

July 1983

The Parishioner

THE ST. BONIFACE MARTYR CHURCH PUBLICATION

A HISTORY OF ST. BONIFACE PARISH

— by Bill Barlow



It sometimes appears as though we Catholics believe that the spirit of ecumenism began with John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council. This, despite Christ's injunction in John 17:21, and the series of Ecumenical Councils beginning with Nicaea I in 325 AD. Actually, our Parish was ecumenically helped at its founding by an Episcopalian benefactor — who, coincidentally, also helped the Methodists, his own St. Luke's, and the Plymouth Brethren, as well.

Since our Faith Community is part of that wider entity to which we all pay taxes, however, we should start our story there. In 1668, the Muskeeta Cofe Patent was issued by England's King Charles II of the restored House of Stuart to Joseph Carpenter (for whom our Avenue is named). The grant included the land which is now between the Glen Cove City line and

Littleworth Lane (then just a trail leading from the shore to Piping Rock and beyond to Oyster Bay), and between Main Avenue and Hempstead Harbor. This acreage became the farm with a dwelling for Joseph Carpenter and his family. Joseph's son, Latting Carpenter and his wife Martha Searing Carpenter lived on the cliff overlooking the Harbor; and another son, Benjamin Carpenter lived near the present water company pumping station. (If you note a strange familiarity about some of these family names, it could be your recollection of Lattingtown nearby, and of Searingtown farther inland.)

Benjamin Carpenter was the sailor-owner of a large boat which he could moor in the natural cove then existing where Prospect Avenue curves toward Laurel Avenue. (That general area took on the name of "Rum Point" when it was used by rum-runners as a landing during Prohibition in the 1920s.)

Soon after the Benjamin Carpenters built there, the place was visited by pirates. Mrs. Carpenter was at home alone when



SEA CLIFF CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

THE INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF SEA CLIFF, NEW YORK 11579

the pirates came. They didn't molest her but went to the stable, borrowed the Carpenters' horse and a drag, and disappeared. Later in the day they returned hauling a huge wooden chest which they took up the hill and buried. The next evening, the same pirate crew came back, dug up the box they had buried and took it away.

Farther along Prospect Avenue, what is now Scudder's Pond was until the turn of this century an estuary known as Pirates' Glen. It was said that the pirates buried their treasure in what is now the golf course.

In a cellar of the Joseph Carpenter home, the family conducted what we would call a "cottage industry" of weaving. They had been instructed in the process by an expert from Ireland named Coluell.

The Carpenters' pasture was in the general area of Sea Cliff and Prospect Avenues; their corn was planted where the Village Hall now stands; their orchard was in the natural depression along Park Place; and Laurel Avenue was where their strawberry patch flourished.

The land to the southwest was part of the "Littleworth Patent." Carpenter and the other proprietors of the Muskeeta Cofe (Mosquito Cove) had no way of knowing that the Indians, who had long farmed these north shore hills, paid little attention to the bargains they had made with the King's men. The red-skins — Matinecocks, one of the fifteen bands on Long Island, all of whom were of the Algonkian tribe — also sold to George Downing (another Avenue), Richard Kirby, Robert Godfree and Jacob Brookin a large tract of land. This included the Littleworth Patent and the northern part of what we know as Glenwood Landing, which was then known as Duck Cove.

The Downing House — said to have been built in 1689 — is still standing on Littleworth Lane near the shore. Other Indian grants were to the Joseph Motts and, surprisingly in an age when women rarely held property, to Anne Roper.

When we were kids, an occasional arrow- or tomahawk-head could be found, generally near the beach (often in piles of bivalve shells presumably left by the Indians). We would visit the Indian graveyard on the Eiler property, where at an earlier time the skeleton of an Indian young woman had been exhumed accidentally by men digging out a pine tree. The maiden had been buried in a sitting position with her arms crossed at her breast. As the skeleton was being removed, the trunk crumbled and was reburied; but the skull was sent to the Heckscher Museum in Huntington.

What is now Sea Cliff was in the hands of the British during the Revolutionary War. Most of the citizenry was loyal to the King — Tories. The famous Black Watch Regiment was stationed across the creek at Garvie's Point, and other British Soldiers were encamped on the hill just above where the new Pavilion has been built.

Allegedly, during this occupation, an "American" spy by the name of Jesse Coles of Glen Cove lay hidden in a barn near Garvie's Point. Coles was betrayed by a relative who held royalist sympathies. Jesse barely escaped with his life when the British surrounded his hide-away, by dashing out the side door of the barn, knocking down several soldiers in his flight to the nearby woods. He got away, according to the tale.

Time passed, the Revolution swirled through this area, we became a Nation, and then we divided ourselves — even to a Civil War. That misfortune over, there was a wave of religious fervor which showed itself in the large number of prayer meeting encampments along the Atlantic seaboard. Such a camp meeting was widely publicized as having been held in Glen Cove in 1865.

By 1871, a group of Methodists from Brooklyn and Manhattan organized the Metropolitan Camp Ground Association, and purchased from the heirs of Joseph Carpenter some 240 acres bounded on the west by Hempstead Harbor, on the east by Main Avenue, on the north by the present Glen Cove line, and on the south by Littleworth Lane as far west as Glenlawn Avenue continuing straight west to the Harbor.

The Association paid \$270,000 to build: a Tabernacle which seated 5000, an Old Ladies' Home, a steamboat dock, waterworks, a boardwalk along the shore. Soon, many of the camp meeting worshippers were staying for the whole summer, living in tents on the 40 x 60 plots leased to them by the Association.

Gradually, camp sites were purchased, and the tents gave way to more substantial dwellings. The narrow, irregular roads in Sea Cliff often owe their history to the time they were simply paths between rows of tents.

In October 1883, with only thirteen families (and a bachelor pastor of the Methodist Church) in the census, Sea Cliff became one of the first Incorporated Villages in New York State. Frederick William Geissenhainer (about whom more will be said later) was elected President of the Village; and John Pirie, J. C. Cloyd and George W. Gardner were elected Trustees.

To look at Sea Cliff today, it is hard to believe that at the turn of this century it was one of the largest and most popular summer resorts on the Eastern Seaboard. But that is no exaggeration! In the decades after its incorporation, the crowd of summer visitors grew, many of them staying to build substantial properties. More than twenty hotels and boarding houses flourished. Throughout the summer, hundreds came on weekend cruises by steamboat from New York, or by the ferry service which regularly plied between here and Rye, New York. Beaches were crowded, and the harbor filled with sails.

