel how fortunate we were to grow up in Barrytown. Compared to the above-mentioned hamlets, we were blessed with so much more. We especially enjoyed a much more diversified array of experiences.

I have definitely accentuated the positive times and events we were privileged to experience. Certainly, growing up somewhat impoverished has its downside. However, the vast majority of people living in that era experienced similar economic problems. We made the best of what we had. We did not feel deprived of material things, for what we had at our disposal more than offset any qualms we might have had about being poor. Basically, we were all in the same boat.

As the tone of my story reveals, I had a ball growing up as a bonafide, card-carrying Barrytown "dock rat."

I should alert you that not all I discuss paints me in a very favorable light. Some of the things I did were downright shameful acts that are quite embarrassing to reveal. But I must tell it the way it was, for I'm sure my friends and siblings would not hesitate to set the record straight. The only solace I have is to state that neither I nor my fellow misfits were preparing ourselves for sainthood in those days.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While basically relying on my own experiences in telling this story, there are many people who have given me help and encouragement along the way.

As noted, I became interested in local history quite late in life. My true interest began when Joan, my wife of 45 years, became President of Friends of Elmendorph, a local historical group that raised the money necessary to restore and maintain the local historic inn. Through her leadership, I began to get involved in helping their staff with auctions, other fund raisers, and doing maintenance work on the building and grounds.

At that time, I began to attend the monthly historical meetings at the Inn sponsored by the Elmendorph sister organization, The Egbert Benson Historical Society. The thing that really appealed to me was a series of historical discussions of the various hamlets and the two villages in the Town of Red Hook. These programs featured the "old-timers" who grew up in the various locations, so we were afforded a grassroots presentation that was televised by the local Panda station. The Egbert Benson Historical Society archives houses all of these historical video tapes.

At the same time, tours of local historical homes were being sponsored by both local historical groups and those at the county level (County Seats Tours). These served to whet my appetite further toward learning more about local history.

While attending various events, I would periodically discuss my early years in Barrytown with Barbara and Bob Bielenberg who were, and still are, the driving forces behind the growth of both Elmendorph and the Egbert Benson Historical Society. They seemed genuinely interested in my stories and encouraged me to serve on the panel that discussed the history of Barrytown and consider writing about my experiences. I owe them a debt of gratitude for their support. I greatly appreciate what they have done to foster the growth of both Elmendorph and the Egbert Benson Historical Society, and their overall efforts to help our community to focus on our illustrious past.

I wish to thank John "Winty" Winthrop Aldrich, Historian for the Town of Red Hook—and for many years Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation Commission—who has done so much to help preserve the history of not only Red Hook, but New York State.

Winty has been most generous in sharing his knowledge of local history, both by availing himself to speak at local events and by sharing written material. I especially appreciate his keynote address when the Egbert Benson Historical Society sponsored its first session on the history of Barrytown. I marveled at his ability to speak so eloquently for 45 minutes without having to refer to notes. I was more than a bit apprehensive as I sat next to him, considering how inadequate my comments would be by comparison.

It was at this session that he suggested we read the book, *Carolinian on the Hudson—The Life of Robert Donaldson,* a wonderful historic work commissioned by Richard H. Jenrette, the present owner of Edgewater. Donaldson, from North Carolina, owned both Blithewood and Edgewater in the mid-1800s. Around 1853 he sold Blithewood to John Bard and purchased Edgewater. Not only did Winty reveal his mastery of this biography, but he made the book available for those who were interested. Red Hook is most fortunate to have him as our historian.

I owe Claire Carr, President of The Egbert Benson Historical Society and author of the paperback, *A Brief History of Red Hook,* a thank-you for her support and encouragement. She was always ready to discuss local history and help secure historical sources.

Joan and Clarence Fallon and I exchanged an assortment of historical articles in 2002. Joan is a member of the Scism family whom I mention with fond memories. They possess a large photo of the Army troops that were stationed at Bard College during World War II. They were gracious enough to allow me to make a copy of this and other historical papers. For this, I am most grateful.

Probably the greatest encouragement I received to write this story came from my two daughters, Pamela and Cheryl. Over the years they listened to me discuss some of the silly and nonsensical experiences I had while growing up in Barrytown. They never seemed to tire of the repetition as I would often repeat myself. Eventually they said, "Dad, why don't you put those stories in writing?" I thank them for their encouragement and tolerance. Pam, though living in Nashville, helped proofread and offered suggestions for this story during her many visits home during the past few years. Her help has been invaluable.

While writing about my experiences, I would meet people who would say, "I hear you're writing a book." I would respond, "Not really, just a short story about growing up in Barrytown." I thought it rather presumptuous of me to think I was capable of writing a book. I added that few would be interested, save possibly a few old-timers like Keith Denegar, Sandy Bloomer Lydon, Dook

Garcia, Jay and Victor Chapman, Joan and Clarence Fallon, Rick and Winty Aldrich, Doris McDermott Tremper, Martha Klepatz Watkins, Bob Schultz, and possibly the Bert Coon family.

A special thanks to my brothers and sisters, and especially Irene, Bud, Bill, Barb, Tom and Joyce for sharing their stories about, and fondness for, Barrytown. When we have a family gathering, it doesn't take long before Bud will tell a Scully Lynk story and Bill will counter with his favorite Jim Hendricks' tale. No matter how many times we've heard them, we still get a chuckle.

I should note that sister Barbara has resettled on River Road in the Town of Rhinebeck after several decades of living in the Washington, D.C. area while employed by Eastern Airlines. She is an avid history buff who has donated much of her new life to furthering the preservation of local history at Wilderstein and Mills Mansions. She has been especially dedicated to the restoration of the Esopus Lighthouse. Recently, she and her fellow preservationists formed the Hudson River Lighthouse Coalition to oversee and maintain seven lighthouses that stretch from the George Washington Bridge to the Hudson/Athens area. Presently, Barbara serves as a director of the Coalition.

Another of Barbara's endeavors has been the compilation of a collection of local historical photos, photo copies of magazine and newspaper articles, maps, books and historical memorabilia. I appreciate her willingness to share this information with me. I commend her for her efforts in helping to preserve the history of the Hudson Valley.

While putting this story together, I would often phone one of the "old-timers" to help me with the details that I had forgotten, were too vague for me to recollect, or I was too young to have experienced. Stories about Chanler Park, the ball teams during the '20s, '30s and '40s, high school life and sports, the high school fire, what was located where, school centralization, life along the Hudson and locations of historical buildings were especially helpful.

I am grateful to those who helped fill me in on many details: Harry and Joe Kane, Bob Rockefeller, Tom Odak, Sr., Jimmy Melley, Cliff Gubler, Dick Griffith and Rich Aldrich.

Also, a note of thanks is due Warren Shaw and daughter Pat Smith for selecting and forwarding the McCrumb quote.

I note of appreciation is due Kim Keil, owner of the Keil Equipment Co. in the Village of Red Hook for allowing me to remove a wooden brace inscribed

"Via Barrytown" from the floor of the historic barn behind his business. The rafter brace appears to be from an old packing crate that was commonly used to ship goods on the river steamers and the railroad in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Since I arrived in this area "by way of Barrytown," I thought it might be appropriate to include the slogan-like message on the cover page.

I approached Dick Wambach regarding this possibility. Dick is a local computer whiz and graphics expert who regularly contributes a column to the local *Hudson Valley Sampler* paper. He felt confident that he could fashion a design using the printed brace. Since some letters were not too clear, Dick manipulated his computer to enhance the images. I am most grateful to Dick for his computer and graphics skills which he relied upon to make the cover possible.

Lastly, Jeanne Hubbell is to be highly commended for her efforts in helping to bring this story to fruition. She not only typed the story, but was involved in proofreading, checking redundancies, spelling errors, punctuation, transition, offering suggestions, and, in general, polishing my prose. I should note that the process of deciphering my handwriting is no mean feat, but she prevailed to the very end. Her undying efforts made this story possible. For this I am most appreciative.

FAMILY LIFE

Growing up in this atmosphere during the depression, war years and the post World War II era (1931-51) was a great joy. We had nothing materially, but we had everything at our disposal: farms, estates, the river, the railroad, general store/post office and depot (railroad station).

Recently, when the local school was celebrating 60 years of centralization, Bob Rockefeller and I were asked to share our childhood experiences with some eighth-graders. I related that if it had not been for the fire that destroyed the Village high school in 1936 that resulted in the centralization of the school district, I probably never would have left Barrytown. I had no idea that there was any meaningful life beyond the hill to the east. Not only that, I wasn't really anxious to find out since, from my perspective, my life was complete. (More of Bob's observations on the high school fire are discussed in the **ANECDOTES** section.)

We lived in the old (pre-1900) Federal style, brick house (John Maloy house on the old Donaldson map) that is situated a stone's throw east of the twin octagon gate houses that lead to Edgewater, the old Donaldson Estate. I was born in the gate house on the north side of Station Hill Road on July 31, 1931. That same Summer we moved to the brick house. Edgewater, a unique mansion, was built by the Livingstons in 1820, and, in addition to Robert Donaldson, it was owned by John Jay Chapman, son Conrad, Robert Taylor and author Gore Vidal. I worked for Conrad and Mr. Taylor during World War II and the post war era. It has been beautifully restored by Richard Jenrette, a North Carolina native and successful Wall Street investment banker.

Despite being reared in a family of 11 children during the struggle of the '30s depression, we faired quite well. While we did not have a car or travel widely, we never went hungry.

My father's father, Warren Lincoln Lewis, born during the Civil War, worked in the Barrytown area as a coopersmith making barrels for the shipment of apples, fish, etc., as a gate tender at the New York City Railroad, and other assorted blue collar jobs. Since he died in 1933, I vaguely remember him. However, I'm told I possess some of his mannerisms.

His wife, Grandma Sullivan Lewis, worked for John J. Chapman (Chanler's father) as a cook. They lived in the house on the east side of the Sacred Heart Rectory. It is presently occupied by Paula and Tom Schoonmaker.

My father, Edward Hilary Lewis (1896-1949), worked in Tower 71 in Barrytown as a signalman/telegrapher for the New York City Railroad. He also tended bars in Red Hook (Melley's Grille and Bud Kipp's tavern) part time. He also worked part-time as a timekeeper during the construction of St. Joseph's (1929-30) and the rebuilding of Linden Avenue (road from the Village of Red Hook north to Route 9G), one of the local WPA projects under President Roosevelt's administration.

My father was most fortunate to be skilled as a bookkeeper and telegrapher, for that was his calling card for employment during difficult economic times. He was a "dapper Dan," always tipping his fedora to the ladies and wearing a tie and suit jacket. Besides his ability to readily find employment and consistently put bread on the table, we were blessed with a mother who was most resourceful.

My mother's background: Irene's maiden name was Maxim. She was born near Worcester, Massachusetts on July 4, 1898. Her father, William, worked for several industries in the New York/New England area. He worked up through the ranks to become Plant Superintendent for both New York Rubber and Kenyon Rubber.

Even when the cupboard appeared bare, Mom could concoct the most delicious meals. Besides being a wonderful cook, she was able to take care of the 11 children she bore between 1920 and 1936, and wash and mend our clothes, do the shopping, clean the house, and see to it that we went to church. She was basically the driving force behind our rearing. One could safely say that she sacrificed her life for her family.

Speaking of sacrifice, I can remember Mom telling about having to quit school at the age of 15 to help run the household upon her mother's death. It must have been terribly difficult for her to make this adjustment—especially in view of the fact that she liked school and was doing so well academically. But she related this experience with pride as she recounted how she helped her Dad and siblings during those very troubling times. There never was a hint of bitterness for the life she had missed as a teenager. I mention this fact to point out what a wonderful, caring woman she was throughout her life.

