

**Interview with Harold P. Beed**

**Conducted by Angela Baker. July 15, 1993**

Transcription by Richard Dennis, February 7, 2000

AB: Start by stating your full name.

HB: My name is Harold Patrick Beed.

AB: And your date and place of birth?

HB: Oh, I was born in Halifax on December 6, 1922.

AB: You don't have to wear the [inaudible].

HB: Oh, that's quite alright, I don't mind.

AB: Lets see, so you started going to Saint Mary's High School?

HB: Yeah, I started I went off to school and then I went to grade nine in Saint Mary's College. In those days it was called and then I went for high school grades nine, ten and eleven. Then I switched over into the university or so called college degree. First year I took arts and first well first couple of months I was sick and I decided well I was sick I would rather go into commerce. So I switched over in my second year and took the first two years of commerce in my second year and then I continued on and graduated late in 1944. By todays standards our class was very small in commerce. We had nine people only and our professor all through the four years of commerce was professor Harold Beazley who has since departed. He was an excellent teacher and an avid golfer. [inaudible] eventually he was made dean of commerce at Saint Marys. So after I graduated I continued on with my studies and eventually I got a professional degree a C.A degree.

AB: So was it under the Jesuits the whole time you were there?

HB: No, the first three years grades nine, ten and eleven it was pretty well the Irish Christian Brothers and then they sort of switched over to the Jesuits who continued on and are still at Saint Mary's to a small degree now.

AB: So what were the high school years like with the Irish Christian Brothers?

HB: The Irish Christian Brothers were sort of a rough and ready and very friendly type of person. They were deeply involved with all types of sports but they would [inaudible]. I guess you could say they were rough cause I remember in grade eleven one particular Brother Keough. He took particular delight in throwing erasers and chalk and anything he had in his hands at anybody that sort of was inclined to doze off or not pay attention. Another feature when I was in grade eleven, this may not be of too much interest or not but there was a new prof there, his name was Jack Lynch and he taught algebra and geometry and as luck would have it I'd be working in the dining room on my homework

doing my algebra and my math and what have you and Professor Lynch would be in the living room courting my sister. Eventually they'd get married and have three children and he just passed away three years ago. So that was kind of a comical situation and I used to kid him a lot.

There was not a lot of activity over there in the line of sports. They had a tennis court and a [inaudible] as it was called. The skating rink and they had a great big football field there they played soccer and football and you name it. It was a track all around they used to have races as well. And we had - it was during the war as you likely realize in those years and we had the COTC which was sort of a training ground for possible officers when in the army or navy or whatever. When I graduated I went into the navy and I just became a [inaudible]. I went away became a C.P.O a chief petty officer but I didn't advance to the rank of any officer at that time and I was only in really a short time. I was only in about two years. I graduated in '44 and I was out in mid '46 I guess it was.

But they also had a novel sport aboard there was - what do you call that now? The handball court and you could play for both sides and it was a great way to skin your knuckles. I, we used to play that at noon time during recess in the mornings and recess in the afternoons and we went from nine o'clock in the morning till about three thirty or four in the afternoon.

As far as subjects were concerned there was no such a thing as an elective. We were told what subjects we were gonna take and there was no ifs and ifs or buts about it. But that's what we took and if we didn't like that well out the door. But I never suffered for it I mean we got the basic education that we needed and cause a number of people that went to Saint Mary's during that time in later life they did exceptionally well. They became managers of banks and district managers and worked for the CNR and they were also involved in trust companies, Nova Scotia Light and Power and Maritime Tel and Tel as well as BC Power and BC Tel so they were well known and well received wherever they went because they knew that they [inaudible] a very good basic education.

AB: What were the courses like that you had to take?

HB: Well, the subjects were, well we took english we took english and french learned basic we had to take religion and we did learned metaphysics and we had to like I said before we took algebra and trigonometry and its kinda hard to remember all the subjects we had but english was a predominant one and also french cause they sort of wanted us to learn both language. Some of us didn't and there was other - metaphysics was quite an interesting thing and religion was a must you just couldn't escape that. As I said before there wasn't anything such as an elective subject at all. I'll rack my brain a little more to see if I can remember what else we took. I took all cause we were going all day.

AB: What were the hours like?

