

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

Date: Thursday, July 17th, 2008

Length: Approximately 49 minutes

Interviewer (Paul Contarino): Could you please state your full name for the camera?

Richard Foy: Richard Foy, sometimes known as Linus Richard Foy.

Interviewer: The first question I want to ask is where did you grow up?

Foy: I was born in the Bronx. We had a house right near the elevator trains [slight laugh]. So I'm used to trains. I-my first twelve years were there. Then I came up to Esopus, to Marist prep, for three years and then came over here, finished high school one year and did three years of college here.

Interviewer: And where did you go to school? Where did you go to school, I mean your primary education?

Foy: Saint Francis of Rome, in the Wakefield sections, right near Mount Saint Michael or right near Mount Vernon.

Interviewer: How was it? Did you have good memories of your grammar school years?

Foy: Yeah, yeah I had the presentation nuns, they were tough but they were very good. I learned more English there than I learned in high school and college [laughs] and they gave you good sound fundamental education. Their mother house is located in Newburgh and about that time, they had some of their land taken for Stewart Airfield. So they used to talk about that, but they're good.

Interviewer: So where did you go to high school?

Foy: I can't hear you.

Interviewer: I'm sorry, where did you go to high school?

Foy: Okay, I went-there was a preparatory school for people who might want to be brothers and it originally was located on this campus but in 1942, it was moved across to Esopus, New York. They had bought part of the Alva House of Payne Estate from the Protestant Episcopal Church. So I was in that first class, over there for three years, and then I came over here and I did-it was called Saint Ann's Hermitage and I did my senior year here.

Interviewer: What inspired you to become a brother? Was there some-perhaps maybe an experience with a priest that had shaped-?

Foy: Admiration for some of the-you know some of the people; I didn't know the brothers that well, although they taught at Mount Saint Michael. Basically, I got to know a couple of them and invited me up. My brother came up too and he left after two years and wound up at MIT but he enjoyed it. Most of the kids who went there did-never became brothers but they really enjoyed the time, how could you go wrong, you had 36 people with six good teachers; [Laughs] when you get that kind of a ratio. In fact, I was contacted by two fellows today-yesterday who

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

saw a picture of their junior eight and they wanted to know if there was an alumni association. I had to say no. We do track former brothers and we have like an association of them. They never really tracked the high school students because they go, you know, they disappear, they go to a different high school, they finish, then you lose track of them; it's a teriffi- terrible job to try to keep track of something like that.

Interviewer: Could you describe for me your college experience?

Foy: Well this, Marist College was just in the process of moving to Greenbrook and they used to give a associate's degree, they call it now and I had moved [to degrees??], so I was like the fourth class that was going to wind up with degrees. So we got here in '47 and you did your college in three years and two summers and I wound up with a 150 credits. A lot of two point courses, everything was rammed in. One of the differences was that they insisted that you get your major and also all your education courses. Whereas before that, typically a teacher training college, you got the education courses and a smattering of it; here you had to get the full major. So we had a good [cuts off] now when I was there, if you want to talk about the railroad.
[laughs]

Interviewer: Actually, what did you major in?

Foy: Mathematics.

Interviewer: What inspired you to major in mathematics?

Foy: I was good at it. I- in high school, we used to have to do compositions and on 20 you never got more than 18 and the teacher would say, "well no composition is perfect." I think once in four years I got a 19, you know that must have been a very good one. Nobody ever got a 20 that had to be perfect. What worried me, I could have gone in history, that was the other major offered at the time, you could write a good theme and the person says, "well I didn't like it, or you could have done better." In mathematics, it's either right or wrong. [Slight laugh] They couldn't tell you- so I sort of drifted towards math. My brother had been in mathematics ahead of me. He went to MIT after, he's two years older than me and I sort of wanted to copy him and you know get into mathematics or engineering. So I wound up as a math teacher.

Interviewer: How many years did you teach math?

Foy: I can't- you have to speak louder.

Interviewer: I'm sorry, how many years did you teach math?

Foy: At what level? [Laughs] When I first graduated, I went down to New York and I taught there for eight years.

Interviewer: What school did you teach at?

Foy: It was called Saint Ann's Academy it was a bunch of brown stones on 76 Street which eventually became decrepit and the-it was moved over and it's now Archbishop Malloy High School which has an excellent reputation in Queens.