In her later years, Mom lived with my sister Joyce and husband, Dick Cole, in the Village of Red Hook. She loved it there—a central point for all of us to visit, with Joyce and family providing such excellent care. I hope we have conveyed our appreciation for the sacrifices they made to help make Mom's waning years so pleasant. Even during those years, Mom continued to show her

love for her fellow man as she took great pride in running the thrift shop for the Red Hook Recreation Park Pool Commission.

I still marvel at the way Mom provided for us under such extreme, austere circumstances—no indoor plumbing or central heat, washing clothes by hand using a scrub board, and on a very tight budget. All of her cooking was done on a Kalamazoo wood stove (advertised as a "Kalamazoo Direct to You") that had four burners and an oven with a reservoir on the end. The rest of the house was heated by a pot belly stove that we called a chunk stove—it burned both wood and coal.

How Mom could cook! I remember her method of cooking wild game, especially rabbits and squirrels that were provided by my father, older brothers (Bud and Bill) and neighbors. At that time the community would share fish, game and garden vegetables. All Hudson River fish were consumed back then; we had not heard of any PCB or mercury problem.

Mom began cooking the game by browning the floured meat in an iron skillet directly over the wood fire on the two main burners. After it was "just right," she added the onions, spices and water and placed the skillet on the two adjacent burners where it would simmer for a few hours. My brother Bill and I would return from skating at Ed Smith's pond (more on that later) to the most scrumptious meal imaginable. To complete the gourmet meal, she would serve homemade biscuits for "sopping up" the gravy.

To supplement our diet, we raised a garden and became what you might call modern-day gatherers. We were able to pick many wild fruits and vegetables (some not so wild, but more on that later): asparagus, strawberries, cherries, apples, horseradish, quinces (apple family), blackberries, elderberries, blackcaps, etc. This, coupled with our weekly delivery from Krasdale's grocery in Red Hook (pre-supermarket days), and an ample supply of game and fish (herring, eels, perch, shad, an occasional sturgeon, suckers and sunnies) taken from the bountiful Hudson, provided us with a diet that I am sure would meet the guidelines of modern day dieticians.

Ma was also very adept at making turtle soup from the turtles we caught in the local creeks, swamps and ponds. We would help with the preparation, using a hatchet, hammer, saw and cleaver to free the meat from the shell. This was a most difficult task. I had heard that some people, after removing the entrails, would boil the meat while it was still attached to the shell; we always did it the hard way. After cleaning the meat, Ma did the rest: browning salt pork, adding onions, tomatoes and other vegetables and spices. Again, the

simmering on the old wood stove for several hours completed the delicious meal. Her 14-quart pot provided our gang with a meal fit for a king, with just a little left over for the next day to feed a hungry uncle or passing hobo.

Mom's other specialties were baked beans, sturgeon stew, assorted beef stews and, on Sunday, a roast (Boston Roll). The sturgeons were caught locally in the shad nets. They weren't too large—maybe 15-20 pounds; the big ones were very strong, with a very rugged dorsal fin and spine which would raise havoc with the light mesh of a shad net (more on that later). Mom would make the stew by dicing the pure white meat into bite-sized pieces; and I would take a large pot to the shad fishermen who had set up their nets down on "the Point." This was the area directly east of the station that was our Summer "hangout."

Today I attend the yearly game dinners catered by the local gun club members that feature a wide variety of wild game: wild turkey, venison, rabbit, squirrel, duck, pheasant and quail. I have also ordered rabbit at gourmet restaurants in New York City. While it was tasty, it couldn't compare to what Mom was able to prepare on the old wood stove. As for turtle soup, I don't believe anyone makes it anymore. One disclaimer: I must admit that today Moe Moul, Jeff Hagedorn and John McKinney prepare the most delicious venison roast to be found anywhere—the best I have ever eaten.

Looking back, I'm amazed at my parents' accomplishments. How they kept their sanity while faced with all of our childhood problems was a marvel! Besides providing for our physical needs, they also saw to it that we were basically honest, attended school and religious education classes regularly, showed respect for our elders and, above all, they taught us how to work and respect our bosses. They were firm believers in a strong work ethic and daily set the pace by their example. The material things they left behind were inconsequential. However, their belief in earning one's way placed all 11 of us in a good stead as we entered the workplace.

I would be remiss if I overlooked the sense of humor my parents shared. They loved to play cards and joke with our neighbors. I'm sure having a good laugh on occasion helped to get them over some of life's rough times which they experienced.

I should note that we all pitched in to help with food preparation and other chores around the house and yard. I believe there was a period of time while all 11 children were at home together (1936-1939).

In 1936 the high school, located on South Broadway (what is now a paint store), burned; some students were bused to Pine Plains, others attended Hoffman Inn (now a B&B) located diagonally across from the Elmendorph Inn. The elementary students attended makeshift facilities around the Village (Red Hook Inn, Lutheran Church Hall and basement).

During 1937-1938 I can remember my oldest sister, Shirley, returning home from the long trip to Pine Plains to peel nearly a peck of potatoes to help feed our gang.

In 1939 the older siblings began to leave the nest. During the Summers and weekends during the school year, the girls would work at Edgewater, Ward Manor and Blithewood. Bud worked for Chanler Chapman on the farm and bottling plant. He would rise at 4:00 a.m. to round up the cows and drive them from the pasture to the barn. During this period Bud was known as "Wrangler." There was plenty of work then: making hay, hauling corn to the silos, chores, general farm work and also working in the creamery/bottling plant. Things were especially hectic in the late '30s and early '40s as Chanler was experimenting with milking three times per day, and much of it by hand.

Bud also worked at John Navins' Post Office/General Store and St. Joseph's.

After graduating from high school, Shirley ('39) and Kate ('42) moved to Ward Manor in Annandale where they worked tending to the needs of the elderly, and doing cleaning and kitchen work. These old folks were retirees from Ward's Baking Company in New York City.

Bud moved to St. Joseph's after high school and worked for a year or so before joining the Army just prior to the outbreak of World War II. Being the oldest boy and a soldier, he was a hero to all of us.

After his tour of military duty, Bud went to work for various companies in Rutland, Vermont—his wife Clem's home town—before returning to Barrytown and joining IBM in 1948. He returned to Vermont in 1958 when IBM opened a plant in Essex Junction, north of Burlington. Attending IBM schools, he rose through the executive ranks to retire after 30-plus years as site manager for the 2nd and 3rd shifts. In the interim, he and Clem raised three wonderful daughters: Joyce and Pat who became outstanding teachers, and Maureen who became a very caring nurse.

I believe Bud epitomizes the type of person Tom Brokaw had in mind when he penned his bestseller, *The Greatest Generation*—growing up during the Depression, off to war, and then returning to civilian life to help shape our nation in post World War II. His leaving home meant "one less mouth to feed," as my father would phrase it. I'm sure Dad never felt the effects of the "empty nest syndrome."

Except for our two youngest siblings, Barbara and Joyce, we all attended the two-room school house located near the intersection of Dock Road and Station Hill Road. This was designed by Andrew Jackson Davis and given to the community in the mid-1800s by Robert Donaldson, owner of Edgewater. After school centralization (1939), it was refurbished as a private home. I should note that Davis was the premier architect of his era and a close friend of Donaldson, considered "THE" patron of the arts.

Donaldson commissioned Davis to design several structures in the Barrytown/Annandale area—notably, the twin octagon gatehouses that lead to Edgewater, located approximately two-tenths of a mile east of the railroad. Both of these structures are still standing; the one on the north side of Station Hill Road has had a few additions over the years. A few of my siblings and I were born in this house. Another important Davis design is the octagon-shaped gatehouse that leads to Blithewood on River Road in Annandale.

The school housed first through fourth grades on one side and fifth through eighth grades on the other. Initially, there was no indoor plumbing, and so we had to use the outdoor privy. Also, there was no central heating, so a coal-burning, freestanding, pot belly stove had to be tended. Sister Irene told me that our dog, Rex, would go to school with her and was allowed to sleep near the stove until dismissal. She remembers the Summer that both indoor plumbing and a furnace were installed (1936).

We usually walked home for lunch, a distance of four-tenths of a mile. Midmorning we could look forward to a snack consisting of graham crackers and grapefruit juice provided by the federal government.

Being so used to my freedom and possessing a roaming instinct, I did not adjust very well to school. Having a teacher who, at the time, appeared to be lacking in understanding—coupled with a meanspirited attitude toward us—did not help my school adjustment.

The fire that burned the high school in the Village of Red Hook in 1936 was a godsend for us. It meant we would be bused to a new facility in Red

Hook. There I encountered a most wonderful teacher, Mrs. Van DéBogart, who treated me and the local farm kids with kindness and respect. I will not say I excelled academically under her tutelage, but it was a wonderful feeling to know that she really cared for us. She helped to nurture our self esteem.

The great part of the fun and excitement of attending the central school was meeting those who had attended the one- and two-room schoolhouses which were labeled Union Free School Districts. They all had their own school board and operated as separate entities, reporting at that time to an itinerant superintendent, a Mr. Milo Winchester.

We were joined by the Unsons and Teators from Nevis, Bill Anagnos and the Hapeman boys from Cokertown, the Redder and A'Brial brothers from Mill Road, Jack Campisi and John Culich from Milan, the Rifenburgs, Sonny Briggs, Martha Klepatz from Annandale, and the Zitz family from the school near the Irving Fraleigh farm east of the Village of Red Hook (Fraleigh School). The Tinklepaughs, Tratnacks and Doyles joined us from Columbia County. Of the families I have listed, six of them lived on farms and, sadly, not one of them is an active farm today.

All of my siblings went on to graduate from Red Hook High School. We found the central school experience to be a great pleasure for the most part. We were blessed with many excellent teachers and administrators over the years.

There were no girls' sports during this era. Not until the advent of the Title IX legislation in 1972 (providing equal money, teams and facilities for girls) were they allowed to compete in sports on an interscholastic level. Therefore, our girls (Kate, Jean, Barbara and Joyce) had to participate in the sports program as cheerleaders. Bud, Bill, Tom and I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in three sports during our high school years. What a great joy that was! We all have many fond memories of the experience.

Years later, Bill's competitive nature on the athletic field continued on the field of battle in Korea, as he went on to distinguish himself and instill pride in his family and friends. Without regard for his own safety, he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to rescue fellow soldiers. For these brave acts he was awarded the Silver Star—America's next to highest award for bravery.

In the 1940s, some of us were instructed in religious education in public school classrooms by the Brothers from St. Joseph's Normal Institute in Barrytown. This probably lasted for two years before a religious education early-release program went into effect, where the instruction was done off campus.

I point this out merely to observe the vast difference today regarding the separation of church and state, with continual court battles regarding federal funds for parochial schools, decisions whether students can pray in school, and assorted other issues being challenged by those with leftist leanings who prefer to interpret our Constitution very strictly.

LIFE ALONG THE RIVER

My childhood years along the Hudson River were filled with great pleasure. There was little stress placed upon us at that time—save wondering where our next meal was coming from. Whereas we were compelled to attend school daily, we were not subjected to pressure to prepare ourselves academically as are our youth today. Most parents in the '30s had not finished high school. They were preoccupied with the simple tasks of survival, the ominous weight of the Depression and later, the tragedy and aftermath of World War II. All things considered, education did not receive a very high priority; working and providing for family needs did. Most of us were prepared to follow our father's footsteps to either learn a trade or pursue other blue collar jobs. This way of life allowed us to mature in a leisurely, relaxed atmosphere.