HB: Oh economics was another thing and what? I took a commerce degree now why did I forget auditing and bookkeeping and accounting. I should have remembered those so actually that's what we would major in would be auditing and accounting so.

AB: Were they the only commerce majors?

HB: There wasn't anything else - no we also had to take the economics along with that . We sort of tied in with the accounting and the bookkeeping but we went we took - it wasn't a question of just taking the auditing and accounting for one year. Auditing was for the last latter two years last two years and the accounting course was spread over the whole four years so we got a good smattering of the accounting business which helped us later in life when we took other courses and got involved in business - but there must have been I think there was about only five or six subjects we took and I think over four years we had twenty subjects and sometimes they slipped in a little odd one here and there. I can't remember that one but anyway I was fortunate enough to pass them all and that was the main thing.

AB: Was the work load heavy?

HB: No, my work load wasn't very heavy. No I mean there was an awful lot of extracurricular activities. I personally was involved in the debating society, the drama society and all that. I didn't get involved in the drama society but I was involved in the debating society which was very good and it was also a sodality over there that took up some time. I was involved in that as well - I used to do a little bit of traveling to different conventions and what have you when, I never did find the work load overly burdening, burdening because I always did my homework. I don't know why but I did.. I had a little desk upstairs in my home on Poplar Street and we - I'd go up there and have the radio by my side and I would study away there and that made for an hour and a half each evening but I didn't find it overbearing or it didn't take up too much time cause I was also played hockey. Late after school we would play hockey at the roorum or we'd play tennis or handball and I wasn't that tired after that I didn't do my homework around between seven and nine at night - my recollection is correct, I think it was but naturally that day I'd miss studying but that didn't bother me too much. It was a very active hockey team over there. We used to go every Friday night to a big hockey game up at the roorum, the Halifax forum which we all would go to. So I never found myself at a loss for leisure time.

AB: You were mentioning before that some of your fellow students were boarding from other areas?

HB: Oh yeah well the building that housed Saint Mary College was an old building. I don't know and it dates back to the 1890 something or 1847 I can't remember when it was. On the top floor was a sleeping quarters and they used to bring boarders in and the majority of the boarders were from Newfoundland and a few were from Cape Breton and maybe two or three from Quebec. They came in - people from Quebec - mainly to learn english and it was sorta comical at times and funny and these people from Quebec went along with it as well. Like I say their english wasn't the best and a lot of them couldn't even speak english when they first arrived. The prime objective coming here was to learn english - well some english that they learned from some of the fellas wasn't very good but anyway it was a good time and everybody enjoyed it. We always found the boarders a very congenial and friendly type - I can remember particularly one fella from Newfoundland - he was a great big fella I imagine he went about 230 and we always had

to wear shirts and ties in class - and this one day this chap from Newfoundland comes in with just a t-shirt on and no tie or anything. So Father Burke-Gaffney is teaching his trigonometry so he sends the fella back up to get a shirt and tie on so he comes back and he still has the t-shirt on but he had a hard plastic collar on with a bowtie which caused an uproar. So he still stayed in the class - that was acceptable to Father Burke-Gaffney but anyway it was quite the laugh at the college for a while the way he was dressed - great big fella like that with a t-shirt on and that hard hard old collar you would see around the 1920's with a little bowtie. These are, those are the little things and the boarders were very active in a number of activities over there - they didn't shy away from anything. As I said before as we all know the Newfoundland people are a very friendly and cordial and these boarders were that way.

AB: You said the building wasn't in very good condition?

HB: Oh no, see this is all preliminary to what I told you before.

AB: Yes but not on tape.

HB: Oh no, it wasn't on tape I realize that but the building was very old and dilapidated and it and the windows were rickety and the windows rattled in the wind just as though there were no windows there - the wind would just blow in well quite often we would have to clean the snow off the window ledge inside window ledge and in the winter when it got fairly cold we all sat around with our overcoats on - our hats and our gloves along with the teacher as well. That was quite a laugh trying to sit there and pay attention half frozen to death with your heavy clothes on and it was really - the heat in the building was terrible. This was particular in the south-west part of the building where the wind would just howl. There right by the courts the handball courts and just whistled there - there was no protection there - was no building there because of their open field there for the rugby and the track and the soccer meets and what have you. That was all open from the building college right over to Quinpool road that was completely - and on the other side there was a few houses on Almon Street but nothing to speak of. It was kind of strange wearing your coats in class - when you went outside you wouldn't feel the good in them and I used to walk back and forth four times a day. I used to live on Poplar Street and I'd walk back and forth which I would say is two miles so I was cold, quite cold on those bitter days because the clothing, heavy clothing had to be worn in class didn't help me too much.