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

Interviewer 2 (Jason Schaaf): [to Contarino] I have a question. [then to Foy] As a student back at Marist in the 1940s, what was the feeling of Marist College towards the river? Perhaps even towards the bridge?

Foy: The-well I remember the bridge; you know the interesting part was that the trains went very slowly across it. The legend was that one of the caissons had slipped when it was being built and the structure wasn't strong enough which is probably a legend because I think that has been proven untrue. However, they were restricted to eight or nine miles an hour. So they were slow. I don't remember the trains being as long or as lengthy as the trains going up and down the Hudson. When I was in school in Esopus, we used to sit in the boathouse and watch the trains go down on the east side and then we would count and we would compare who got the right number and it was always between a 100 and 120. You don't have that on the east side anymore, it's almost all on the west side but you have that there too with several locomotives. I don't think the trains quite as low going across and it was just-it was there. You know we didn't know any of its history, we just knew that it carried freight, by that time, it wasn't carrying any passengers. There was no way of getting up on it because when you're in Poughkeepsie, it's about a 100 feet over your head so you know, there was no real attempt to explore the bridge, it was there you know.

Interviewer 2: What about the river itself? Did you have many activities on the river as a student?

Foy: We had a lot of activity on the river over in Esopus. We used to swim off the dock and as a college student, we used to take vacations over there and we'd swim across the river and back you know so. You weren't supposed to but everyone used to do it, up to Esopus island [and down], not everybody, just- it was test to see your swimming endurance but it was you know, it was a beautiful river you could sit there and you could see the storms come down the river and you think of Rip Van Winkle and the bowling with the thunder, you know that's the sound that probably got Washington Irving to talk about it. You know so it was there. I don't think you would have thought about it as much as-now later when you get to see the Mississippi and you see some of the huge rivers in Europe, you realize how big the Hudson is, how magnificent it is. We knew it was a tidal river, we knew it had fish, we knew it had seaweed; we knew it had debris on it and we had a lot of-it was just there. We never tried to cross it during the winter, although many students here, by the time I got here, used to try to walk across it and the early 60s, you didn't have it always open. You had the Coast Guard cutter go up maybe once every two weeks but apart from that, it was frozen solid, you could walk across it; so some of them did it. [Laughs]

Interviewer: So what would you say is the most interesting aspect about the Hudson Valley?

Foy: You it's- there's no one thing. When you go out west, you've got these 12,000 foot mountains and spectacular scenery along the coast, you don't quite get that but what you get is a gentle situation and the more you study it, the more you'll appreciate it. Last Saturday my brother and I went up to Olana, have you ever been there?

Interviewer: No I haven't.

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

Foy: Did you ever hear of it? It's the home of Frederic Church and it's-he built what's a rather zany looking house it, he has-they always say it's the Persian influence the guide said he never got to Persia. He got to Lebanon and to Syria but he never got to Persia but he- it's-the views are spectacular. I saw that, I went up there in '67 and I just on a Sunday afternoon, to view it and I always remembered it, you just can't get it out of your mind. Now it's a little bit overgrown. Now they're trying to bring it back but in 67, the trees weren't that high. Now the trees are getting a little high and you have-you know so [there is the statement there??]-[cuts off]. Also I went in July, don't go in July, go in September or October when the air is clearer, then you get a beautiful view to the west of the Catskills, to the east, the Berkshires, and then looking south you just-it's like a panorama of the river, it's really magnificent, you know. So the Catskills are not even the Adirondacks but they're nice Mountains and there's so much to do in this area. You know you can go rock climbing in Shawanguck, you can ski in a lot of different spots, you can fish. It's just a good place.

Interviewer: Could you please tell me a little about your time as president of Marist College? I mean how did you become president of the college?

Foy: I was named president when I was 28. The college was-had been founded in '29, it was called Marist Training School and it gave a two year program and then the graduates would go out teaching and they would normally get the rest of their degree with Fordham University working part-time and the brothers felt that was becoming unsatisfactory. You have to remember in 1929, you didn't need a bachelor's to be a teacher; you just needed a certificate from a teacher training school which was two years. So the brothers-they began feeling dissatisfied with the sort of the makeshift courses, it-there's no knock on Fordham it just really wasn't.[Cuts off] So they decided they wanted to go to a four-year college, that was pretty common; that's how Mount Saint Mary got founded. Catholic University, there was a fella by the name of Roy DeFerrari who was like the Johnny Appleseed of small colleges and he kept encouraging the orders to start their own colleges. They would get a better type of education then they would if they just sort of went part time little by little. So they named a young fella, his name is Brother Paul Ambrose Fontaine and they named his as dean and he came in '43 and he never-the president was the titular, was the provincial, the group of brothers, the head group was the provincial council and the provincial was the nominal president of the college and this went on but basically it was Brother Paul who really ran this institution. Eventually the state said, "this is whacky, you've got a dean for 15 years and you have a president every three years, it doesn't make sense." So they made Brother Paul president in 1957. He was president for one year and he went to the general chapter of the brothers which is the general meeting every 12 years of representatives from every province and he got elected as an assistant general. So when he came back to speak to the group here, they began looking at people and he said, "look, don't get older people get a younger person that can stay with it."