We enjoyed many wonderful experiences. Summers were spent swimming at "the Point" on a daily basis only to return to "the trough" (my father's name for the kitchen table) at noon and again for supper. To reach "the Point," we would cross the railroad tracks at the car crossing area just north of the station and proceed due west to the river. The station was located just west of the present Post Office building (closed in the Fall of 2001). The area between these two buildings was for parking (taxis, mail delivery vehicles from Annandale and Red Hook, and those from the estates and institutions—Bard and St. Joseph's).

At that time, to reach Edgewater (the present Jenrette Estate) one would cross the tracks, take an immediate left and head south, paralleling the tracks. Today, to reach that destination one has to travel out to the "Point" and encircle a most attractive guest house erected by Mr. Jenrette, and then return along the cove, bear right, and head south along the tracks. From a distance, the guest house, with its stately columns, appears to be a replica of Edgewater.

In the '30s and '40s we did not know who owned "the Point" property and did not concern ourselves, for we had free range to do as we pleased—young masters of all we surveyed.

We had developed a fine relationship with the Brothers at St. Joseph's, a normal school (teacher preparation) for Catholic boys who would go on to teach in the Northeast parochial schools and colleges. As a result, yearly they would erect a diving platform: a diving board and ladder with a small movable platform for us to enjoy. We would jump from this platform to the diving board to gain a greater arch in our dives. This was a godsend since the river shore was

strewn with heavy boulders but little sand. Swimming, diving, perfecting our flips and other maneuvers, and sun bathing occupied our time.

On occasion, several families would gather at "the Point" for a cookout. Again, Mom's cooking expertise was relied upon to prepare the hamburgers, onions and peppers. These were happy times for us.

Another activity at "the Point" was to dig through the ruins of the old saloon (a sad victim of the 1908 fire that devastated this area) and the steamboat dock and icehouses as far north as Herring Rock—nearly one-half mile of shoreline buildings. It was basically the end of Barrytown as a thriving waterfront community—icehouses, hotels, saloons, freight houses for the night boats, power plant, a paper mill, etc. A new freight house was built, but the ice industry was dealt a devastating blow.

Getting back to digging through the ruins...by digging through the compressed layers of the charred roof (all that remained), we would find the treasures of nickels and dimes perfectly preserved. Brother Bill once unearthed a 1845 quarter and a half dime dated 1871. We spent many a pleasurable hour conducting these "architectural digs."

I should note that Bud Kipp owned the saloon/hotel. I'm told that my father worked for him at the time of the fire (he would have been 12), and later as a part-time bartender and/or patron in his tavern on South Broadway in the Village of Red Hook. Rumor has it that it was mostly the latter.

My brother Tom, a retired Lieutenant of the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department, is married to Elizabeth Kipp Baxter's daughter, Norma. Elizabeth, in turn, is a daughter of Bud Kipp. She was less than one year old when the fire struck. She told me that normally she would take her nap on the second floor, but on the day of the fire she was napping on the first floor. She believes that is what saved her life.

Another fun aquatic outing at "the Point" was to swim out and ride the waves of the day liners which traveled between New York City and Albany. Some of the older boys would dive for coins that the passengers would throw overboard.

I can remember as a child thinking that one had to be a millionaire to be able to ride on such magnificent ships. I later learned that Mom had taken sister Joyce for a ride on one of the day liners. The vessels were named as follows: *Peter Stuyvesant, Alexander Hamilton, Robert Fulton* and *Hendrick Hudson.* All were

named after famous historical figures who were noted for their contributions in varied fields, especially in New York State.

One liner would approach East Kingston around 11:00 a.m. daily and another would be headed south in the afternoon. In short, we had two sets of waves to ride. Long before we could spot the morning boat south of Kingston, we would go underwater to hear the pounding of the giant engine's cylinders. The *Peter Stuyvesant* was the smallest of the boats and therefore did not "kick-up" very big waves. We were never very anxious to hear or see *Peter* on the horizon. After waiting for the liner to drop off and pick up passengers at Rondout Creek in East Kingston, we would anxiously await its coming into view, plying north past Barrytown. We would also borrow a rowboat or canoe to ride the waves; keeping the canoe from capsizing while riding the waves broadside was a thrilling experience!

It is my understanding that none of the liners were preserved. I recall touring the *Stuyvesant* during the '70s while it was anchored at a pier adjacent to and part of Anthony's Pier Four Restaurant in Boston. I recall that it served as both a restaurant (addition) and a maritime museum while in dry dock. Unfortunately, a hurricane in the '70s caused it to sink. Sadly, no attempt was made to bring it to the surface and preserve it for posterity, thus ending another era of the Hudson River's glorious past.

For the history buffs, I might point out that "the Point" was the location of Robert Donaldson's dock which he operated and leased during the period from approximately 1853 to 1870. He previously owned Blithewood (Zabriski Estate adjacent to Bard College) which he sold to John Bard around 1853. At the same time, he purchased the Edgewater Estate which extended on the north from Dock Road to the Rokeby Estate on the south and from the river to as far east as River Road. The north docks, owned by Captain Tyler, housed the freight houses, icehouses, power plant, coal yard, paper mills, store and saloon. From these two docks the night boat (steamer) would ferry produce, ice, hay, etc. to New York City and other ports along the Hudson.

As noted, this entire area burned in 1908 while workmen were using a blowtorch to repair the roof. However, since ice was still being harvested and produce, hay and fish (shad during the Spring) were being shipped, there was some rebuilding, but the dock area never regained its vitality. The freight house on the north end of the dock was rebuilt and was still standing in the '30s and '40s. The area was referred to as Steamboat Dock.

As a young lad, I remember watching with amazement as the older adults and boys and girls (especially brother Bud and a neighbor, Bucky Stickle) jumped or dove into the river from the freight house roof which extended out toward the dock's edge. Sadly, the roofed area was razed before I became old enough to accomplish that feat. Joe Kane (Red Hook Mayor, '49) told me that he and his friends would slide down a coal chute and land in the river.

Adjacent to "our" swimming spot at "the Point" was an area affectionately known as the hobo or Bum's Jungle. It consisted of a level stretch of land located on the remnants of an old icehouse, well protected by the sumac trees and high grass. Plenty of stones were available along the Hudson from which the hobos could construct their fireplaces. This became a haven for those men whose lives had fallen upon hard times during the Depression just prior to World War II. We coexisted with these men whom we found to be articulate (we did not know it at the time), humorous, and generous. They welcomed us to share what little they had. We would sit by the fire and listen to them spin a tale or two of their travels, anxiously waiting for them to finish their quart of beer so we could grab the empty bottle and race over to John Navins' store to cash it in for a nickle or a popsicle.

Barrytown became a strategic disembarkment point for the hobos who were adept at catching a freight and riding the rails. Key to this arrangement was the close proximity of the "Jungle" to the general store, river and St. Joseph's. There was a well-beaten path that crossed the tracks north of the Dock Road railroad bridge near Herring Rock that led to the back door of St. Joseph's kitchen. The Brothers were most generous in sharing their food with these men.

Also, while awaiting the next freight train to stop at Barrytown, some of them would walk the three roads of our hamlet, Dock Road, Station Hill and Sneakers Gap—the short road that ran parallel to them, but not the full distance—begging for a handout. I'm sure there were times when the "pickin's" were slim at the houses they frequented.

There was also a "beaten path" to our door. I remember how gracious my mother was in sharing what little we had. I don't remember her ever turning the needy away. I especially remember one old, bearded hobo (they all seemed old to us, especially when unshaven) who would frequent our house. He'd always utter the same words, "Uh, piece of bread, uh, cup of tea, uh lady?"

I once spotted a hobo bathing in the Hudson adjacent to the "Jungle" while wearing his trousers. On closer inspection, I realized that he was washing the thighs of his trousers with a bar of soap. What a neat idea, I thought!

Thereafter, the days I worked on the farms, I would carry a bar of Ivory soap in my pants pocket (one of the few inexpensive soaps that floated) so I could wash my trousers after a dirty day's work. The soap also served me well as I took my daily bath in the Hudson or Zabriskie's Creek when weather permitted. This was just one small way I could help ease the burden of my mother who scrubbed all of our clothes by hand using a washboard.

The hobos always treated us kindly. They committed no crimes, just seemed to be trying to get along until better times prevailed. In a sense, I envied the hobo's lifestyle: the freedom to go as they pleased, no work restrictions, lots of travel (albeit not first class), but it did have a certain appeal to an impressionable youth.

In my latter days of high school, I entertained the thought of becoming a brakeman on the New York Central. I figured this would satisfy my hobo's yearnings and I would be able to make a living at the same time. Also, I would be joining my father's employer. However, by then (the late '40s), the railroads were cutting back employment, people began to travel more by auto and air, and trucks, now being mass produced since World War II, were beginning to replace the freight trains as the popular mode for hauling cargo.

ENTERTAINING OURSELVES

Besides our daily jaunt to "the Point" to swim, we would sometimes travel to the old swimming hole on the Zabriskie Estate (Blithewood) located between what is today sections two and three of the Linden Acres development. This we did especially during our high school days when we would be able to catch a ride with the Schultz brothers or Harry Scism, our boyhood friends, after a day's work on one of the local farms. This is when the Ivory soap came in really handy, for swimming was not only for pleasure but served adequately as our daily bath, as well.

Periodically we would venture off through the woods to the north past St. Joseph's and Montgomery Place (owned by General John Ross Delafield at that time) to reach Sawkill Creek and the Falls. The creek separates Montgomery Place and Blithewood (Zabriskie's). The Zabriskies had an ingenious swimming pool built into the side of a cliff on the north side of the Falls. Using gravity flow, the creek water would rush into the pool. When the pool was full, the excess water overflowed into a conduit and re-entered the creek, flowing on into the cove. Hence, they always had a fresh supply of water.

Obviously the pool was off limits to us, so we had to play a cat and mouse game to avoid detection. On occasion, Howard Nish, the caretaker and one of my father's fishing and drinking buddies, would come to the edge of the cliff and verbally reprimand us. We responded by excusing ourselves and pledged that it would not happen again. We would retreat to the Montgomery side of the creek and hide in the brush. When the "coast was clear," we would reappear and jump back into the pool and enjoy our swim. Anything off limits was a most enjoyable challenge for us.

Building snow forts, snowmen, and having snowball fights occupied much of our time after a snowfall, especially when it would turn warm, allowing the snow to pack. We would make huge piles of snow in our front yard and jump from our front porch roof onto the mounds of snow. We would also hollow out the snow piles to make a crude igloo. Once, when jumping from the roof, I forgot which pile of snow contained the igloo. Needless to say, the igloo's roof was not strong enough to cushion the impact as I crashed through it and hit the ground. The shock definitely got my attention—another painful lesson learned.

Much time was devoted to playing sandlot football and softball. We used Chanler Chapman's pasture as our practice and home field (Sylvania Farm—formerly Donaldson Estate property between Station Hill Road and the

Rokeby Estate; we called it "the cow lot"). Even though it was on an incline, it served us well. Dried cow dung served as our bases. Never having new equipment, we spent considerable time improvising. We used old taped bats and balls, and for a football we would scrounge through St. Joseph's dump for a discarded bladder or leather outer covering (pigskin). Usually the bladders had leaks, but we could solve this problem by hiking to Ed Smith's (owner of a garage and restaurant at the intersection of Route 199 and 9G). Ed always had time for us. Many times he repaired our football bladders and bicycle tubes. A very gentle, easy-going man, he made these repairs without charge. Sometimes we would find just the leather pigskin minus the bladder. We would then fill the casing with leaves or rags and the game would begin.