But all in all the days were good at Saint Mary's and I felt the educators were good - they didn't lack knowledge and they were very dedicated and wanted to help ya as much as they could and some of em especially the Jesuits - some of em had been there 14 - 15 years and still hadn't taken their final vows. There was one man there I think his name was Father McCarthy he was the dean of discipline. He was a great big man, I would say he weighed about 270 - anyways the most gentle person you want to talk to but a very, very strict disciplinarian. He was - everyone loved him whenever he said don't do that - nobody did it - because they respected him. I think that's lacking today in the universities. Is the, if somebody was caught running on the steps of the old college you just yell at them and that was it - no more - there was no talk back or sauce you just say

fine, fine Father that's it, sorry which is not present today. I think that's one of the problems today is the lack of discipline and not only in the schools but in possibly in the homes.

AB: Did you notice any difference, any difference, but notice. I'll try that again. What differences did you notice between the Irish Christian Brothers and the Jesuits as an educator?

HB: As I said before the Irish Christian Brothers were more freewheeling, more outgoing, the Jesuits were more conservative in their way of approaching things of that nature. As I say the Irish Christian Brothers were more or less like a lay person almost. I know they were Irish Christian Brothers but I mean they were more like a lay teacher they were right down to your level but the Jesuits always seemed to be just a little above. They wanted a little more respect and were sort of more reserved. As far as quality of teaching was concerned then I would say there was very little if any difference. A lot of people said that they found the Irish Christian Brothers superior teachers but I didn't find that - I found them both equally capable of teaching.

AB: What was I going to say? So what were the family backgrounds of the students, of your fellow students?

HB: Well they were quite diverse. Well I remember one fellow whose father was a seller of meats, a meat plant, sold meats. Another fella was involved in politics. Another fellow was an MLA, his father was an MLA and my father was the customs officer. Another chap his father ran a piano business [inaudible]. I don't remember the rest of them I have to look at a paper to find out who they, what they did. Oh yeah another chap, his father was an accountant and another chap he was in Shubenacadie and I don't know what his father did I think he was involved in [inaudible]. So there was only nine of us I think that covers six or something doesn't it? Its kinda hard to remember the backgrounds on all these people but the people I had with me and I think generally speaking they're really very nice chaps. Most of em grew up and succeeded very well in life. There was one chap I don't know - I think he got killed during the war but he was always tumbling down the steps - he did it on purpose, he'd just trip over his feet and go tumbling down. It's a wonder he didn't break his neck but he survived but I think during the war he unfortunately - he lost his life - but he used to be the comic over there. Everybody would be laughing at him falling down the steps and I still marvel at the thought that he never injured himself badly like a broken arm or a neck or something like that but he was a real tumbler.

Quite often we were talking about classes there - we used to have the chairman I guess, I don't know what his name was but he he was the head man over there at the time. I don't know if they'd call him a dean. I suppose dean of the college - he used to have classes quite often in his boardroom which was quite the thing but we enjoyed it. I'm just looking here at a picture of the graduates, commerce graduates here. I don't know what - he was a teacher, he was a priest, he died, he is a priest but he's very sick, I don't know what that fellas doing now, hes doing something, now this fellas up in Toronto and hes up in Toronto and this is the fella that died, and hes down in Greenwood and this is Jim - his

father had a meat business I saw him at the golf course the other day. This fellow, his father was an MLA, very deep this fellow was deeply involved in politics - he also worked on the school paper. He - he's deceased as well.

AB: Are there any other memorable personalities that stick out in your mind?