So essentially, I was 20-28, so that fit into thing and to my surprise, I was named president. [Laughs] So it was a bit of- but you know, they knew who I was and it was -there was a good cadre of teachers up here that could sort of hold the fort until I got going, you know. But when I came up here, I had a little breathing room. I commuted up from where I was still teaching, at Cardinal Hayes School and I had a chance to sort of think and being young, I could also ask questions of the older presidents. Presidents are always willing to give advice and so by the-and then I took a course down in Washington, one of these compact two-week courses on

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

college accounting, not on college administration, just accounting. I wanted to know how to get your teeth into this and so but as I came up, some of them said a couple of the fellas said, "Brother Paul's vision for this college is not going to work," his vision, it would be a commuter college and that you would draw students from the local area and get probably 500 or 600. They said, "well we have two and we've actually surveyed all the Catholic grammar schools around here. There just aren't that many students." Besides students here; Dutchess, I found out after, is the biggest exporter of students for colleges in the state, in the county. So they said, "this is just not going to work" and in my studies, I had decided that 600 was not a good size for a college, it had to be at least 1200. So you draw- you connect the dots, if you're not going to get them from here, where are you going get them from? You going to have to get it from outside, which means you're going to have to create dormitories, which we did. So one of my first big changes was to move to a residential college from strictly a commuter college; Brother Paul had recommended that I look at an evening division. And we put that in my first year up here, opening up the evening division that worked out very well.

So it was you know, it was quite a-and then actually when you're the president and you're up here and you have a 100 brothers and you have 20 lay students, you look and around and say, "what kind of activities can I get for them? What kinds of sports?" You know, you look out your window and you see the river and when I was a student here, the regatta, the Poughkeepsie Regatta, was run. My brother had rode for MIT, [he didn't get down here really??], he had back problems but there was certain-the young men, California and Cornell and there was one other school that lived down where the Marist boathouses are. They used to come up and watch us play softball or just sort of wander because they were here the whole month of June. Also, there was- and then we would watch the races, so the-you know that adventure and then it ended. I think it ended my last year, in '50 or '51, pretty easy reason, before World War II, it was essentially, let's just call it Ivy league type of thing. The young men came from affluent families and the trick to this was they used to row about a mile and then they had to row four miles here. So they used to take the whole month of June to get the stamina to row the four miles. Well after that, you wound up with GIs, a different breed and they couldn't afford to take June off. They had to go out and work. So they moved it out of here. There were complaints too. The complaints were that if you got a drawing closer to Highland, the water was quieter. So you had an unfair advantage. Basically the whole notion of taken, when you look at who the colleges were, you had California and Washington from the west coast and then you had [almost??], you know, Columbia, Dartmouth, Navy, Cornell, you know they were quality colleges but people just didn't have a month to practice rowing and do nothing else. [Laughs] So it sort of came to an end.

Interviewer 2: Could describe what the spectacle looked like from those regattas?

Foy: We never went down there but it was about this level was the half way mark. They would start up at Crumb Elbow past that-that you know the- and if you get up there, if you're on the river and you look down, you can-you can see four miles. So it went from there down underneath the railroad bridge, underneath the regular bridge and below that. They did have a train which I had not noticed, I don't know if it was still operating on the other side that sold grand stand seats and you can watch it, but generally you watched the part that you saw it. The section we saw was interesting because they would take a breather about halfway. Now they wouldn't just stop but they would definitely slow down and some of them would even just rest