During a minor football scrimmage (two on two), we would use an evaporated milk can in lieu of the real thing. Sometimes Tom and I would play against older brother Bill. We would have to hike or center him the "ball" (can). Then he was fair game. This gave me the opportunity to hammer on him legitimately without having to pay the consequences.

As we got older and more proficient at sports, we would challenge the other hamlets to contests in football, hockey and softball. However, our big rivalry was with the players from the Village of Red Hook. Despite the fact that they had many more to pick from, we held our own over the years. What we lacked in size and numbers, we made up for in tenacity and a tremendous will to win. The **Village of Red Hook** contingent included Red Moul, Buddy Younghanse, Brooks Curtis, the Dubois brothers, John Mitchell and others.

The hamlets' players were as follows: **Mill Road:** A'Brials, Redders; **Upper Red Hook:** Hards, Coles and Wright, etc.; **Nevis:** Unson brothers (Bob & Larry), Burt Coon, and the Teator boys (Bruce, Arnie and Jay).

The **Barrytown** team consisted of brother Tom, Bob Fallon, Forest Henderson, Ernie Bloomer, Pete Troy and Keith Denegar. Occasionally, if we were short-handed, we weren't above recruiting a ringer from Red Hook. Keith used to lime the field just east of his house in preparation for our annual football games with Red Hook. He lived with his sister Ethel and brother-in-law Jack Rabbett, on the east side of the two-room school house. This was the big one! If we beat them, which we did repeatedly, our season was considered a success.

In our small community we did not have the luxury of a YMCA or Boys Club, so we would improvise. We played basketball outdoors, one-on-one or two-on-two, using a maple tree or side of a barn or garage to support our "basket."

I should note that the basketball pioneers in our hamlet were Don "Tup" Teator and brother Bill. Long before I became interested in the game, they had attached a bottomless, two-gallon galvanized pail on the front of a garage that belonged to Frank Kolbinskie, our neighbor. They used a small, 6-8" rubber ball to shoot "baskets." I observed them out there in freezing weather shooting baskets for hours. I asked myself how idiotic can they be?

However, their early dedication paid off: Tup became the best shooter on his Rhinebeck High School team and Bill was the best at Red Hook. Tup also became an outstanding baseball player, having pitched a one-hitter to a no-hitter when I competed against him in later years. Bill went on to become one of the best hitters to come out of the Mid-Hudson region. He attributes his hitting prowess to the hours spent batting stones along the road, the river's edge and the railroad tracks—another activity which I thought was rather mindless at the time.

We also started with pails and half bushel baskets and later prevailed upon our neighbors for the use of their garages. We used Frank Kolbinskie's two-car garage and Bill "Wid" Scism's one-car garage located at one of the Chapman tenant houses down the lane behind the post office. The Mundhausens moved to Barrytown in 1948 and allowed us to use their old chicken house which measured about 12-15 feet by 30 feet. Obviously, all of these facilities were small and had low ceilings severely restricting our game, but we felt they were godsends, since it allowed us to play during inclement weather.

When I was about 12 years old, I really caught the basketball fever from Tup and Bill; no longer did I question their sanity. My folks allowed me to terrace an area in our back yard (15' x 30') and erect a basket attached to a real backboard. They also permitted me to run a lead cord from the house to the court so we could play after dark. This was a major breakthrough for us as many a happy day or night was spent on our new state-of-the-art facility. I remember Elisha "Dook" Garcia joining us once he became old enough to play basketball. He became a very polished shooter.

Playing three-on-three in an unheated garage presented a real challenge: though we suffered bruises and splinters, we put these minor difficulties out of our minds and continued to play for the love of the game.

Recently, Keith Denegar told me that one of the great joys of his childhood was to return home from school, change his clothes and race to Chapman's pasture or one of the garages for sandlot softball or basketball games.

During high school, we were fortunate to have access to an old gym at Camp Scatico in Elizaville. Although it was small and unheated, we were able to enjoy ourselves immensely. Here we were able to play five-on-five and compete against other teams. The boys in Elizaville attended the Pine Plains schools (some played on the team), noted for its outstanding athletes. We enjoyed our bruising battles against them, especially when we won.

I might add that we prevailed upon Jack Holman, co-owner of the camp with his brother Nat—the famous coach of C.C.N.Y. (City College of New York). He was the only coach to ever win the NIT (National Invitational Tournament) and the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) tournaments in the same year. He is immortalized as one of the all-time great players and coach—a great role model and someone whom I was quick to idolize.

I never had the pleasure of meeting coach Holman since he coached C.C.N.Y. in the winter months while we played at his closed camp. However, he did frequent the area, staying with the Bill Anagnos family in Cokertown. Bill, a classmate of mine, possesses autographed books on basketball written by him.

Besides playing basketball during the winter months, we also would go skating and sleigh riding almost daily. Despite the dangers of the Hudson (because of the tides and subsequent ice movement), we continued to take chances against our parents' better judgment. There would be times when vast areas would be as smooth as glass, proving great conditions for ice boating. Other times, as the ice broke up and continually shifted, it could be very treacherous.

I remember holding my jacket to simulate a sail and being propelled clear to East Kingston by the wind. It was such fun that it never occurred to me how I'd get back across the river and north to Barrytown. Fortunately, a friendly ice boater came to my rescue—my first lesson in tacking. I should note that the river's channel was not kept open for the larger boats in those days. This allowed me to cross to the Ulster side.

We also skated at Lake Robert, a man-made, stream-fed pond that provided the boundary line between Sylvania Farm owned by Chanler Chapman and the Rokeby Estate owned by the Aldrich family. The lake provided ice for both estates. Sadly, the old pond no longer exists. On a recent hike to that area, I was amazed to see that what used to be our skating area had been filled with sediment and is now sprouting tall grasses and young trees. The only reminder is the small stream that meanders around the south shore over the Falls to the

Mudder Kill and on out to the Hudson. No signs of the old ice shoot or platform remain.

On any given Sunday, the lake would be teaming with skaters. Some of the local youth, who were experimenting with the old Model "A" Fords and Chevies, would drive their cars onto the ice for a spin.

St. Joseph's also made their pond available to us. The Brothers would keep it free of snow for their students' use during the day. In the evening, we would take advantage of this facility. Not only was there great skating, but the Brothers always built a bonfire for warmth and to heat hot chocolate for our enjoyment.

Although the facilities of the river, Lake Robert, St. Joseph's and the local creeks were certainly great places to skate, the really shining gem at our disposal was Ed Smith's man-made skating rink. Sometime around 1940 Ed built a skating rink behind his garage. He leveled an area, poured a concrete curbing to hold the water, erected a building to change skates, keep warm, and to do our all-important snacking. He also provided lights and heat, all of this at no cost to us.

Recently I was reminiscing with a lady from Rhinebeck who had skated there. She informed me that she was charged 10¢ per outing. Maybe Ed only charged out-of-towners!

Ed took great pride in the rink. He kept the surface in excellent condition. Since it was sealed by the cement curbing, it was easy to flood the surface in preparation for smooth skating the next day. We were most fortunate to have such a wonderful facility at our disposal. I'm not aware of any other small hamlet in the area at that time that enjoyed such luxury. I only hope we conveyed to Ed how much we appreciated his efforts.

Sleigh riding was another of our favorite pastimes. When conditions were right on the Station Hill Road—enough snow and ice and not too much sand—we would start near the entrance to Good Hap (Chanler Chapman's winter home) and ride clear to the railroad station, a distance of about one-half mile. We could get up quite a "head of steam," especially on the hill near the station. When the road was bare or too sandy, we would ride down the hills near Chapman's tenant farmer's house on the river side of our house, use our own property, or ride the hills of his pastures. We would build our own toboggan runs. We would use about anything that would slide; the local dumps were a great source of building material for tobogganing equipment.

Possessing a competitive instinct, one of our great joys was to race our sled and man-made "toboggans." I once salvaged the metal frame of the front seat of a Model T Ford. Once the seat cushion was removed, the back of the steel seat was exposed. It was shaped like a semicircle and the bottom was a square metal frame that allowed me to steer the contraption. I should note that I was in the running in most races.

Speaking of dumps, each family had their own refuse pile. There was no waste pickup in those days.

The railroad station and post office/general store, the hub of our hamlet, became the focal point of our social life. During the '30s and '40s, several trains made stops at Barrytown to deliver and pick up passengers, mail and freight. The station agent was Charlie Montany, who was idolized by kids and grownups alike. He was always smiling and kidding. As a most generous man, he was most willing to help someone with a problem. He was assisted by another kind and gentle soul, Ken Unson, who was completely devoted to Charlie and the New York Central Railroad. When Charlie died in the early '40s, Ken was heartbroken and never returned to work, a virtual recluse.

Charlie also made accommodations for a homeless man (who had fallen upon hard times) to live in the station. Wheeler Shoemaker occupied a large chair in the rear of the station office. That is where he slept, ate and spent most of his time. Wheeler, one of Barrytown's more colorful characters, wore a heavy black overcoat year 'round and seldom bathed (more about him later).

The station was the gathering place in the evening for the farm hands and workmen from the estates and St. Joseph's. They congregated there to pitch horseshoes, discuss baseball, drink a few beers and, in general, "hang out" for a few hours. We would join them and listen to them "spin their yarns."

When I was very young, I would take everything these folks would say literally. Two occasions, in particular, stick out in my mind: I was listening intently as they discussed the whereabouts of a particular Big League baseball player. In the discussion, the question was asked of his present status. The farmer replied, "Oh! They farmed him out." I couldn't restrain myself from tugging on his bib overalls and asking why they would send a baseball player to work on a farm. Naturally, they all chuckled at my naive comment. Another time they were discussing the disappearance of a fellow farm worker. One farmer stated, "Oh! He's been fired." This prompted another tug on the overalls as I asked in wonderment how anyone could set a man on fire.

In the late '30s, I became aware of Big League baseball. The men, including my father, would hang out just south of the general store and listen to the New York Giants' games. John Navins, proprietor, always had an ample supply of cold beer and ale for sale that the men consumed on a lower level behind a wooden fence.

In the evening, around seven o'clock, two trains would stop at Barrytown, one from Albany and one from New York City. These arrivals attracted three Red Hook taxis, mail carriers from Red Hook, Annandale and, I believe, Bard College. St. Joseph's sent a Brother to retrieve their mail and the Rokeby and Delano Estates sent their coachmen.

Since there was no Federal Express or UPS in those days; local businessmen would personally bring their packages and freight to the station. In the late '30s, I especially remember the Battenfelds—Rock City violet growers—bringing their flowers for immediate shipment to New York City. This was near the end of the violet-growing era in the Red Hook/Rhinebeck area. The heavier cargo would be brought to the freight house located on the river side of the tracks. The trains would be routed to the side track (siding) to pick up and deliver freight.

Charlie Montany would allow us to help push the cart that carried the mail and small packages alongside the baggage car for loading and unloading. This is another example of the local men accepting us and giving us some simple chores so we could feel helpful and bolster our self esteem. At the end of the day, we always looked forward to feeling grown up and joining the men as they would enjoy a few simple pleasures.

There was also a freight siding for coal (mostly for Bard and St. Joseph's), cattle, chicken feed, and, at times, other miscellaneous heavy cargo. Two feed stores in Red Hook—the Grange League Federation, or GLF (which today houses Red Hook Electric), and the farmers' co-op (which today houses Agway)—would dispatch local truckers to haul feed from the siding to their stores in the Village of Red Hook. This was another place of excitement where we would "hang out" and get to know the truckers: Ed Slezak, George and Lou Wasner, and a man named Gardner from Pine Plains who hauled feed to both the stores and the many dairy farms in Red Hook and Pine Plains during the '40s. We would help them load their trucks for tips that we used for life's essentials—candy, soda and ice cream—sold at the nearby Navins' store.