The Battershall Inn stood where Memorial Park now is; The Sea Cliff Hotel was on Fourteenth Avenue between Central and Prospect Avenues; a cable car carried passengers from the steamboat *Sagamore* or the *Idlewild* docked at the Harbor, up to the top of the cliff; there was the Soundview, the Plaza Park, Comfort Cottage, The Pinnacle, the Monterey, the Brunswick, the Towers, Glenada, and the Willow Tree Inn. Several of these buildings still stand but have been converted to other uses. The boarding houses most often mentioned in Parish records were Murray House and The Kenwood.

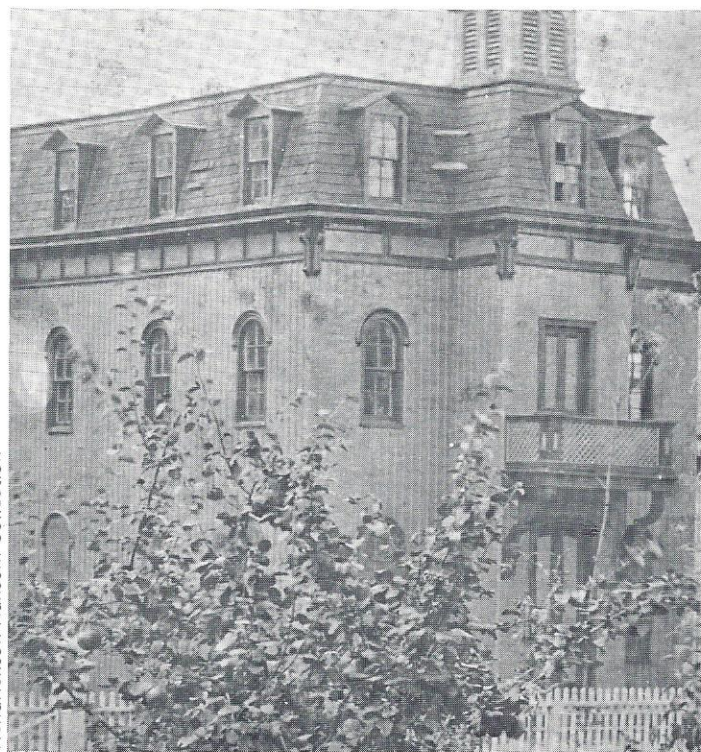
One hundred years ago, the horse-and-buggy, the stage coach, the bicycle and the trolley car provided local transportation. Excursion boats, the ferry and the railroad were the Village's only contacts with the outside world. A stage ran daily between the Post Office and Glen Cove. The trolley whose tracks followed Twelfth Avenue to Main, jogged south on Main to Glen Avenue, jogged again on Glen Cove Avenue

to Sea Cliff Avenue, down to the railroad station, met all trains on one end, and all boat passengers from the cable car, on the other end. Later the tracks were laid through Glen Cove to the Landing. Even when we were young, the fare was a nickel for the whole ride. When the first automobile came to town in 1902, there were wild accounts in the *Sea Cliff News* of accidents caused by bolting or rearing horses frightened by the new contraption.

There are references in the Parish records to several taverns along Glen Cove Avenue, the big pond and the foot-bridge in Glen Cove, to the Race Track in Glen Head, the boat dock in Glenwood Landing, the Starch Works in Glen Cove, and the Old Opera House.

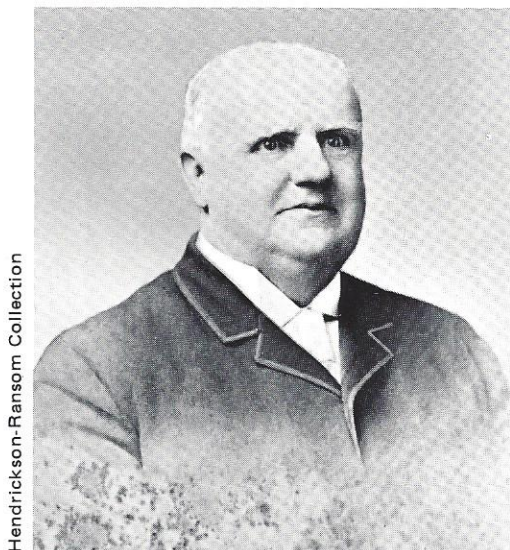
On Fourteenth Avenue about 300 feet west of Central Avenue, a dormitory and chapel was built for the use of the clergymen who came to Sea Cliff Grove to conduct the camp meetings. That so-called "Old Chapel" in 1874 became the first Methodist Church. In 1883, it housed the first public school. Later it was the first home for St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and as late as 1918 it became the chapel for the Plymouth Brethren until they built, up the street from us, in 1948. The "Old Chapel" was finally torn down in 1970, having served as a rooming-house for the 22 years between. But that is to get away from our story.

By the early 1890s, there was a small group of the Roman Catholic persuasion in Sea Cliff. They traveled by stage to St. Patrick's Church in Glen Cove for Sunday Mass. On July 18, 1897, Father James McEnroe from St. Patrick's opened a mission in Sea Cliff and celebrated his first Eucharist in the Old Chapel on 14th Avenue.



The "Old Chapel" — original home for the Public Schools, St. Boniface, St. Luke's, the Methodists, the Plymouth Brethren, and the Christian Scientists — as it was in 1883.

It was the already-mentioned Episcopalian, Frederick William Geissenhainer who provided the use of the Chapel. He apparently had great wealth for his time. He bought much of the land in Sea Cliff Grove when the Association began selling plots instead of leasing them. He had the largest bathhouse on the beach. He was the first elected President of the Village, after its incorporation in October 1883. He organized the F.W.



Hendrickson-Ransom Collection

F. W. Geissenhainer, Benefactor

Geissenhainer Engine Company No. 1 to fight fires. He had a reservoir constructed. (When we were young, the street now known as Ransom Avenue was still named Geissenhainer Avenue — which most of us mispronounced as "Geissenheimer".) Mr. Geissenhainer was called "the best benefactor of the [St. Boniface] Church among the resident non-Catholics," by the first Pastor, Father Donohoe, in his *Historia Missionis*.

The *Sea Cliff News* [7/17/97] took note of the "first Catholic services to be held in Sea Cliff" and added that "in the near future, a Catholic Church will be erected in this beautiful village." Before the year 1897 was out, the Catholic lay people — with money donated by Mrs. K. I. Reilly — had purchased a one-acre plot of land owned by a Mrs. Reckewec, at the edge of the Grove on the corner of Glen and Carpenter Avenues upon which to build that church. Meanwhile, the Old Chapel provided sanctuary for celebrations of the Mass for the next two years.

