

**Oral History Interview with Father William Pepper**  
**Conducted by Angela Baker, 1993.**  
Transcribed by Sarah Brennan, 2000.

AB: Ok, well, let's start off by stating your full name, we'll have it in tape

FWP: William Michael Pepper

AB: And your date and place of birth

FWP: Halifax, June 8th, 1911

AB: Ok, and you say that you went to Saint Mary's in 1926?

FWP: '26 to '33, yeah, I graduated in '33 I think.

AB: So you must have gone to the high-school

FWP: Yeah, I did my high-school there, a lot did high-school there. There was a big crowd we had in Grade 9.

AB: Oh yes, and so uh...

FWP: Um?

AB: After high-school you went... did you take Art?

FWP: Yeah.

AB: So tell me what was the workload like?

FWP: Pardon?

AB: What was the workload like...as far as school work goes?

FWP: Oh, it didn't...

AB: Was it a lot?

FWP: It never bothered me too much.

AB: No? You have a lot of homework or anything like that?

FWP: No.

AB: No?

FWP: Yeah, there a ... certain amount to be done every day, I guess that's ... like any school.

AB: And ahh, what type of subjects did you have to take?

FWP: Of course that was 60 years ago, kinda hard to dig all those things up.

AB: Yeah, do you remember any that stay in your mind?

FWP: No I don't, not too many come back to mind, that's .. that's a long time, 60 years since I've been there.

AB: Yeah. Um, what were the Irish Christian Brothers like? As teachers?

FWP: They were very good, very good teachers, yes.

AB: Um-humm?

FWP: That was their profession, teaching.

AB: Yes was the discipline .... was there a lot of discipline?

FWP: Well, I never noticed you know, too much abuse, it was there I guess, had a lot of boarders there.

AB: Oh yeah? where did they come from?

FWP: I think most of them came from around Cape Breton, I don't know...

AB: Oh yeah and the rest of the people came from around the....

FWP: City, yeah...

AB: Were there any from any type of a family background generally, or...?

FWP: No.

AB: No? Mixture? Do you remember any of the rules and regulations that were [?] as students?

FWP: No.

AB: No? How about recreation? What types of things did students do outside the classroom?

FWP: I don't remember anything that was prohibited. We had a rink area.

AB: So, you played hockey?

FWP: I played hockey, yes.

AB: What other sports?

FWP: Well, they played football and they played .... baseball, handball. They had good handball courts there.

AB: Oh yeah....the Irish Christian Brothers liked handball, didn't they?

FWP: I guess that was part of their training .I don't know, it's a European institution. We don't see much of it around here.

AB: So, were there any other types of activities or concerts, or anything like that?

FWP: Oh, there were things going on from time to time.

AB: Like what kind of things?

FWP: They didn't have too much to work with there you know.

AB: No? Do you mean facilities?

FWP: Facilities, eh?

AB: Did you have a gymnasium?

FWP: No. We just had a Recreation hall, or an Assembly Hall. That was part of the building.

AB: What was the building like?

FWP: Oh, it was old... it was an old building, I guess it was... I don't know how old it was... Wasn't in very good condition I guess. People went there, and stayed there and graduated from there.

AB: There couldn't have been that many students at the school with just the one small building there, could there?

FWP: No, Oh, people weren't looking for much, perhaps in those days.

AB: Ok, what else? Were there any type of ah, like student government, or student organization, or anything like that?

FWP: I don't think. I can't say for sure. Don't want to put my neck out for it.

AB: (Laughs)

FWP: As I said, it goes back 60 years, so a lot of things slip your mind that time and I am at that stage now in life where I forget very easily. I had one day, whole day last week. I didn't know anything, where I was... was some kind of a turn I took or....

AB: So, I've been talking to a lot of people who say that a great number of young men that went to Saint Mary's went on to become priests... What type of role was religion when you were at Saint Mary's? Do you remember?

FWP: Well, of course, those who were going on for the priesthood, they would go, go to Saint Mary's anyhow, so there was this great encouragement given to them for vocation to the priesthood at Saint Mary's by the Brothers. They didn't get many themselves. They'd a few individuals from Halifax, Brother O'Connor, Brother Penny.. two fellas that I knew well, were from my parish. They were, I was just thinking about them today.. I was wonderin' where they are you know...

AB: Did you have prayers at the school when you were there?

FWP: What ?

AB: Prayers? Like, praying, praying sessions, or did you go to Chapel together as a class?

FWP: No.

AB: No? Was that religion any...did it take any role in the ahh...

FWP: Oh yeah, we had religion class every day.

AB: Oh, did you?

FWP: I think it was half past twelve. I don't know if I ... I can't, as I say, I can't remember a thing.

AB: Oh, you don't have to remember a thing.

FWP: I think it was half past twelve every day, but I may be wrong. Some may contradict me. That was part of the days. We had school Saturday morning too.

AB: Oh really?

FWP: I'm sure we had school Saturday morning. That seems to come back to me now I mean, I may be wrong there...

AB: Did you have to pay tuition?

FWP: Yes, Tuition paid, I think it was 60 dollars a year, or something like that. Of course in those days 60 dollars years ago or 70 years ago, 60 dollars was a lot of money...

AB: Yeah!

FWP: Well, that's the only thing that they had to go on, there was no other in... I suppose there were some other people that gave them money, I couldn't say. They had big schools in the States, high-school, New York, California..

AB: The Brothers did?

FWP: Yeah, oh yes, oh yes, they were well in demand.

AB: So they were good teachers.

FWP: Educators, yes.

AB: Well, that's about all I want to talk about unless there is anything else from your days there?

FWP: I don't remember a great deal more than that. You know, things that happened... perhaps you'll find out more from other people that you'll interview, perhaps they got better memories than I have.

AB: Well, that's good! If you get ah..

**Tape Ends**