The fact that there was a feed spill in the unloading process prompted brother Bill and me to enter the chicken farming business. Up to this point, a

local couple, Herman and Nora Felthouse, would benefit from the spilled feed. Since we were in on the ground floor now, we felt we could get all the feed we needed free of charge.

George Wasner sold us each a "laying hen" that we felt would nicely supplement our food supply. Bill bought a beautiful, full-bodied, Rhode Island Red, while I was sold a puny, white Leghorn. Once we were established in business, we anxiously waited for the eggs to arrive. In a few days I discovered a large brown egg that I immediately harvested and ran to the house to tell everyone that my chicken had finally laid an egg.

Bill did not take kindly to my claim, stating that it was his chicken that laid the egg. A fierce argument ensued, but, in the end, my argument did not stand up when Bill proclaimed, "Red chickens lay brown eggs and white chickens lay white eggs." End of debate!

I learned really early how far I could push Bill, especially since I had this dreadful fear of meeting up with his powerful left hook. I must admit that over the years he was very tolerant of the crazy things I would do to "get his goat," or eggs, as the case may be.

My Leghorn never did produce an egg and, to add an insult to injury, Bill's hen, which he nicknamed "Biddy Hen," went on to lay double and even triple yolks. We finally resigned ourselves to the fact that my hen was an old one past the egg-laying stage, and therefore only good as a pet. I was disappointed at being taken advantage of by an adult and very envious of Bill's success. Through my tears, I gradually gave up the chicken-raising business and moved on.

That wasn't the only time Bill felt the full brunt of my wrath. When we worked with or just tagged along behind the farmers, we would mimic their expressions and try to dress like them by wearing denim trousers or an occasional flannel shirt and work shoes. The farmer I was closest to (Cecil "Red" Van Wagner) bought a pair of work shoes that had a steel cleat that completely ringed the heel. We could hear him clacking along on the road as he walked to and from work at Chapman's dairy, and on the cement barn floors where the milking was being done. I thought it would be great to have a pair of shoes like his and began to save my money. There were no shopping malls then and so much of our clothing was purchased by mail order from Montgomery Ward. (Ironically, they have declared bankruptcy and are going out of business after all of these years.)

Bill was only mildly interested in that type of work shoe but decided to order a pair anyway. As luck would have it, Bill's shoes arrived, but an enclosed note informed us that they did not stock my size. This news nearly destroyed me.

A few weeks later, as we were walking home from Red Hook, I was still upset about the chicken deal and the fact that Bill was wearing a pair of shoes that rightfully belonged to me, when I walked too closely behind him. As his sharp-heeled shoe lifted off the pavement, it shaved about three inches of skin off my shin bone. In excruciating pain, I let out a scream, followed by a few expletives as I yelled at him for being stupid enough to let that happen. In actuality, the chicken deal was simple fate and my injury was caused by carelessness on my part. But my anger did not last long as I continued to follow his lead and idolize him, especially for his athletic ability.

If we did not send to Montgomery Ward or buy clothing, boots and shoes at "the Jew's" in Red Hook, my mother would journey on the train to Poughkeepsie to shop. She'd make the trip quite frequently since she had a free train pass awarded to my father as a fringe benefit. To call the Red Hook store "the Jew's" was not an ethnic slur in the '40s. It was the name everyone used to identify Mr. Shapiro's business. We knew nothing of anti-Semitism at that time.

When several of us would receive new sneakers at the same time, it was traditional to hold road races to determine who had acquired the fastest pair.

Bill & I used to visit the blacksmith shop located at Barrytown Corners, operated by a man named Duncan Watt. It was one more place where we could be around the excitement, while watching Mr. Watt shoe the local farmers' horses and forge other metal parts.

Our visits came to an abrupt halt when Duncan (we called him "Drunkin" Watt) would "kiddingly" grab me and squeeze my earlobes with a pair of pliers. Obviously, this became quite painful as I would squirm to free myself. The more I would try to loosen his grip, the harder he'd squeeze. On our last visit—I believe he was under the influence—he grabbed me and squeezed harder than other times. Although only 10 years of age, I took my chances of injuring myself by wrestling free and throwing him to the ground. I was very frightened and bolted from the shop, never to return. I believe Mr. Watt was the only adult we associated with who was cruel to us. We moved on to other neighborhood hangouts where people liked us—or, at least, tolerated our behavior.

Another activity we looked forward to was hog-butchering time. Many of the tenant farmers and other neighbors raised their own hogs, butchered them, and cured their own pork. Sometimes they'd be "in the cider"—a bad mix among flailing butcher knives. It was not always a pretty scene, but a necessary part of the process. They built a fire to render the fat (boil fat, or separate fat from the rind of the meat). In the process, the diced and boiled rind would become quite crisp and very tasty. We would hang around like the proverbial hound dogs waiting for a tasty morsel to be thrown our way.

A neighbor, Louis Daniels, raised and butchered hogs annually. He told me when he was 65 years of age that he had been working on the railroad for fifty years, mostly as a laborer. At that time, post-World War II, there was a decrease in rail service for both passengers and freight. Louie had been a gang foreman for many years. Because of the drastic personnel reduction, he was offered an ultimatum, either rejoin a gang as a laborer or retire. Bumping rights allowed a fellow section gang foreman with more seniority in that role to take over Louie's job. I'm sure with his railroad pension and Social Security, he was able to live quite comfortably in his retirement years.

Getting back to hog butchering, there was one phase of Louie's procedure I would not have believed if I had not seen it with my own eyes. He would cut the throat of the hog, set the knife down, cup his hands to catch the blood and then drink it. The first time I saw him do this, I stood there in disbelief. Apparently it did not disturb me too badly for I remember him doing this on more than one occasion.

Louie and his wife are buried in the Sacred Heart Cemetery quite close to the road. Encased photos on their tombstone show them to be a very handsome couple.

Each Spring we would eagerly await the outboard motorboat races from Albany to New York City. The racers of these motorboats would pass Barrytown with a tremendous roar; we assumed they were traveling 100 mph. Realistically, top speed was no more than 40 or 50 mph.

I can remember being frustrated because we had to attend Mass at Sacred Heart before being allowed to run to Steamboat Dock to enjoy the action. If it was a warm day and the church door was left open, we could hear the roar of the engines as we anxiously awaited the end of the Mass.

We became especially excited if we viewed a boat headed our way for a pit stop. There were crews along the way to help with refueling, repairs and

refreshments. Occasionally, a driver we knew would veer in toward the dock and wave.

The races were grueling affairs; the boats were short and the motors were powerful, causing the bow of the boat to constantly lift out of the water and then slam down. The drivers would sometimes be seen lying forward on the bow while reaching back to control the throttle. This was done to minimize the impact and keep the boat from flipping over. However, the pounding did take its toll on the drivers. I cannot imagine the amount of stamina required to complete a 150-mile race of this type. The faint of heart did not participate.

I remember the races in the '30s and into the '40s. They were suspended during World War II and resumed in 1945 or 1946, but were discontinued shortly thereafter. It was great while it lasted. This is just one more event that afforded us free and very exciting entertainment.

Around 1940 the hall on East Market Street in the Village of Red Hook was converted into a "state-of-the-art" movie theater called the Lyceum. We walked to Red Hook on weekends (a distance of almost three miles) to see mostly western movies featuring Gene Autry and Roy Rogers. I believe we also saw Abbott & Costello.

For 15¢ we could see the movie and buy a box of candy (licorice, Good'N Plenty). I especially remember during World War II (1941-1945) viewing the headlines of our GIs in action. A brief report (film) would apprise us of our troops' progress in each of the major battles.

Except for a periodic encounter with the Red Hook bullies, these experiences were a great source of inexpensive entertainment.

Today, when I tell people that we used to chew tar that we would dig from the road, they look at me as if I'm kidding or exaggerating. I cannot understand their skepticism, since I thought all country kids chewed tar when they couldn't afford gum. My wife, Joan, was skeptical of this tale but recently became a believer when she read a story about this practice in a magazine entitled *Reminisce.*

Another cheap thrill for us was smoking cigarette butts we found along the road. We used to have contests to see how many butts we could pick up between our house and the post office. The ones with lipstick marks were considered special, but I don't remember why. Beside the butts that we would smoke over in Paul Zeller's orchard, we would smoke just about anything that

could be puffed in a corncob pipe: a weed called Indian tobacco, corn silk, used cigars, etc. I even tried to smoke a piece of clothesline once. I was about 11 years old when this fad was in vogue.

I used to pal around with a neighbor named Donald Lynk (Lynky) who was much wiser in the ways of the world than me. We would trap muskrats, collect scrap iron and rags, and ride around Barrytown in a wagon pulled by his brother-in-law's horse.

We had a running feud with an older man in our community who we felt was "lifting our traps" (removing our catch). Soon we discovered five of our traps missing up at Crugers Island (between the Tivoli North and South Bays), and also noted that he was placing his traps in the muskrat homes, which was against the game laws and certainly unsportsmanlike. We figured we would take two of his traps for each one of ours he stole. So off we went with ten of his traps.

He somehow found out that I was involved, and so he stopped at our bus stop where 21 of us boarded and read me the riot act in front of all of my friends—telling me that he was going to have me arrested. I was most embarrassed and scared, knowing that I had to tell my father what had happened.

Dad's reaction was a surprise. Instead of beating me, he was sympathetic. He said he would talk to his good friend, Judge Jacoby, in an attempt to head off the warrant for my arrest. Whatever he did worked. I never heard another thing—no trial, no sentence, no punishment at all. I do believe we returned the traps, however.

I should note that to get started in trapping, we "borrowed" Lynky's older half-brother's name tags. His name was Lewis Lynk. Since the tags were soft copper, we simply engraved a "&" sign between the two names and we were in business.

I must confess that I had no more success at trapping than I had raising chickens. I did not have the knowhow and my heart was not in it. I guess I just tagged along for the excitement.

Back to smoking: at this point, I had not attempted to inhale. I would curiously observe Lynky as he would be bending over while working on a junk engine and other scrap metal. He somehow curled his lips and positioned his jaw so the smoke would avoid going up his nose or into his eyes. I tried to

emulate him with little success; each attempt would bring tears to my eyes and set off an awful fit of coughing.

Since it seemed like the thing to do at the time, I tried to get him to teach me how to inhale. When I finally drew smoke into my lungs, I went into a coughing, gagging seizure that was most distasteful. That one bad experience ended my smoking career. I have now been clean for sixty years.

I have often thought that if every kid had this awful experience with tobacco and "tobacco substitutes" as I did, maybe some of the fatal illnesses and high cost associated with tobacco products could be avoided. I highly recommend it!

During the summer evenings, just for something to do, we would walk to Annandale to buy candy and ice cream at Irving Smith's store and stop at the hamlet pump at the triangle for a refreshing drink of water. Mr. Smith also operated a small bar attached to the store. He sold gasoline extracted from the storage tank by turning a handle. The candy we liked was a chocolate-covered caramel called "hardtack," measuring 1-1/2" square by 1/4" thick.

Some nights we would walk clear up to Fannie and George Hoffman's general store just past Ward Manor gatehouse. The store is a private home today at the corner of River and Campus Roads. The Hoffmans were kind souls, always glad to see us; they always added a free piece of candy to our bag. The distance to Hoffmans from our house was more than three miles.

During the war years (1941-1945), we were joined in the strawberry patch by the farmerettes who had come from New York City to the country to help with the harvest. There was such a shortage of pickers at that time that the price for picking a quart of berries was raised a penny to 5¢. The farmerettes were housed at the Leake and Watts Home, a former orphanage located near the river in Tivoli.