In 1898, Bishop Charles E. McDonnell, the second Bishop of Brooklyn Diocese, formed a new parish which he named St. Boniface Martyr, and appointed Father James J. Donohoe as first Pastor. Father Donohoe celebrated his first Mass on July 3, 1898 in the Old Chapel. Again, the *Sea Cliff News* [7/9/98] correctly predicted: "As Father Donohoe is a hustler, it will not be long before a handsome new church will be erected." They broke ground for the edifice on January 11, 1899, and volunteers (including many non-Catholics) carted bricks and fieldstone from the Glenwood Landing dock and from the Long Island Railroad station in Glen Head. On June 11, 1899, the cornerstone for the church building was laid.

The work of building the Parish proceeded, as well. Father Donohoe set up a Sunday School and organized a Junior Choir, formed an Apostleship of Prayer, arranged for a mission,

At the turn of the Century

Henry O. Korten Collection



The Hegeman Home which became the Convent, and then the Parish Center, as it appeared in 1908. Evidently the ground level was raised since then.



Mrs. Charles Myles



Trolley Car turns from Main Avenue into Glen Avenue just before passing the Church. Glen Avenue, though a dirt road, seems wider somehow, in this turn-of-the-Century shot.

got the Holy Name Society underway, and the St. Aloysius and Holy Angel Sodality organized, took the first census, celebrated the first Confirmation, trained the first altar boys. He set up the St. Boniface Guards for youths age 9 through 15. He bought an old boarding house and turned it into a Rectory; and there was a special collection to furnish it. Instead of charging pew rent, as was the contemporary custom, an "admission fee" of ten cents was taken at the door as one entered for Mass.

The social life of the Church blossomed, all with the point of fund-raising. A news account of the time tells of "lectures, balls, stereoptican views, picnics, minstrel shows, fairs (one, in 1897 netted \$1,200), concerts, lawn parties, open-air dancing, euchre (card) parties and suppers . . ." The dancing and the euchre probably shocked the Methodists of the time!

The moment the basement of the church was completed, Father Donohoe again appealed for the parishioners to harness their horse teams to carry chairs, benches and an altar to the site, where Mass was celebrated on July 9, 1899. The completed church building was dedicated by Bishop Charles E. McDonnell, D.D., on April 22, 1900.

only 36; with 29, in 1903; in 1904, just 25; in 1905, only 22; then, there is no further record. Prohibition was a little more than a decade away.

In 1902, the first St. Patrick's Day Supper was served, and netted \$142.40. It soon became the Parish event of the year, attracting people from the whole Oyster Bay peninsula. Its eat-all-you-like meal prepared and served by the Ladies Guild in an atmosphere of carefree joy was finally discontinued in the 1950s for lack of ability to handle the crowds.

The first curate, Reverend Joseph A. Zimmer, served from 1904 through 1905, followed by the Reverend Patrick Hart. Father Donohoe was transferred in 1906 to St. Martin of Tours in Brooklyn.

Reverend William L. O'Hara was the second Pastor at St.



The first church (about 1900), without bell or covered entrance. It seated 300 and had marvelous acoustics.

The *Sea Cliff News* for September 2, 1900 reported that Father Donohoe had participated at suitable ceremonies to unveil the Geohegan Monument in the small park on the corner of Eighth and Roslyn Avenues. John Geohegan, a member of St. Boniface Parish, had died while serving in the Army during the Spanish-American War.

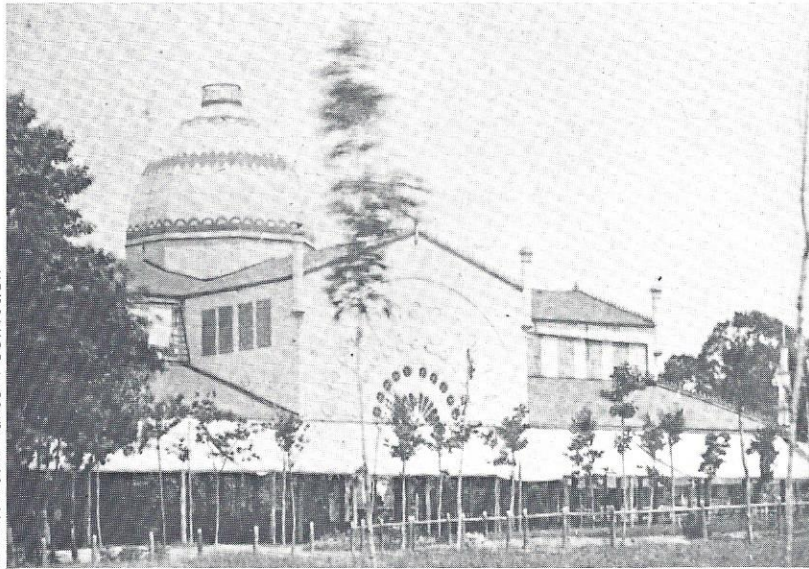
Boniface Martyr [1906-1909] and he early became known for his civic interest, his instruction of non-Catholics, and for his generosity. In June of 1906, he gave the commencement address at the Sea Cliff High School graduation exercises. It was he who urged his parishioners and others in Sea Cliff to send money to aid those suffering from the San Francisco earthquake. Later, they collected for victims of an earthquake in Italy.

A Temperance Society was begun in April 1901 and lasted for five years. Why it finally extinguished itself is evident in the records: the first year, 64 "took the pledge;" then, in 1902,

John Casey, a veteran of the Civil War, died in his home in Glen Cove on February 15, 1908. The Mass was said at St.



Once upon a time...



Hendrickson-Ransom Collection

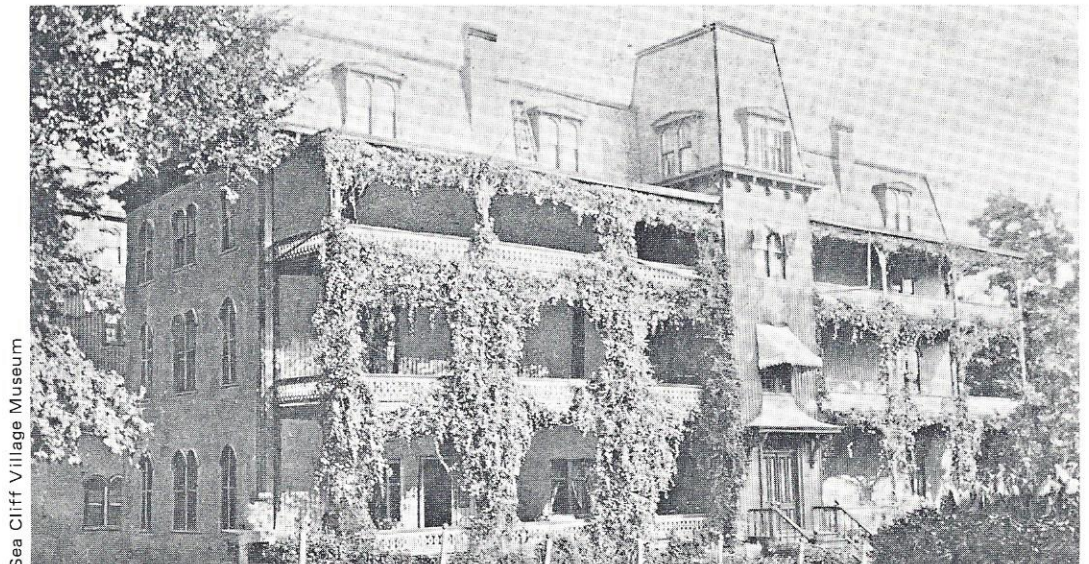
The original Tabernacle as it stood on Summit Avenue in 1870 seated 5000 worshippers who came for camp meetings.