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

on their oars for 20 or 30 seconds there and go back to it again. So we were intrigued with the guys getting the boats in the water, getting the boats out of the water, you know that was the romance of the thing. So when I took a look, I said, “the cheapest sport and the best sport to put Marist on the map was rowing.” Of course nobody heard of Marist or Marist College but when it hit the paper, Marist had rowed against Amherst or Williams, that’s good company; [Laughs] you know Georgetown, you’re known by your friends. That was better than trying to go by basketball or any other sport. So that was our first sport actually and it worked out very well. Well you say why? Because the river, cause it’s there, it makes a lot of sense. It’s been one of our better sports. We had sailing, I don’t know if they still have sailing here and we had-in fact I used to row, they used to bring in singles and doubles. I used to row when I was president, during the summer, I’d go down, great exercise but it’s you know tiresome. [Laughs] So that’s my, you know, that’s part of the romance of the river. It’s so many things, to so many people, that it’s hard to say it’s this one thing, it’s a cumulative effect that it’s there.

Interviewer: So as president, what other memories do you have of the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge?

Foy: Well it’s not something that you got up every morning and thought about. It was there, you would see the trains cross, you could see sometimes the smoke coming out of the diesels. You could hear them a little bit, very quiet but it wasn’t enough to disturb you, not like the L’s in New York City, you had to stop talking when they went by, but here it was just going across, they were lumbering across back and forth. It was just like cars going on the street; you just assumed it would go forever. We didn’t know who ran it; we didn’t know where the trains were going. We know they went to Maybrook that’s about the only town that we knew. We’ve since learned of course that it was operated by the New Haven at the end-the New Haven but then it got taken over by Penn Central and by Conrail. I think it was owned by Penn Central when the fire occurred. So but what began happening, first of all you got rumors that the bridge was structurally unsound, you know stay away from it. I think that goes way back that was the construction was held up for years, by river men who claimed that the caissons were going to be a navigation hazard. So it was a lot of-it became a legal mess when it was being built. There’s very good short essay by Arthur Adams who was the president of the Lehigh, Erie, and Wallkill River Railroad and after ’74, they were making some sort of a play to get it. But I think he- it’s an essay and a book called *The Hudson River In History* and he wrote it about ’83. It has a pretty good description of how it-not the mechanics of how it got built but where it was going to at that time and why the Penn Central and Conrail were not interested in building it. You could almost maybe think it was arson. [Laughs] It wasn’t arson; it was sparks from a train. They don’t know if it was from a defective break or what but by the time I got out, somebody said, “hey the bridge is on fire” and we went out and looked and you could see the smoke on this side and you could just see the edge of the train ending on the other side as it was leaving. So you knew how it got started and then it was more interesting who’s going to go up there and try and put it out [laughs] you know, How did you get up there? How do you get equipment up there? I really didn’t-you know I couldn’t stay there for hours watching but I could see it was on fire and it was scary. So I was called out of my office, somebody said, “hey the bridge is on fire.” We went down and looked we didn’t go down; I could see it right from my office. So I knew there was problems with it but we sort of assumed it would get either rebuilt or torn down.

Interviewer: Have you actually ever been up on the bridge?

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)
Foy: No, no, you have right? So-

Interviewer: Yes I have.

Foy: You're a lucky guy. I've seen pictures of it. Fred Schaafer was an attorney in Colby and Gartland Office, I don't know if he's still there or out, but he was a young man at the time but I don't associate him with the railroad to any extent. My biggest association which I picked-up derivatively is that probably the chief architect for it was John Flack Winslow and John Flack Winslow had his estate on Marist property and-but his background was in steel. He had the rights to the Bessimer process and I believe he was the first president of the Poughkeepsie Bridge Company, but I sort of backed into that. First of all, we never-I never knew that until I came back here this year. The northern part of the property we always called Woodcliff. Woodcliff was an amusement park which had failed and closed down but it turned out the people who build the park, used the word Woodcliff because John Flack Winslow called his estate Woodcliff. There is a cliff, it's where the Gartland houses are and you can look down and see these softball fields out over the river and that's-but he basically he came down here to retire in 19-1868 and he had made his money up in Troy in steel and done a good job. Then he had been instrumental in getting the *Monitor* built and really organized getting that built in a 100 days by using four or five different iron manufactures, cause the 100 day compressed, there was no way one outfit could do it. So he-but he also from his background, it looked like, particularly studying some of his early deeds, that he was getting ore rights along the Connecticut boarder in Amenia and Millerton and he was working out deals and putting them in the deeds. He didn't buy the things, he just bought the ore rights and he-I think had the idea that he could bring the ore down to the founders which were working in right on the river and why were the founders on the river? Well they needed coal. Where did they get the coal from? the Delaware and Hudson Canal. So it was a natural place and they were a lot of foundries, there were foundries in Peekskill. The famous one is the West Point Foundry in Cold Spring that made the Parrot Gun during the Civil War.