On one occasion we had made arrangements to visit the farmerettes in the evening at their residence. Brother Bill, Harry (Skizzy) Scism, Ronnie Houghton and I set out for our destination on foot (a distance of 14 miles round trip). I cannot remember why I was allowed to make the trip, for I was only 12 or 13. I must have weighed all of 90 pounds—just tagging along, I guess.

We reached Tivoli and were headed down the steep hill toward the river when seven Tivoli "toughs" jumped out of the bushes to challenge us. Their

leader, who appeared to be as formidable as a Greek god to me, grabbed me and announced in the typical Tivoli lingo, "I'm gonna break dis guy's aum!"

As he began to show off for his followers, Skizzy (who could "lick his weight in wildcats") stepped into the fray. As I struggled to break free, Skizzy delivered a shot to his head, accompanied by a good, swift kick in the rump, followed by a left hook and another kick that sent their leader reeling and the others scampering back through the woods. What appeared to be a lengthy brawl and a severe beating for us lasted only a few seconds, with the only serious injury being their pride.

Looking back, I have often thought how lucky those "tough guys" were that the fracas did not last very long. If they had gotten by Skizzy and me, they would have had to face Wild Bill who could deliver a punch with the impact of a mule kick.

I should note that Skizzy had bailed me out of other dangerous situations over the years. I was very fortunate to have such a wonderful friend.

HIKING THE ESTATES

At this time I would like to introduce you to Howard Zeller, my friend, schoolmate, partner-in-crime, and the one I spent many a day with, exploring and/or raiding the river estates and institutions. Howard lived on a farm that stretched from our rear boundary to Dock Road, with a frontage on Dock Road in the neighborhood of 1,000 feet (approximately 25 acres of apples, peaches, plums, asparagus, strawberries, currants, cabbage, pears, hay fields and pasture). A small stream traversed the property.

Howard's father and mother, Paul and Mollie, operated the farm with the help of an occasional farmhand and local fruit harvesters who picked by the quart or bushel. They also had a team of horses, a cow, a few calves, pigs and chickens. They were basically self-sufficient. They did not have a tractor, so all equipment (hay wagons, mowing machine, orchard sprayer, harrows, plow, disc, stone boat, snowplow, hay rake and cultivator) had to be pulled by the team of horses.

The Zellers marketed their produce at the Menands Market north of Albany. Paul would make several trips per week during harvest time. They also marketed their fruits and vegetables door to door in the hamlet of Rhinecliff, five miles south of Barrytown. I hired on as their only paid "salesman" at 25¢, or a hotdog per day. I negotiated for both, but frugal Mollie would not yield. I must say that she was a very hard worker: canning, doing farm work, and keeping house and Howard in line. Howard was on the cutting edge of deviltry. What he didn't think of, Lynky did. Naturally, I was a willing partner of both hellions.

The Zeller farm was another place to hang out. It was fun being around the animals, jumping in the haymow, helping with the chores, and harvesting crops. It was especially rewarding in the winter when we would "borrow" apples and Mollie's preserves and eat them in a fox den that we had enlarged and covered with brush to escape detection. We would break the empty jars and bury the glass to destroy the evidence.

At the age of nine, I got my first job there picking strawberries for 2-1/2¢ per quart. In the winter, Howard and I were responsible for keeping the creek free of ice so the animals could drink. We always drank from the creek and springs in the Barrytown area. I can remember drinking from Zeller's creek, with a cow on one side of me and a horse on the other—that was a big deal. I was never sick a day in my life. I guess I built up immunity.

At fair time, Howard would pilfer a dollar from his mother's pocketbook. Since my brother, Bill, was oldest, he would get 34¢ and Howard and I each 33¢. This, coupled with what we had earned or scrounged elsewhere, was enough for us to have a grand time at the fair. Since there were several holes in the fence along Route 9, admission was free. I recall walking both ways to the fair, a distance of about 10 miles round trip.

I spent considerable time at the Zeller farm, either working or playing with Howard. The pay was not that great but playing in the haymow and taking care of the animals made up for it. Sometimes Paul allowed me to drive the team of horses.

I used to help the Zellers make hay in the fields on either side of the driveway leading to Blithewood. These were pre-hay baler days, so we had to mound up the hay that had been raked into a windrow before pitching it on the horse-drawn wagon. It was hard work but great fun to drive the team down River Road to Barrytown. Driving the horses, with the clip-clop sound as their hooves met the blacktop, made us feel that we were doing something very important.

Some time during the mid-to-late '40s I worked for Barton Orlich, a local trucker who did custom work for farmers with one of the first hay balers in the area. Initially, the baler was a "four-man" operation: tractor driver and two "men" who sat opposite each other on a small seat and pushed wires across to each other to make a connection. Then the hay was compressed and sealed in the form of a 60- to 80-pound bale. A fourth man stood on a single platform and helped feed the hay from the windrow into the baler. Unlike today, where the baler operates automatically and hurls the bales into the wagon, the bales dropped on the ground and had to be picked up by the field hands, creating additional labor.

Another advantage of growing up in Barrytown was having unbridled access to the local estates and institutions. We were basically free to roam as we pleased with few restrictions. "Our" territory stretched from the Delano Estate on the south (which today borders on the property occupied by Route 199 and the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge) to Ward Manor and Crugers Island on the north—a distance of approximately five miles. The Hudson formed the western boundary and River Road the eastern. While we were careful not to go near the private mansions, there was ample room to hike and explore between River Road and the Hudson. I must admit we would peak through the windows when we were sure the owners were not home, but we never broke anything or vandalized the property.

The Chapman family, in particular, allowed us to roam freely on their Sylvania Estate, especially around the farm and animals. We knew all the farm hands so we would join them at work in the fields or help with chores, mostly herding the cows in the pastures and "driving" them to the farm for milking. We would feed them hay and grain and climb up into the silo to "pitch down" the silage (chopped corn) which supplemented the cows' diet.

In short, Chanler's farm was a very appealing place to visit. We were welcome among the workers as long as we obeyed their rules. From time to time they would have to reprimand us, especially when we would start a battle using the half-inch slices of the corn silage as weapons. This was another highly competitive sport until we were caught.

During the '30s and into the war years, Chanler operated a creamery/ bottling plant at Sylvania. The milk was pasteurized and processed in glass bottles for delivery to local customers. Brother Bud was the first one to pasteurize milk for Chanler.

I used to ride along with the deliverymen just to help out and be around the action. I remember helping Dude Pulver, neighbor and farmhand, deliver milk to Ward Manor and especially to the summer cabins at Ward Lea, the area to the north of the main buildings on the way to the swimming pool, farm and Kidd Lane.

Chanler also bottled chocolate milk and some kind of orange drink that came in really handy in later years when we were on the payroll harvesting hay and corn. Nothing creates a thirst quicker than a dusty haymow.

I believe Chanler was a pioneer in experimenting with milking three times per day. I should note that I recently read in an old newspaper that Chanler sold his milk route in 1944 to Alvie Battenfeld. He had a creamery and bottling plant on Fraleigh Street in Red Hook, and the sale allowed him to expand his route delivery business. Mr. Battenfeld was another fine gentleman who was most generous to me when I mowed his lawn and helped maintain the grounds. I must have been too young to work in either of the creameries.

I fondly remember helping the farmhands cut and transport ice from Lake Robert to the Sylvania icehouse located next to the creamery. This was before the chainsaw was available, so all of the cutting had to be done with hand saws and chisel bars. My main chore was to lead the horse in pulling blocks of ice from the lake, up a ramp and onto a wooden platform. From there we would slide the ice onto the old Model "A" truck for transportation to the icehouse, a distance of

approximately 1-1/4 miles. I enjoyed a real feeling of accomplishment from being allowed to take part in this most worthwhile job.

There were times when Howard and I would leave home in the morning and hike through the properties of St. Joseph's, Montgomery Place, Zabriskie's (Blithewood), Bard College, Ward Manor and on to Crugers Island. Sometimes we would not return home until six o'clock. We never had to carry a lunch, however, for there was ample food along the way. We felt this bounty was fair game and would freely help ourselves. We would also surface near Bard and hike to their campus store located, at that time, at the north west corner of Stone Row. The store conveniently carried the essentials of life—candy, gum and ice cream. Sometimes we hiked over to see Fannie and George Hoffman on River Road, between the Ward Manor gatehouse and Route 9G, to buy the chocolate-covered caramel delicacy called hardtack.

One day I informed my father that I would be hiking to Crugers Island that day and probably would not be home until toward evening. With his sly grin he responded, "Go ahead, it will be one less mouth to feed." However, we did not feel any less loved, for we knew what he was thinking and we enjoyed his sense of humor.

It was great fun exploring the creeks and rivers in search of lizards, frogs, polliwogs, turtles, etc. on our way to Crugers Island. There were interesting treasures to be discovered there. We would dig for arrowheads and play among the Mayan ruins built by John Church Cruger.

In recent years there have been several articles written about the Mayan artifacts. John, whose father and grandfather served as Mayor of New York City, acquired the island in 1820 (the same year Edgewater was built). He built a home, landscaped the south end of the island with extensive gardens, and built false ruins (stone arches) to display the Mayan figures brought back from the Yucatan Peninsula. These figures, now among the Mexican collections at the Museum of Natural History in New York City, were said to act as vigils. I lament the fact that I did not pay closer attention to these ruins while hiking the area since there was so much more to view in the '40s. I remember the broken arches and segments of the house foundation. Unfortunately, today there are few traces of this historic wonder.

Many times we would locate the old carriage roads that traversed the estates and would also connect the bordering properties. This allowed the owners much privacy since they could drive their coaches through the woods to visit friends without having to surface on River Road. Though there was some

overgrowth of trees, the trails were still visible and made our travels less burdensome.

Reamer Kline, former President of Bard, points out in his book entitled *Education for the Common Good—A History of Bard College—The First 100 Years, 1850-1960, With an appreciation by Leon Botstein*:

> *"Carriage roads wound through each property and joined the roads of the neighboring estates and there are people still alive who can remember when you could drive all the way from Tivoli to Staatsburg on estate roads, hardly touching the public highway."*

Another of my favorite places to roam was St. Joseph's Normal Institute, built around 1929-30 to train young men from the Northeast to become Christian Brothers who went on to teach at Catholic high schools and colleges. After four years of high school level work, the graduates moved on to the novitiate where they continued their studies and spiritual life of prayer and sacrifice. It appears that this regimen was used to "weed out" those who were not totally committed.

Those who successfully finished their years at the novitiate were sent to Catholic University for two or three years. They finished their fourth year at a Catholic College (Manhattan, Fordham, etc.) where they received a Bachelor of Arts or Science. They were now ready to tackle the teaching profession.

I remember little about the novitiate. Patrick Leggett, who studied at St. Joseph's (1942-1947), informed me of the rigors of pursuing the curriculum to become a full-fledged Brother. Mr. Leggett left the order after five years of study to join the teaching staff at Rhinebeck Central High School where he taught all levels of Latin for many years until retirement.

St. Joseph's occupied the Aspinwall Estate that stretched from the river to River Road. The south boundary was Dock Road and to the north was Montgomery Place. Basically a self-sustaining operation, they raised pigs, chickens, dairy cattle, and all types of fruits and vegetables. They also operated a cannery and sawmill. The students were assigned work in the laundry, gardens, orchards, farm and hayfields to help minimize the cost of the operation.