Hendrickson-Ransom Collection

Family tent used in 1870s to house camp meeting members. Tent canopy seems frivolously ornate for a religious settlement, but other accommodations are obviously austere.

Sea Cliff Hotel stretched from Prospect to Central Avenues on Fifteenth Avenue, had 300 rooms, a dining hall to seat 1000, bowling alleys, and a croquet court which is now Prospect Park. Torn down in 1916. Card was printed in Germany.



Sea Cliff Village Museum



Shore Road at Pumping Station, where Benjamin Carpenter once moored his boat in what was a cove. Note that auto and horse-drawn carriage share the dirt road in 1904.



It was a busy waterfront in 1910, when the Ferry from Rye, N. Y. and an Excursion Steamer from Manhattan arrived at the same time.

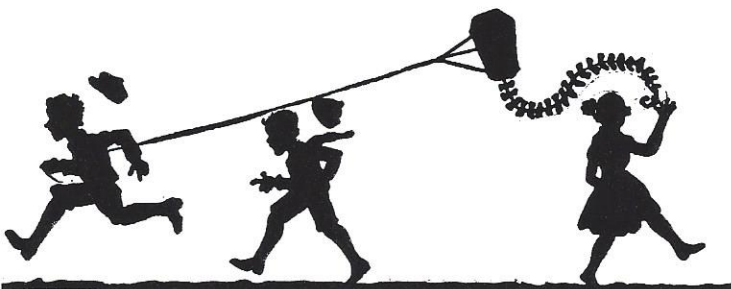
"THE PARISHIONER"

ST. BONIFACE MARTYR CHURCH

Parish Center, Glen Avenue, Sea Cliff, N.Y.

Publisher Rev. Donald F. Diederich
Editor William H. Barlow
Photography Ken Spencer
 Katherine Spencer
Typesetting Albert M. Bell
Printing Economy Press, Inc.

For photographs in this special issue, we are indebted — in addition to the Spencers, who regularly and splendidly serve here — to the Sea Cliff Village Museum, the Hendrickson-Ransom Collection, the Henry O. Kortzen Collection, to the Allen Williams Collection, Mrs. Charles Myles, and to the Parish Archives (where, God bless 'em, no one apparently ever thought to put a name or date on the back of a picture!).



kids korner

Sea Cliff, from the start, always was a big baseball town. In those days, almost every village on Long Island had competent teams. The rivalry between Sea Cliff and Glen Cove, Oyster Bay, Hicksville and Mineola was extreme. Tempers often ran hot. "The Idlewilds" played in Sea Cliff uniforms in the 1880s.

Then, early in this century, the teams began to be more semi-pro. A player sometimes found he was playing with — or against — a top ex-big-leaguer, too. Sea Cliff won the Nassau County Championship in 1912. There were gold medals (real gold, at that time!). There was a big parade, and later a dinner and a dance.

St. Boniface once fielded a first-rate team, in the days of Father Donohoe. The *Sea Cliff News* for August 11, 1900 said: "If you want to see an exciting baseball game, just watch the team from St. Boniface. Their little catcher is all right. So is the pitcher. The only trouble with the team is that it takes from seven to fourteen umpires to [give good] decisions during the game. 'Umpire is no good', 'Fire him out'. Zip. Out he goes and another is chosen. And Father Donohoe, the popular pastor, smiles and says nothing, while he permits the boys to settle their own disputes." Doesn't sound like Little League, does it?

Even when we were kids, in the 1920s, there was baseball-fever, here. The House of David (an all-Jewish team that wore big black beards — but really played ball) was here several times. Donkey Baseball — actually played on mule-back — was a lot of fun to watch, because the stubborn mules often refused to budge when a player was trying to run the bases after a hit.

Basketball was also a favorite sport. The Sea Cliff team was County Champs in 1898 and 1899. The Sea Cliff A.A. team was Long Island Champions in 1903-04. The Sea Cliff High School always had great basketball teams, into the 1930s. One County champion team was in 1910.

Scudder's Pond was the delta of brooks running from the springs in what is now the golf course, until the area was filled in to form the road by Tappen Beach. That is when Scudder's Pond was made in 1906. Skating on that Pond started then. Before that, the kids used to skate on a small pond in what is now North Shore Acres. Another small pond behind the St. Christopher's Home had some good ice, too. The biggest pond, though, in this area was the one on the southeast corner of Glenwood-Glen Head Road and Fire House Hill. That pond was filled in long ago. It was where the Glenwood Landing Post Office and the other buildings are now.

Hempstead Harbor used to freeze over quite often in the old days. There was a lot of skating and ice-boating on the Harbor then. There seems to have been a lot more snow then, too. The roads weren't plowed and there weren't many automobiles. Glen Avenue, Prospect Avenue, Central Avenue and Laurel Avenue were the most popular places for sledding. Everyone owned a Flexible-Flyer, and there were many bobsleds. The older boys used to take the younger kids on bobsled rides which were thrilling. Some kids were killed sledding, though. So it wasn't 100% wonderful, either.

Sailing and fishing were good sports here. Swimming was great, because the water was so clear and pure. Bicycling was safer, too, because there were so few cars.