But so he decided, he started the Poughkeepsie and Eastern Railroad which comes in from Amenia through Pleasant Valley and then curves-it's up at 400 feet it's got to go down to the river. So it curls and then it curls back down, right on the Marist territory. So it's gone now but the right of way is still there and it's right next to the Marist baseball field but then it goes under route 9 and it goes right across the Marist property there. So I got very interested in that and found out that he was the founder of that and I think-my guess is that what triggered it was that he was familiar with the ore which he was being taken up to Troy. Because the railroad along route 22, was built long before the railroad was built along the river. So he had a route in there and he decided to get in it. He also foresaw at that stage that he wanted to get to Connecticut so that Poughkeepsie and Eastern backed into the Connecticut and Western. Everyone was building railroads after the Civil War, you know and eventually the Poughkeepsie and Eastern got taken over by the Central New England which really was controlled by the New Haven. The Central New England didn't really want the Poughkeepsie and Eastern going down to the New York Central. They wanted the branch lines that cut into there that they could then tie into the other line which is going across the bridge. So you need a doctoral thesis to write on railroads in Dutchess County, at that time they were all over the spot but it's sort of fascinating and then-[cuts off] So basically my interest in the bridge got peaked again because of the- because of John Flack Winslow of studying his background, very bright guy.

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

Interviewer: Once the bridge is completed, would you go up on the bridge to look at the views of the Hudson?

Foy: Yeah, I'd be happy to go up there. My worry is whether there will enough funds to do it; they're caught between a rock and a hard place. It's still cheaper to put this up than it is to tear it down. It's going to be very expensive to tear it down. So it's-the problem is were coming into an economy right now where money is tight and if the-you know so I understand they're scaling back some of the-some of their plans which are good I mean, you know, from a grandiose to small; get something up because you can-you can always work it better. The interesting part that was built in 1888, that means it's the 120 years old and the steel is still as good as the day they put it up. It's not-you know, it's a very solid structure. So with a little bit of maintenance, it probably can last another couple hundred years. That's why I'm sort of for it but I just hope that they can get at least enough money to get the thing started, to get some sort of-and what would be terrific, if they can get the walkways, I think you do have the rail trail on that side. They're talking about the rail trail on this side which would go along the Poughkeepsie and Eastern a little bit, up by Morgan Lake it would go up and eventually cross down to Hopewell Junction. So that would be a fabulous set up, you know, the kittle with Conrail is they broke down the rails going in at both ends to make sure that anybody who bought it, wasn't going to be able to use it. They should be put in jail. [Laughs]

Interviewer: So do you think people will be attracted to the Hudson River Valley because of the bridge, do you think more people will come?

Foy: I think there will be-there's a whole variety of attractions, you have West Point, you have Cold Spring, I've mentioned Olana, you have the Vanderbilt. I had my niece and her family come in and you know everybody talks about New York City but as you move north of the city, there is some tremendous places to visit. They don't have the cache of Radio City or the Statue of Liberty but yes, I think the Hudson is probably one of the greatest rivers in the world and you know it's got everything. As you go up past Albany, the Hudson is still a beautiful river, so it's a -you know the more you can do - I think the environmental people, Scenic Hudson, they've all done a tremendous job of making us aware that we have a treasure here. We just have to continue to improve it and also make the best use of what we have. You wouldn't build the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge today [laughs] but it's there [laughs] and when you look at the other places, when you go to Rome, nobody would build a Coliseum but you go to the Coliseum to see it. So the Poughkeepsie Bridge would just give spectacular views. I mentioned Olana, there's spectacular views, have you ever been there?

Interviewer: No.

Foy: Yeah, and you know there are great views from West Point, it's just a magnificent river and it's a quiet river, it's not noisy, it's not-but it's frightening when you get real close to it when you're down, it's a big river, it's wide, it carries a lot of water. It's a tidal river, so it has an amazing variety of fish species but I'm not a biologist but I- you have the-you-know [cuts off] and they're hoping at some stage to get salmon back in here. One time it was a salmon, a salmon river. Now I guess it's mostly, shad, herring, and sturgeon but we used to catch eels which I hate but-[laughs].