As noted, the great majority of the students were from the Northeast, basically New York and New England. Many were the sons of immigrants who were fiercely devoted to the Catholic faith. I have a feeling that the economic conditions brought on by the Depression may have played a role in sending

some of the boys to St. Joseph's and other similar seminaries throughout the Northeast. Sending their boys to the Order served three purposes, helping to fulfill their religious obligation, providing a quality education free of charge, and lessening the economic burden of the family—similar to the services provided by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) of the '30s. However, this is pure speculation on my part. As my "Old Man" would say, "That's one less mouth to feed."

We enjoyed watching the Brothers compete in different sports. (Regardless of age, we called all members of St. Joseph's community "Brother.") Only recently, my brother Bill, who was an outstanding athlete and devoted sports fan, reminded me of the traditional New York vs. New England football game played annually on Thanksgiving morning. The teams were outfitted with the full football uniform—New York in green and white and New England in maroon and white. Bill and I would follow the line of scrimmage by moving up and down the field while vigorously rooting for the green and white.

Other interesting pastimes at St. Joe's, as we fondly called the institution, were visiting the farm, chatting with the workers, scrounging fruit and watching the sawmill operation.

Once when we were up in a tree filling up on cherries, a few of the teaching staff approached. They were praying with heads down as they enjoyed their daily stroll. I whispered, "Hold fast and keep quiet." The Brothers passed on through without discovering us. These are the kinds of mischievous acts that we enjoyed, beating the odds to get away with something!

With few restrictions, we were free to roam the grounds, use their handball courts, playing fields and pond for skating. Occasionally, the older boys were allowed to use their indoor basketball courts. The Brothers were a kind lot. They always made us feel welcome, possibly viewing us as future enrollees.

Our favorite spot at St. Joe's was the Aspinwall House (Messena) known by all of us as "the Mansion." This beautiful structure (still standing) was used to house the workmen. It contained a woodworking shop on the first floor and a cannery on the lower level.

Brother Cleophus was our guiding light. He allowed us to help in the shop, gather sap to make syrup in the cannery and, in general, would take us on his daily rounds. He was also responsible for erecting the "Brothers' Dock" near the foundation of a large icehouse located just north of Steamboat Dock. The

dock, erected each spring, had a huge platform because of daily use by so many students.

Brother Cleophus was the driving force behind the construction of our swimming facility at "the Point" (mentioned earlier). This was no mean feat, considering both facilities had to be removed each fall to prevent their destruction by the shifting ice. I should note that we assisted him with the construction of both swimming sites.

For lunch we would accompany him to the dining hall where the kitchen staff had set up an area to feed the help, our gang and the hobos who happened by. Sometimes he would bring the food to us at the Mansion workshop.

The dump was also a haven for us as we would scrounge old bats, baseballs, football bladders, pigskins, and hockey sticks which we would repair and use in our sandlot games. There was money to be made from what we found on the dump, but more on that later.

St. Joseph's left other lasting impressions on us. On Christmas Eve our whole family would attend midnight Mass at their chapel. To hear their entire student body sing and chant was a memorable experience.

Periodically, the Brothers, dressed in black robes, would walk the loop around Barrytown. They were a friendly group and always spoke to us. From a distance we would wave as they passed our house; upwards of one hundred Brothers would simultaneously return our wave.

With the passing of time the number of young men joining the vocation dwindled until the '60s when it became necessary to close the doors for good. Near the end, a lay high school was initiated, but it only lasted a year or two when low enrollment no longer warranted its continuance. Ironically, the seminary was sold to the Unification Church where teachings differ greatly from those espoused by the Catholic Church, but at least the wonderful grounds, spacious buildings and beautiful stained-glass windows have been preserved.

Bard College was another local institution within walking distance. We gave little thought at that time to walking three miles one way to the Village of Red Hook, Bard or Ward Manor and Crugers Island. Another three miles home provided us with plenty of exercise for one day. I should note that the local folks who owned cars would always stop to give us a ride. We never had to hitchhike; they all knew us, so a free ride was a given.

In the '30s and '40s Bard consisted of the main campus between River Road and Route 9G (approximately 30 acres), and the Chapel on the west side of River Road. The campus proper included Stone Row (the large gray building at the top of the hill across from the Chapel), administrative, kitchen and dining area to the south, the original library with the colonnade, the President's Circle to the north, and a stone dorm to the north of Stone Row. Behind Stone Row was a building which housed the heating plant on the lower level, a dance studio and sculpture room on the second floor and, on the third floor, a theater used both for plays and movies. On the 9G side of Stone Row and slightly to the north, the gymnasium and a girls' dorm (South Hall) basically completed the building complex. All of these buildings remain standing, although the Bard officials are considering demolishing the old gym. An infirmary that appears to have been a tenant house at one time was situated just north of the main entrance to Stone Row, near the present Student Union. That building has been relocated just south of the Blithewood gatehouse.

Bard College has a very interesting past. In 1853, Robert Donaldson sold Blithewood to John Bard. Donaldson then bought Edgewater in Barrytown. In the late 1850s Bard gave several acres to the Episcopal Church of New York City for a college and theological seminary (St. Stephen's, founded in 1860).

In 1927 the College became affiliated with Columbia University. A bulletin notice states: "Bard College—Residential unit of Columbia University—The degree of Bachelor of Arts of Columbia University is conferred upon graduation." The bulletin is not dated but it must have been printed between 1927 and 1944, at which time the 17-year relationship was liquidated. The name was changed to Bard College, and their mission was rewritten and greatly broadened. Coeds were also accepted in 1944 for the first time.

Today, the Bard campus comprises the Zabriskie Estate (Blithewood) which stretches from the river on the west, south to the hamlet of Annandale, and Route 9G to the east. Bard owns the majority of the buildings in Annandale, including Adolph's former tavern—some for administration and some for faculty housing. On the north, Bard encompasses the Ward Manor Estate, bringing their total campus to approximately 550 acres.

A walk through the campus today "boggles the mind." Construction since the '70s has been as follows: the Stevenson gym (a fitness center and pools), Kellogg library wing, Olin lecture halls, classrooms near the old gym; and Kline Commons, the dining room/student union across from the Chapel. More recently, Heinz Bertelsmann (another student union, bookstore and post office building) was erected south of the Chapel. An assortment of art/dance studios

has been provided. Several dorms have been built on the Blithewood property and at Ward Manor. Just north of the tennis courts, several new dorms have been erected. The Robbins and Manor houses (the buildings at Ward Manor) have been renovated to accommodate student housing.

Beautiful Blithewood Mansion has been restored and renovated to accompany the Levy Economic Institute. It is a "state-of-the-art" facility (comparable to a "think tank") and graduate facility addressing international economic issues. Several years ago I met two British graduate students there. In conversation I asked what they thought of the Levy Institute. They responded, "It's great! There is nothing comparable to it in all of England." In the past, William Buckley's television program, "Firing Line," was broadcast from there on a few occasions.

The original Italian sunken gardens that were planned and built by Robert Donaldson with the advice of the foremost landscape architect of the 19th century, Andrew J. Downing, have been fully restored. On either side of the road leading to Blithewood, there are studios and art galleries (Black, Avery and Blum).

The original Zabriskie farm complex, located across Annandale Road from the gatehouse and south of Stone Row, has been renovated and expanded to accompany the Building and Grounds quarters.

Bard President, Dr. Leon Botstein, has done an outstanding job of fund raising, providing a physical plant, and broadening the curriculum to bring Bard into the 21st century. The array of new facilities is amazing. He has been most innovative in establishing new programs at Bard: Environmental Studies and a field station on the cove, freshman writing programs, expanded graduate offerings and summer music festivals (at which he acts as orchestra conductor). He has been instrumental in bringing international scholars to the Bard campus to enrich the faculty and students. He has been featured in several national magazines for his accomplishments at Bard and is highly quoted in the academic community.

Of all of his accomplishments, I believe Dr. Botstein's crowning jewel is the Performing Arts Center, presently being constructed on the north side of Ward Manor, east and slightly north of Robbins and Manor House. The facility was designed by Frank Gehry, one of the foremost architects of our time.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Dick Griffiths, Director of Buildings and Grounds at Bard for the past 41 years and a local Justice of the Peace for

many years. Dick has been a friend of the Lewis family since his arrival at Bard in 1962. Mom worked for him at that time. He was associated with my brother, Lieutenant Thomas Lewis, when a deputy with the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department.

Dick is a unique individual in that he knows all aspect of construction: carpentry, electrical plumbing, air conditioning, water, sewage and logistics. His desk is piled high with blueprints that he has had to master in bringing about the campus as we know it today. He does a tremendous job of making Dr. Botstein's ideas and dreams become a reality.

We used to visit Bard regularly in the '40s. Today, when I return for periodic walks through the campus, I'm continually amazed at the growth and tremendous scope of its facilities provided for the students, despite the fact that enrollment since my early visits has increased threefold (approximately four hundred to twelve hundred students).

Despite its tremendous growth, Bard remains a most picturesque setting. Recently on a fall day, while Joan and I were walking from the Ward Manor gatehouse north toward Robbins House, I was struck by the sheer beauty of the view to the west. First one views a well-manicured field extending west to a multicolored, wooded area—the Catskills—rising majestically in the background. The only thing missing is a glimpse of the Hudson. It is easy to see why so many folks fall in love with the Hudson Valley and why Thomas Cole and Frederick Church chose this area when founding the Hudson River School of Painting.

Walking to Bard or Red Hook, a distance of approximately six miles round trip, was almost a daily routine for us. Sometimes we would catch a ride, but mostly we would walk the entire distance. To relieve the boredom of walking the same route, we would sometimes dig tar from the road and chew it, or walk the top plank on the "white fence" that bordered the Sylvania pasture just west of the fork in the road where Dock Road and Station Hill meet. To us, there was only one white fence. We never really had a decent bicycle we could depend on. Again, we prevailed upon Ed Smith or his hired man, Elmer Hogan, to keep things wired together.

Bard was another place for us to spend our idle hours. We would visit the campus store, located in the northwest corner of Stone Row, to buy the essentials of life, candy, soda and ice cream. It was fun just to hang out on the campus.

On Saturday nights we were welcome to view free films or plays at the theater on the third floor of the boiler plant building, behind Stone Row.

On occasion, we were allowed to use the gymnasium to play basketball. We also had access to the pool room and bowling alley on the lower level of the gym.

Since there was no Boys Club or YMCA in our area, Bard and St. Joe's became our hangouts. We certainly were blessed to have adults in charge of these places who saw their way clear to open their facilities to us at no charge. In retrospect, I often wonder if we showed these benevolent souls how much we appreciated their hospitality.

My favorite memory of Bard dates back to World War II when a contingent of Army personnel (approximately 200 men) was stationed there. They were a segment of the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). Many colleges and universities throughout the country were used for this purpose. Brother Bud recently informed me that he studied with an ASTP unit in California before being shipped to the Pacific theater in World War II.

The soldiers at Bard studied engineering and languages (mostly German). I recently read in a 1944 *Red Hook Advertiser* newspaper that the program only lasted one year. The program was discontinued by the military because there was such a critical need for soldiers with these particular skills in the various battle zones. Also, there was an acute need for recruits since the draft at that time was 200,000 men short.

It should be noted that the Army had an excellent relationship with Bard and was most pleased with the Bard faculty and the instruction given the troops. Bard's program was exemplary; the highest percentage of graduates of all the programs was selected from here.

Bard also maintained a small civilian body at that time (1943-1944). In 1944 there were 43 civilians enrolled. Only five graduated, but there was no graduation ceremony. The men, for the most part, were off to serve their country.

I remember being most impressed with the soldiers, as I watched them play softball, basketball and, on occasion I would run through the physical training exercises with them. They would jog north on River Road, past Ward Manor and out to Route 9G, then proceed south and turn right into the hamlet of Annandale, then proceed north back to campus to complete the circle. I felt like a "big shot" as I jogged along with them.