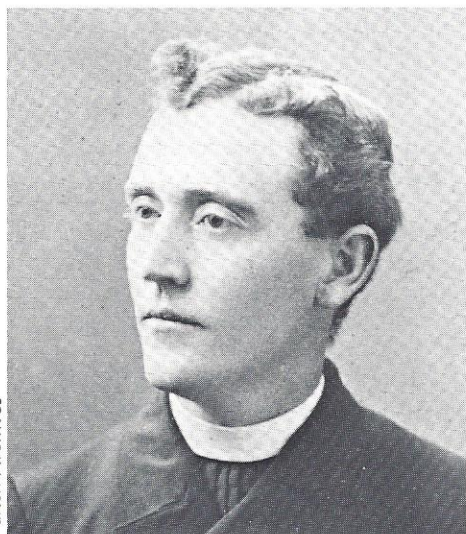
Best of all, though, was the fact that Sea Cliff was not so built up. There were a lot of places that were open. There were more — lots more — spaces where you could play and explore and have adventures. There were places where you could get away from adults!



Children in 1907 wait for start of a push-mobile race.

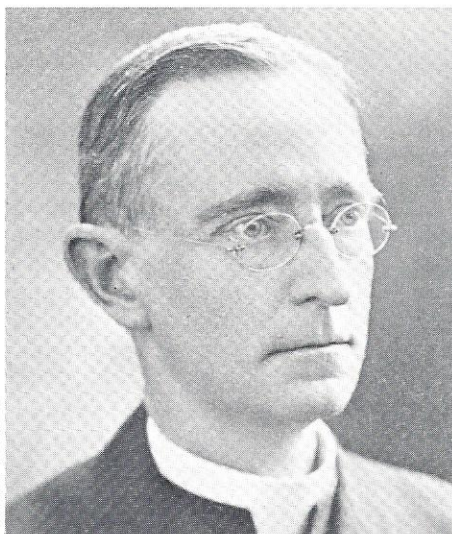
Pastors Past and Present

Parish Archives



Rev. James J. Donohoe
[1898-1906]

Parish Archives



Rev. William L. O'Hara
[1906-1909]

Allen Williams Collection



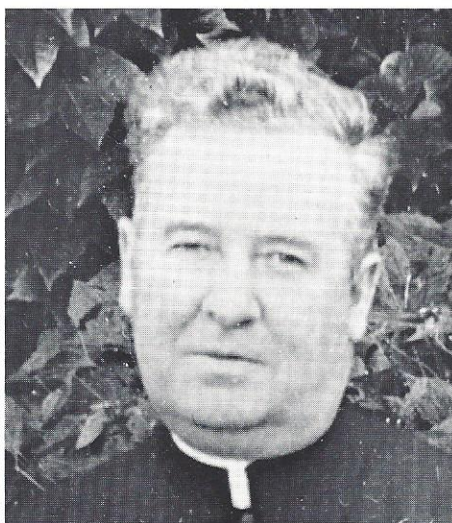
Rev. Louis J. Sloane
[1909-1926]

Parish Archives



Rev. Patrick J. Ford
[1926-1937]

Allen Williams Collection



Rev. Charles B. Garvey
[1937-1946]

Parish Archives



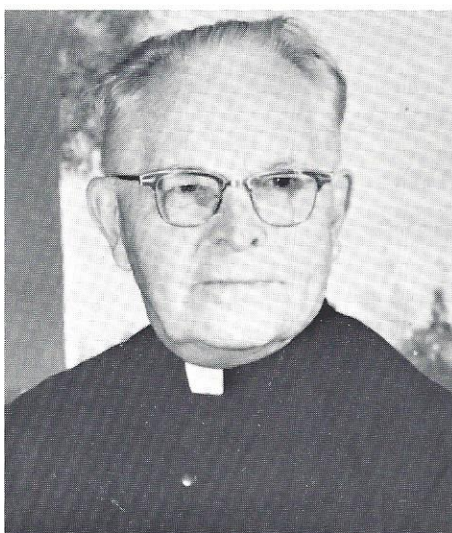
Rev. William J. Gately
[1946-1952]

Courtesy of F. Roy McMahon



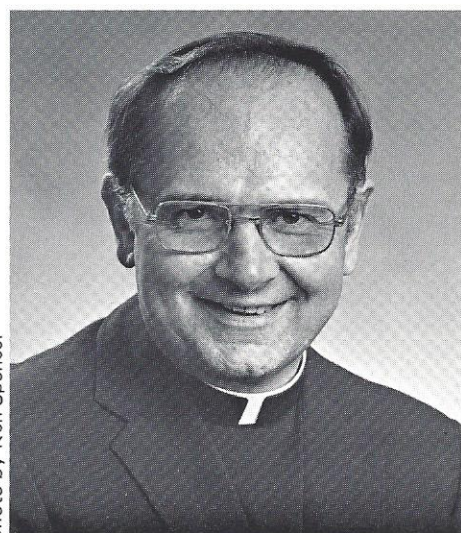
V. R. Monsignor Vincent J. Baldwin
[1953-1956]

Parish Archives



Rev. John J. Fee
[1956-1980]

photo by Ken Spencer



Rev. Donald F. Diederich
[1980-]

Boniface because he had been a member of the Parish — which had, of course, not yet been organized during that conflict.

The Pastor who followed was by disposition apparently something of a local John XXIII (before his time). The Reverend Louis J. Sloane, who lasted until 1926, managed to pay off the church debt and began to dream of a parochial school. To this end, he started to build a treasury. He was well liked by non-Catholics in town. He made many converts, as a matter of fact; and was known for his great charity toward all people.



Evidently, the Pastor was a particular buddy of Dr. Lewis K. Moore, then-minister of the Methodist Church. Stories remain of their friendship, and of how they met almost daily in the back-room of Mr. Charles Bauman's "tonsorial parlor" opposite the old Methodist Church building to spend some time together. It is well documented that Dr. Moore didn't smoke, drink or play cards, so one assumes they just enjoyed each other's company and intellectual stimulation. It's further proof, if it were necessary, that ecumenism is hardly a new thing.

A new church bell was blessed on Thanksgiving Day 1916 and began to ring out the Angelus three times each day and to call the Parish to Divine Worship. Weighing one thousand pounds, it was made by the Meneely Bell Company of Troy, New York, and is still in service.

In the late 1880s, the Sea Cliff Grove Association had begun to sell building lots, and a group of these was purchased at the north end of Main Avenue by the German Methodist Church. They took over the Tabernacle, and built a small church edifice. Their camp meeting flourished until about the time of the first World War. Many of their number had become permanent year-round residents.

Unfortunately, at a time when sauerkraut was renamed "Liberty Cabbage" and the Frankfurter became the "hot dog," a small element in Sea Cliff harassed those of German ancestry (including the then-President of the Village). There was talk of lanterns signalling U-boats, and other nonsense. The German Methodists nevertheless served the United States in the military, bought War Bonds, and did what the rest of the country did to win the War.