Camera Man (James Duryea): There's a lot of people that can attest to that. [Laughs]

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

Foy: But you know so, you know the bridge is like-the bridge by itself is nothing. The bridge and the Hudson River is something and then you keep adding these things and you get a accumulative effect of a beautiful area. It's beautiful in the winter, I don't know why people go to Florida but they're cold but, you know you have great views. I used to ski, I loved Hunter and Catamount and it's just somewhere you can hike, you know there's just so much to do. You're not climbing Mount Everest, it will never be you know geologically, it's an older set-up but it's still nice, it's great.

Interviewer 2: Going back to the trains, how frequently would the trains cross the bridge, like in your general estimation?

Foy: I would gather maybe once or twice an hour, you know maybe-I don't remember at night but you know during the day; generally when you looked up, there was a train on there. It was-that – now did you look up because it was there? Or did you look up just to – but I think it probably had, of course it was in competition with the bridge up at Castleton and it didn't hook into the major lines over on the other side. It hooked up into smaller ones; you know Conrail and Penn Central wanted to hook up to the major ones; hopefully they that are part of Conrail or Penn Central. So it was- it wasn't as busy as for example, as you see the Conrails going up on the other side of the river now. I think they run 24 trains an hour-I'm sorry 24 trains a day. You know but which is a lot of traffic going down there but you know I think rail traffic will increase but there's no hope of getting this back onto rail traffic; that's dead. So let's make the best use of what we can. I think the notion of a walkway is just a very clever and imaginative use of a very important part of the Hudson Valley.

Interviewer: I'm just curious, how long were you president of Marist?

Foy: 21 years.

Interviewer 2: Both of us are college grads. I'm glad you created a legacy for us.

Foy: Well it was- [cut off by Schaaf].

Interviewer 2: We graduated from here.

Foy: It was interesting, I did all the bad things, I got a lay board of trustees. I changed it to a residential college, I ran an evening division and I made it co-ed. [Laughs] So you can blame me for all those things.

Interviewer 2: Those are all good things [Laughs]

Foy: Well you know, you're just- the interesting thing is we tried to do those things before the curve rather than after. You know we went co-ed before a lot of the major colleges did and we just-well let's not get into the – I just felt the-you know- well you had to make money and I wasn't insistent on making money. I just felt women were getting the short end of the stick in terms of education which sounds like Matthew Vassar but the-you know and I had-really I had worked with Jack Gartland who was a close friend. Unconsciously I had gotten to him that women are not getting their share in terms of sports. So when the McCann Center was built, we both agreed that women would get an equal priority to the thing. I think you know he-almost all the facilities we've built now have given women you know the softball fields and so on. There's

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Richard Linus Foy (former president of Marist College)

always something-something good for them but my concept was women are just as smart as men. One of my big disappointments in life was to I think-women are-would make better mathematicians in general, because they are more intuitive. And see people think mathematics is sort of logic that you go from here and you plot up to there. Most discoveries in mathematics are insights that you get, that you say, "maybe it's this way" and women are good at that but the problem is women get oriented not to be good at that, like they're going into accounting which is good you know, you scribble and you make all the numbers add up and that's good. That's not mathematics, that's arithmetic but when you get some very competent women they're very very good. One of the problems is most of their teachers they had in elementary school, went to teacher colleges and their teachers could be women. Basically, in many cases, they didn't really like math, they liked English and history but they have to teach math. So you get a complete cycle. You got some very intuitive people, you get a complete cycle of bad math teaching and then how do-you know it's the exceptional fish; they can get through all these ifs and turn out to be very good.

Interviewer 2: I think I had all those bad math teachers [Laughs] in grade school.

Foy: It's a question of you know the average-you don't really have departmentalization in most grammar schools you know you have maybe you don't have it. When I was in grammar school, you had one teacher then an art teacher came in and a music teacher and that's it. Now you get, you know you get departments of mathematics and departments of history. If you have that, if you're big enough okay but if you're just stuck with the one teacher, generally that one teacher will like history and English or literature more than he or she will like math. So they teach math because they have to, [laughs] but that's a minor grip that has nothing to do with the railroad [laughs].

Interviewer 2: Paul anything more?

Interviewer: No.

Interviewer 2: Thank you very much.

Foy: Okay, good.

Interviewer 2: We appreciate your time.

Foy: I'll probably get a 10 second-[DVD ends].

[End of Interview 48:47]

Transcribed by Paul Contarino