A swampy area behind the original gym had been cleared and dredged to provide a skating rink. I felt very privileged to work out with a soldier who had

played hockey with the New York Rovers (I believe this team was a farm club of the New York Rangers at that time). He would dress in full hockey uniform and would fire shots at the goal. I would help with his workout by returning the pucks to him at mid-ice.

I should note that Bill Asip was the officer in charge of physical training. After the war, he returned to Bard as Athletic Director and Coach. He later joined the administrative staff until retirement. He raised a family and became a pillar of the St. Christopher's Church community. He was also a referee at local high school athletic contests.

During my high school days after World War II, our local basketball and softball teams competed against Bard. We enjoyed the competition and established a fine relationship with the Bard players. Two of these fine student athletes stand out in my mind—Lee Gray, who later became a Bard Trustee, and Johnny Swanchek who became a professor at St. John's University. Recently, I tried calling John, only to be informed that he had died. I felt very bad that I had not contacted him sooner. I really looked up to him. We would sometimes add these two "ringers" when we played the town teams in the Mid-Hudson Valley. John was only 5'6" tall, but he was all heart. He never stopped hustling—an outstanding athlete. Lee was close to 6' and smooth as silk on the basketball court. It was a great joy to play with and against such unselfish, intelligent and talented athletes.

The estates and institutions north of Barrytown held far more interest than those to the south. As noted, much time was spent at Sylvania and, on occasion, we would venture to Rokeby and the Delano Estate adjacent to the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge. The interest in Rokeby was mostly along the river where we would scap for herring and spear suckers in the Mudder Kill. This was the outlet to the Hudson for the stream that separated Sylvania from Rokeby and fed Lake Robert before spilling over the man-made falls on its way to the river.

Rokeby's fascination, aside from Lake Robert, was in the boathouse owned by Winty and Rick Aldrich's father which sheltered a large sailboat. It was mounted on a large cart with railroad-type wheels designed to ride on the rails which entered from the Bay and ran into the boathouse. We periodically scapped within 30-40' of the boathouse, and would check out this huge vessel by lifting the side doors. We would climb aboard and pretend to be sailors. I do not ever remember it being launched during the '40s. I believe Mr. Aldrich was caught up with World War II and other postwar interests. The building eventually collapsed. Richard Aldrich noted that the boat originally belonged to

the Astors. He rescued it and has it stored at Rokeby. Someday it may again ply the Hudson.

Across the small bay at the mouth of the Mudder Kill was Aldrich's personal dock. To reach this area (actually a peninsula), one had to walk south of the Kill, cross the railroad bridge, and travel north about 300-400'.

On the south side of the peninsula was an area that actually had some sand, known as Jake Simmons' Beach. How it got its name remains a mystery. The Aldrich brothers never heard it referred to as such (only as Aldrich's Beach). Offshore (maybe 75 feet) was a small island that housed a lighthouse. We spent many pleasure-filled days exploring the island and peninsula and swimming at the sandy beach—a real novelty for us since "the Point" was mostly rock and small stones in the area that we cleared. My mother would take us there for picnics on Sunday afternoons.

One September day, as my mother, my sister Dorothy, and I were returning home from the "beach," we approached a Rokeby cornfield that provided silage for their dairy cattle. My mother told me to pick several ears of corn to take home. She sliced the kernels off the cob and fried them in bacon grease. There was no concern about cholesterol in those days. The result was a very tasty meal—just one more way my mother was able to create a delicious meal when the cupboard appeared to be bare.

Some years ago the railroad bridge burned. However, in the '90s Rick Aldrich, relying on his ingenuity and many connections, rebuilt the bridge using donated steel decking from a dismantled bridge. At minimal cost, he has made it possible to once again drive to their dock. Although the dock has been completely destroyed by the river ice, Rick informs that he hopes to restore it sometime in the future.

We would occasionally hike past Rokeby and on to the Delano Estate, mostly for wild cherries and berries, staying well away from the mansion and barns, for we did not have any contacts there. However, my friend, Harry Scism, got wind of the fact that the Delanos had a Christmas tree plantation that was there for the taking (topping). About the third year of securing our tree this way, we were feeling really confident that we could get in, top a tree and get out without being detected.

During our last venture, Harry was topping a beauty (the first tree was already on the ground) when I heard a noise in the distance that was getting louder. I shouted to Harry to hurry with his cutting for it appeared we had been

discovered. Down came the top—and then Harry. He shouted, "Run like hell, it's Ennis Keane!" (the superintendent of the estate). Run we did; without dropping our saw or trees, we "hightailed" toward the river. Mr. Keane began shouting for us to stop and continued the chase. Needless to say, we were scared to death, and hellbent for home.

We kept running—looking back to see if "Old Ennis" was gaining any ground. We seemed to be keeping our distance, but we were beginning to tire. As luck would have it, a very slow freight was passing by, headed in our direction. With little hesitation and without dropping our trees or saw, we jumped aboard one of the freight car ladders the way I had seen the train brakemen do it on many occasions. We were thrilled to realize that we once again had beaten "the system." As we looked south, we saw Ennis emerge from the woods. Fortunately, he had more commonsense than we, and gave up the chase.

We were home free, but as we approached the bend just south of Tower 71 where my father's fellow signalman was on duty, I shouted to Harry to disembark. I did not want the tower man reporting us to "the old man." So ended another of our annual conquests. It was fun while it lasted, but now we had to look ahead in search of another source of Christmas trees.

It is with great fondness that I reflect on our carefree days of roaming the estates. I marvel at the opportunities we had to explore, unimpeded by the owners. They accepted us as happy wanderers and allowed us to pursue our interests.

In March of 2002, my wife Joan, my sister Irene and I went hiking in Barrytown in search of Captain Tyler's family graveyard behind their two houses just east of the railroad bridge (left side of Dock Road). Tyler owned and operated the upper end of the Barrytown Steamboat Dock in the latter half of the 19th century. Robert Donaldson owned and operated the southern portion of the dock that ran from the present day Red Hook Boat Club to "the Point." We also viewed what was left of Lake Robert, explored Jake Simmons' Beach and the ruins of the Aldrich dock. We also collected some of the malformed and broken Goldrick bricks that were used as a filler base for the dock.

My father's brother, Francis, had married one of the Goldrick girls, whose parents owned a brickyard near Kingston, thus the interest in our collecting the souvenirs. We then proceeded to Ward Manor in search of their cemetery to explore the Ward Lea area (at one time used for summer campers) that had a cattle barn, foundations of other buildings, and the old swimming pool which the

public was allowed to use. On that hike we were unable to locate the pool. When Ward Manor closed, the State of New York had it filled in with gravel.

Irene had worked at Ward Manor in the latter part of World War II. Her duties brought her in contact with William Matthews, founder of Ward Manor along with William B. Ward, owner and operator of the Ward Baking Company. Matthews was a benevolent soul who was a pioneer in social welfare at the turn of the century and until his death in 1946. Most of his work and innovative programs for children and the elderly were done in the Northeast, particularly New York City where he became the first Commissioner of Child Welfare in that city. This commission was the forerunner of Social Services as we know it today.

Matthews was the author of the book *Adventures in Giving* published in 1939. Irene had been given a copy of this rare book while an employee. In the fall of 2001 the newspaper, *About Town*, carried a story by Claire O'Neill Carr, President of the Egbert Benson Historical Society, about the history of Ward Manor and William Matthews' contributions in particular.

This article, and discussions with Irene about her association with Mr. Matthews, motivated Joan and me to read the book. We found it well written and most informative about helping the less fortunate, as he spelled out his life's work in social welfare.

As we explored the various areas that day, Irene mentioned how fortunate we were when we were young in that we were welcome to hike the estates and institutions. She noted that we never littered or destroyed any property, and, except for the fruit, vegetables and Christmas trees which our gang pilfered, no thefts were committed.

We began to compare our easy access to the estates with the situation that exists today. The two parcels that envelop the hamlet of Barrytown (Sylvania and St. Joseph's) are basically off limits. Mrs. Lerrick, owner of Sylvania, does not operate the farm; the vacant farm buildings are well kept and the fields manicured. She is very sensitive to intrusion of any kind and will prosecute trespassers.

St. Joseph's was purchased by the Unification Church, and while they will allow visitors, the welcome mat provided by St. Joe's no longer exists. Reverend Moon's teachings are so different from that of the Catholic Church. This, coupled with his selecting wives and husbands for mass weddings and the original allegations of brainwashing the young and naive recruits, has left a bit of a bad taste in the Christian community.

Rokeby is still open to the public, but to reach it one no longer can travel the lane behind the post office that connects it with Sylvania. From Barrytown, one would have to use a boat or walk alongside the railroad tracks. The heirs of Rokeby have graciously made land available on the south end of their property to help with the development of Poets' Walk (entered from River Road). The owners of the Delano Estate also furnished land on the north end of their property to help this venture.

Bard College remains fairly open despite a few attacks on coeds over the past several years (more recently a mother and daughter). They offer the use of their facilities for youth basketball, with a fitness room and tennis courts available to the public for a reasonable fee. Many productions, lectures, television broadcasts and noncredit courses are also available. One can still hike Bard and Ward Manor and drive to the North Bay off Kidd Lane to launch a canoe or kayak. Much of the land is owned by the State of New York. Crugers Island is still open to the public, but it is heavily overgrown.

Two other factors enter this picture: We have become a nation of slobs. The amount of litter people leave at these sites is appalling; we've sort of worn out our welcome. The fear of lawsuits has also become a factor.

THE RIVER: FOOD, ENJOYMENT, INCOME

Besides swimming and skating on the Hudson, fishing occupied much of our time, especially in the spring and summer. We would spend many hours at Steamboat Dock among the fishermen. I always admired how far the adults could cast their lines in hopes of snaring catfish, bullheads, eels and white and yellow perch. I never owned a real fishing rod so I was content to use a drop line off the dock for the perch and sunfish. These were pre-PCB days, and so nothing was thrown back or went to waste. People would share with their neighbors.

I have to admit that I was never much of a fisherman or hunter. As a fisherman I didn't have the patience, and as a hunter I was a poor shot and never did get into the shooting of game. I left these two endeavors to Bud, Bill and Tom.

However, over the years, I did invest $50 in two shotguns. The last one, purchased for $20, was a Marlin 12-gauge pump gun. Not knowing much about guns other than the Ithaca and Winchester, I asked Brother Bud what kind of a gun the Marlin Company made. He replied, "I don't know about the quality of their guns, but they sure made a fine razor blade."

Tom, especially, was a superb marksman. In later years, he operated the firing range and taught gun use and safety to the deputies while assigned to the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office. Over the years, he received many awards for his marksmanship. He would really "clean up" at the many "turkey shoots" held by the local gun clubs. Bill still provides both family and friends with a variety of fish year 'round. He has become very adept at ice fishing in the local lakes and ponds.

I never felt left out, however. I was always welcome to accompany the hunters since I could flush out the rabbits, pheasants and deer with the best of the hound dogs. I loved getting out in the woods, enjoying nature and the camaraderie with the fellows. Also, I was looking past the rather boring sport of hook and line off the dock. I had bigger fish to fry (shad, that is). There was the excitement to enjoy down at "the Point," not to mention the money that could be earned—more on that later.

We began, in early spring, to monitor the arrival of suckers in the Mudder Kill (we called it the "Muddy" Kill). Separating Sylvania from Rokeby, the creek skirts the southern and western shorelines of what used to be Lake Robert, spills over manmade falls into the Mudder Kill under the railroad tracks, and then joins the Hudson River. There is no more Lake Robert as we knew it; over the