James F. Brengel, a member of St. Boniface Parish, was among the Sea Cliff "boys" killed in action. The local American Legion Post was named in his honor. (His son and namesake, born after his death, fell in World War II!)

There is no record of harassment or of open bigotry against Catholics in Sea Cliff, despite the fact that in the mid-1920s there was a Klavern of the Ku Klux Klan here.

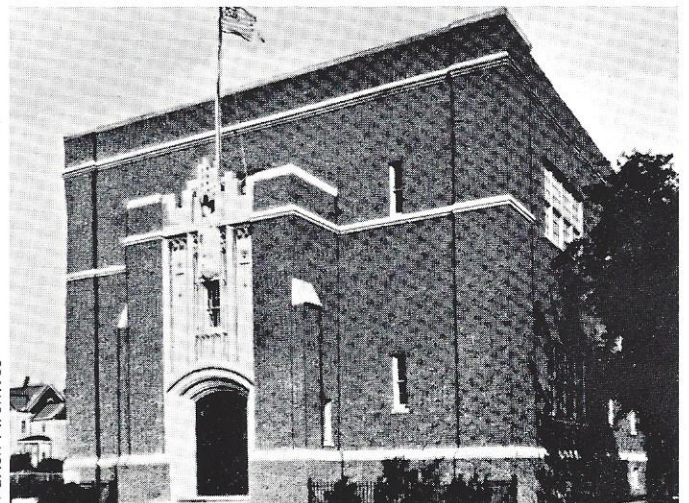
When Father Sloane was suffering his last illness, public prayers for his recovery were said in all the Protestant churches in Sea Cliff and in the Jewish Synagogues in Glen Cove. During the last two years of Father Sloane's pastorate, Reverend Aloysius H. Gillick and then the Reverend William Rhatigan served as administrators.

A census taken in October 1923 showed 140 families where both spouses were Catholic, and 260 families where only one spouse was Catholic. There were then 859 Catholics in the Parish. A Sunday School held at the time averaged 135 youngsters in attendance. Fifty were Baptised that year; 26 made First Holy Communion; thirteen couples were married (of which 3 were "mixed" marriages); and there were 16 deaths.

The "diamond-in-the-rough" who followed Father Sloane is still remembered by many in the community: Reverend Patrick J. Ford [1926-1937]. Irish-born, with a tough exterior, he was the sort of Pastor who visits his flock, family by family.

Carrying forward Father Sloane's dream, the School became his great effort, and it was brought to reality at a cost of a quarter-million dollars. It opened in September 1928 with an initial enrollment of 150 pupils.

Originally, a few Sisters of St. Joseph and the laity gave instruction to the children; but Father Ford arranged for the Mercy Sisters to staff the School. The Pastor bought a home across Glen Avenue from the church and remodeled it as a Convent. This it remained until the present Pastor, Father Donald F. Diederich, arranged for its conversion into a Parish Center, containing the Hope Chapel and an upper-floor Rectory, this past year.



The St. Boniface Martyr School at its opening in 1928.

In those days, people held family pews (evidently the "admission fee" at the beginning of the Church's history was early abandoned). An April 1930 Chart which is tattered at the edges shows the following Pew Holders at St. Boniface's. Many of the names are still familiar. They are: Mr. and Mrs. John Cantwell, John E. Curley, John Dunn, Sr., Mrs. P. J. Segue, Mrs. John Martin, Joseph Bartley, Mrs. Daisy Dowd, Daniel Deneen, John Wischebrink, John J. Neafsey, Mrs. John McAdams, Bryan Murray, Mrs. Catherine Miller, James Kane, E. J. Meany, T. H. Meany, Mrs. A. Lavelle, Miss Annie Mackin, Mrs. E. A. Wansor, Thomas M. James, John Englert, Mrs. Grimelsbacker (sic!), J. H. Jarvis, Michael Meyers, Mr. Pfister, Mrs. R. Hendrickson, Fred Groiss, Miss P. Probin, Miss Edna Britt, Otto Schmitz, George Schleicher and John Grumman.

The Great Depression hit the country, and it seriously affected St. Boniface Martyr. Few could meet pledges made in good faith, and the church was burdened with debt. Father Ford in 1932 organized a "conference" of the St. Vincent dePaul Society as one bulwark against personal need suffered by the parishioners and others in Sea Cliff during those stark days.

To make matters worse, in 1936 an arsonist set fire to the church building on three occasions, causing heavy damage. He was caught and given psychiatric treatment, but this damage added to the financial load of the Parish.

The curates assigned to St. Boniface Martyr during Father Ford's tenure were: Reverend W. W. Kroupa [1927-28], Reverend James F. Bradley [1928-29], Reverend Patrick O'Connor [1929-34], Reverend Cornelius Toomey [1934-35] and Reverend George F. O'Mara, who came for a long stay in 1935.

When Father Ford was moved to St. Sylvester's in Brooklyn, he was succeeded by Reverend Charles B. Garvey [1937-46], a native of Cutchogue, who was one of the first vocations from Suffolk County. During his pastorate, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was organized, the Confraternity of the Rosary was begun, and the Carmelite Third Order set up a chapter here. This was an era of renewed prosperity and of World War II, when many Catholic families moved out to the suburbs and into the Parish.

Despite the return of better times, many still felt the pinch of the long depression; so to aid them to adjust financially while helping them avoid the high interest rates of the loan companies, a cooperative credit union was established among the parishioners. Small loans at very low interest rates were of untold value.

During World War II, parishioners knitted scarves, held blood-banks, rolled bandages, sat fire-watches, entertained "the boys" from Mitchel Field and the Roslyn Air Base, whispered about the strange boats quartered at Fyfe's Shipyard in Glenwood Landing that were tested up and down the Harbor (which they later learned were "PT Boats" of Pacific fame). They wrote a lot of V-Mail letters. They also held special prayer services for various D-Days. As a matter of fact, they did a lot of praying!



More than 400 men and women of St. Boniface served in our armed forces; and of these, 15 made the supreme sacrifice of their lives!

The parishioners also on a very personal basis suffered along with Father Garvey's evident and very real pain during the last years of his pastorate. He died as Pastor in 1946.

Reverend Joseph F. X. Canning came as curate in 1938. He, like Father O'Mara, who was still active in the Parish, came to stay a long while.

Within a month after Father Garvey's death, the Reverend William J. Gately arrived. Under his leadership, the parish debt was paid off, and the church, school, convent and rectory were repaired and redecorated.

In May 1947, a census revealed 1198 families in the Parish, representing 3645 individuals. That same year, Catholic Charities of the Brooklyn Diocese acquired the former Home for Convalescent Babies in Sea Cliff, and renamed it St. Christopher's Home.

During Father Gately's stay, the Parish celebrated its Golden Jubilee in June 1948, with a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving on the 27th, the Most Reverend Thomas E. Molloy, Bishop of Brooklyn, presiding. Father Gately, before he left St. Boniface for a large parish in Brooklyn, was instrumental in establishing a Mothers' Club as a support for the parochial school.

In 1952, Reverend Thomas W. Smiddy succeeded Father Gately. Having come from the orderly routines of the seminary in Huntington, Father Smiddy found the work as parish leader a burden; and in 1953, he was transferred to the Chancery Office in Brooklyn, where he was eventually elevated to Papal Chamberlain as a Very Reverend Monsignor.

In exchange, a man who had held the post in Brooklyn, Very Reverend Monsignor Vincent J. Baldwin, came to St. Boniface. He was aided in his adjustment to the life of Pastor (for he had had no more pastoral experience than Father Smiddy, having served in high official circles) by Fathers O'Mara and Canning, who had long served in the Parish. Three years later Monsignor Baldwin left for St. Aloysius in Great Neck, and was succeeded by Reverend John J. Fee.

Since the three successive pastors, Fathers Gately, Smiddy and Baldwin, each won high office in the Church after leaving St. Boniface, it was said at the time that a priest apparently "is never simply transferred from St. Boniface — he's promoted!"

About a year after Father Fee's arrival, an important change

occurred. The Brooklyn Diocese had, from 1853, extended control over the entire length of Long Island. In May 1957, Nassau and Suffolk Counties were separated from the old order, and designated as a new diocese with its seat at Rockville Centre, and with the Most Reverend Walter P. Kellenberg as the new Bishop.

In 1958, Father Joseph F. Canning left for a pastorate, after having served as assistant at St. Boniface for twenty years. He was succeeded by Father John Tunny.

Father Fee sensed in 1959 that it was time to build; the lovely small church built in 1900 seated just over 300; the school (built in 1928) needed more classrooms; the greater number of classrooms would demand more teachers and, hence, more convent space; and the rectory which had never been large enough, would in any event be demolished if a larger church were to be built.

• At about this time, the Diocesan Commission on Parish Boundaries began its work to provide more realistic borders for the Parish. It was eventually decided to increase the St. Boniface boundaries, so that Shore Road to Glen Cove Avenue provided the northern limit, the "back road hill" past Kennedy Heights, then Sea Cliff Avenue from Glen Cove Avenue to the Railroad tracks continuing the northern boundary. The eastern edge of the Parish followed the tracks, to Glen Avenue in Glen Head and Scudders Lane which provided the southern border; with Hempstead Harbor, the western extremity.

With Father Fee's leadership and much work and sacrifice on the part of the St. Boniface lay people, a fund-raising campaign began in 1960. The goal of a quarter-million dollars was quickly oversubscribed. Six additional classrooms were completed within the original school building; an extension providing for thirteen sisters was added to the Convent; and an adjacent house was bought and made into a Rectory. A new and larger church building was designed and constructed. All of this took until 1964 to complete.

During that time, Father George O'Mara, after having served for twenty-six years as assistant at St. Boniface, left for a church of his own. He was succeeded by Father John O'Brien, whose curacy was terminated by his sudden death two years later. Father Hubert Spinner followed Father O'Brien as curate.

Finally, on May 3, 1964, the Solemn Dedication of the new edifice took place. The Most Reverend Walter P. Kellenberg, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, pontificated; and the Most Reverend Vincent J. Baldwin, S.T.D., V.G., Auxiliary Bishop of Rockville Centre, who had served as Pastor in Sea Cliff [1953-56], preached the homily.

There were other familiar faces serving as Officers of the Pontifical Mass that day: Right Reverend Monsignor William J. Gately was the Assistant Priest; Very Reverend Monsignor Thomas W. Smiddy and Reverend James F. Bradley were Deacons of Honor; Reverend George F. O'Mara was the Deacon; Reverend Joseph F. X. Canning was the Subdeacon. The Masters of Ceremonies were the Very Reverend Monsignors Francis J. Williams and John R. McGann. The former-Monsignor McGann, of course, is now our Diocesan Bishop.

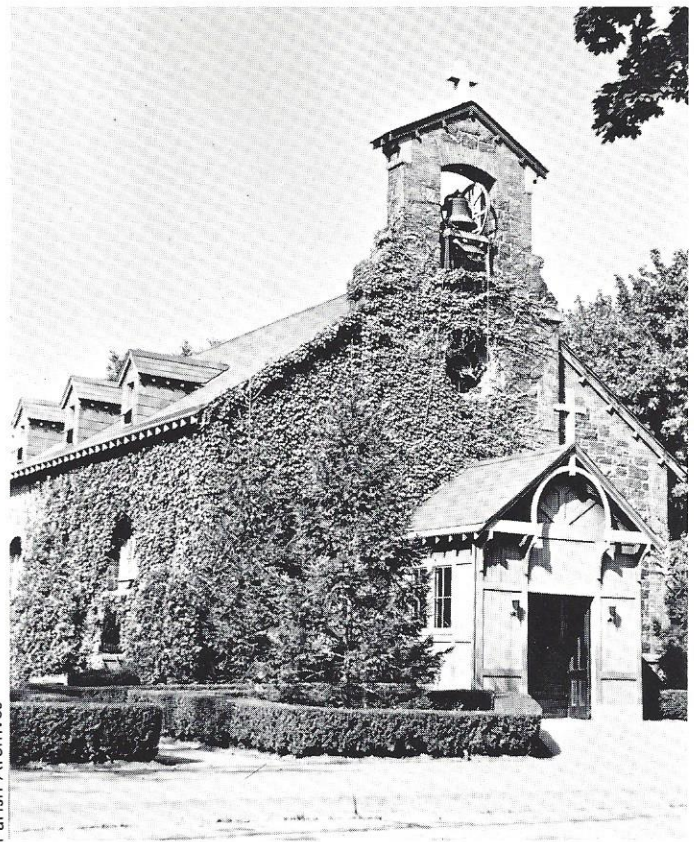
The souvenir program for the day explained very well the rationale for the new church building, and permitted the architects to describe what they thought they had accomplished:

Church's Changes



Parish Archives

The church as it appeared in 1910, still with an empty belfry, but with protection against the elements at the entrance.



Parish Archives

The old church in 1960, just before demolition, ivy-grown and out-grown.

"The new church building we dedicate today replaces the old St. Boniface Martyr Church which stood for more than sixty years on the same site. Much local affection was held for the old church which had become a landmark in town . . . (P)arish growth demanded an enlarged, more up-to-date church. In the demolition of the old St. Boniface, Father Fee hoped that something of the original building might be incorporated in the new design. The original church bell atop the front facade of the old church was in excellent condition and would provide auditory as well as visual memories of the former place of worship. To bridge this old and new, the old bell has been placed in a new free-standing bell tower, and has been made automatic, with clock and manual controls inside the new church.

"The design . . . is of a simplified Romanesque with contemporary feeling . . . typified by the large entrance arch of limestone, the slate roof and the circular head windows in the nave and transepts. The short walls of the transepts . . . carry carved limestone statues . . . of the Patron of the Parish . . . and . . . of the Patron of the Diocese . . ."

The architects described their use of oak (symbolic of St. Boniface's having destroyed the Pagans' sacred oak tree) in the nave and in the church doors, and of the oak leaf and acorn design in the altar rail, votive stands, the lectern and the speaker grilles. In great detail, they describe the eight stained-glass windows in the transepts which depict "historically accurate events from the life of the Patron of the Parish"; the four windows in the nave which illustrate the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary; and the large entrance window which depicts the fifth: The Coronation of the Blessed Mother as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

As is usually the case, when the celebration was over, it was realized that with the cost of the expansion and of the new buildings and of the purchase of two adjacent parcels of land, the Parish had a \$440,000 debt.

In 1966, Father Tunny was transferred and was followed by Father William Croft, who served for four years and was succeeded by Father Eugene Malachowski, who left in 1972. He was followed by Father Thaddeus Semla (who had had the distinction of having been ordained in his native Poland by the then-Cardinal Karol Josef Wojtyla, now much better known as Pope John Paul II).

Lay activity had always been a hallmark of the Parish, but with the advent of Vatican Council II came the formal changes of a Parish Council and of a School Board, composed of laymen and laywomen. These lay efforts continued to be reinforced by those organizations already mentioned in this account: The Mothers Club, Ladies Guild, Legion of Mary, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (later renamed — using the same initials — Continuing Christian Development), Holy Name Society; and adding the Adult Choir and the Folk Group.

To celebrate its Diamond Jubilee, the Parish began in 1973 with a New Year's Party. Two dinner plates were designed to commemorate the occasion of the 75th Anniversary. A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated on Sunday, June 24, 1973 with Bishop Kellenberg as the principal celebrant and with Fathers James Bradley, George O'Mara, Joseph Canning, Hubert Spinner, Thaddeus Semla, and, of course, Father Fee, as concele-

brants. Father George O'Mara, who had been Assistant Pastor at St. Boniface from 1935 to 1961, gave the homily. The record shows — reflecting Vatican II — that Joseph Vulpis was the Cantor and Robert Bolger was the Lector. In May there was a very successful Bazaar held, and in October that year, there was another Parish party.

Again in the Korean Conflict and in the War in Viet Nam, members of the Parish participated; and two young men, John McCarthy and Francis Andrysiak, gave their lives for their country.

In 1976, the School Board initiated a pre-school program to act as a "feeder" method to encourage school enrollment.

The Parish continued to prosper and to grow, and as one observer from outside the Parish noted, Father Fee played "a dignified and important role in Sea Cliff," as well as in the St. Boniface community. Father Fee was and still continues to be Chaplain of the North Shore Firemen's Holy Name Society.

Finally he reached the age of obligatory retirement, and on February 23, 1980, his successor, Reverend Donald F. Diederich was installed as Pastor. Father Fee, as Pastor Emeritus, continues to live and serve among us, now recovering from a triple by-pass.

On April 17, 1980, North Shore Kiwanis Club of Long Island proclaimed Father Fee their "1980 Citizen of the Year" with a dinner at the Swan Club in Glenwood Landing, "in recognition of his leadership and unselfish contributions to his Church and the people of this community . . ."

On June 10, 1980, Father Fee celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his Ordination; and on June 15th, the Parish held a dinner in his honor in the School Auditorium to try to express thanks for Father Fee's countless acts of charity and grace during the nearly quarter-century he had served the Parish as Pastor. (It was later discovered that Father Fee had insisted on picking up the tab for the dinner!)

In April 1978, Father Zygmunt Kaminski came as curate and stayed until January 1980. Reverend Thomas F. Mulvanerty arrived in June of 1979, and is still serving us.



Father Diederich, who had previously served as a Professor at the seminary in Huntington and whose authority in Liturgy and in Canon Law is widely recognized, very quickly assumed the many responsibilities of Pastor. As he becomes more broadly acquainted with the Parish, he has expressed great optimism for the future of St. Boniface Martyr.

In February of this year, the last of the original members of the Parish died, when Mrs. Anna Markland passed to her reward. She was born in Glen Cove on March 1, 1879, and would have been 104 years old within a matter of days after her death. She had been the first bride to be married in the old church by the first Pastor, Rev. James J. Donohoe!

May 31, 1983 was the twenty-fifth anniversary of Father Diederich's Ordination. Quite secretly, the Parish determined to send Father on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which he had never visited. Arrangements were made for him to depart on May 22, so he could celebrate a special Mass in one of the most-sacred spots, on the actual anniversary.

On May 15, therefore, the Noon Mass was dedicated to Father Diederich; and afterward, the Parish held a coffee-and-cake reception in the School Auditorium to wish him well.

At this time in the Parish history, it would be appropriate to pray that God's blessing continues with us into the future. May Christ walk with us on our journey; His Blessed Mother watch over us; and our Patron, St. Boniface Martyr intercede for us before the Almighty Throne.



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Long-remembered conversations with *Hannah Forster Graham, Charles E. Ransom, Elsie Jonas Hendrickson, Isabel Chellborg Bell, Charles and Maggie Morris, Sarah and John Coates, Joseph Mott, Mollie Gluck*; and with my mother, *Martha Lucile*, who as a young woman came to Sea Cliff by steamer on a Sunday School excursion with a young man named *William H. Barlow*, walked from *Karatsoni's* picnic-grounds (where the LILCO gas-plant was built and dismantled) up to the village; these two on a date liked what they saw of the town, remembered it, and when they had married decided to buy here and raise their family which eventually numbered three: sister *Grace Barlow Mandigo*, brother *Roy Element Barlow*, and me.

More-recent recollections by *Joseph L. Martin, Esq.; Prudence and Charles "Lindy" Hurley* and *Jean Jamieson Steward* of the Sea Cliff Village Museum — who have been most helpful in the matter of pictures and of setting some particulars straight.

I am much indebted to Clyde and Gerry Brady for materials and for reminiscences, since I am a newcomer to the Parish, despite having lived in town most of my life.

— W.H.B.