HB: I'm just trying to remember. There's a lot of little, a lot of. Here's a chap here - this is Edmund Boyd. He was very active in the theater. He was very, very good at French as well. I think he taught at Dalhousie for a while teaching French I believe and then he went over to Paris. He didn't marry I don't think and I see him around once in a while. I'm just looking at some of these other fellows, a lot of them are schoolteachers, here's a priest and here's a priest, a teacher, this fellow's a priest and that fellow's a priest.

AB: What was...

HB: I'm just going through here...

AB: What was the role of religion while you were there in school?

HB: It wasn't a [inaudible]. They had a chapel there it was available to anyone that wanted to use it and they had a sodality that was for the Roman Catholics that were there and they could get involved - it was sort of an inter-university type of thing it was tied in with Saint F.X and the other units - the Mount Saint Vincent and other universities so they would have different conventions that you could go around and discuss different things of a religious nature - but it was certainly not overbearing by any stretch of the imagination. Even though we were obliged - I guess that's a good word to say - to take religion as one of our so-called elective courses it didn't bother too many people I don't recall anyone complaining at all.

AB: Were there many non-Roman Catholics there?

HB: Oh yes, there's a mixture but you wouldn't know cause it wasn't that pronounced there. It wasn't brought forward or anything of that nature. I know in my class they were all of the same religion. There's a lot of people here like this fellow here - he was the chairman of the port of Halifax and a lot of em advanced very well. I'm just trying to...they went into their own businesses and engineering and things of that nature and as I said before some of them became involved as chairmen and what have you of various utilities not only here but in Ontario and BC.

AB: You must have been a if you know what all these guys are doing you must have been a pretty close knit group were you?

HB: Well they were as I say the university. I think on graduation day if I can count them then you want to take 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 [inaudible]. In our graduating class there was 25 people so you can imagine that everyone else knew everyone else.

AB: So I guess it wasn't in the Metro Centre.

HB: No, it wasn't in the Metro Centre and our graduation was held down at the Hilton which was the old Nova Scotian Hotel. Now there was also had a business type of degree which quite a few people took but it wasn't, it was just a diploma type of course and they would be involved but as I said you not only did we have the university but we had the high school as well so you had nine, ten and eleven and four years of university. They also had a diploma degree for engineering but in order to get your actual degree you had to go to the university, the Nova Scotia Technical University was called Nova Scotia Tech - now I guess they call it TUNS right now - Technical University of Nova Scotia. It was called Nova Scotia Tech at that time so anybody that wanted to get their engineering degree had to proceed another at least two years at Nova Scotia Tech.

AB: So was that affiliated through Saint Mary's?

HB: No, that was not affiliated with Saint Mary's it was open to anybody, any university that wanted to send a student there naturally would have a restricted enrollment - but anyone who had the requirements, the university requirements could get in would be admitted provided there was space.

AB: So was there varsity a sport competition between you and other universities?

HB: There was an outlet. It was called intermural sports and they had hockey that you used to play in the Forum, umm Roarum, pardon me. They also had tennis matches and they also had the handball courts which you could have a competition for. We'd play after school as I said and before and during recess and at lunch time. We'd come back early and some people would just take a sandwich and spend the rest of the lunch hour playing in the handball court. That's something that sort of lost its way somewhere but it was an excellent game. You played with a very hard ball there was a little hole in the center of the ball but it was hard and there was three walls - the backboard the two side walls and there was an open end. There was a concrete floor and if you went too low with your hand you would bark all your knuckles. After a while your hands got so hardened that you could whack that ball as hard as you could. The ideas of the game was to sorta get the ball to carom in the corner and get from corner to corner and then would come back out flat so low that you couldn't touch it.

That was one sport and they had intermural soccer. As far as football, that was an interschool, inter-highschool, inter-university type of thing. That was not intermural was not just within the university because the enrollment wasn't such that you could get enough people to go out for the teams and make it workable. But hockey - they used to have all kinds of hockey games and they used to have tennis - they had a lovely tennis court there that's gone naturally. That's the present Saint Vincent's guest home is located pretty much where Saint Mary's College used to be. There was an awful lot of activity as I said - there was a debating society and a lot of intermural sports - it's a long ways back I'm trying to think of all the intermural sports there were but its limited. Oh, there's another thing they had boxing, they did intermural boxing but I didn't get involved in that and there was a lot of hockey.

AB: Did pretty much everyone play?

HB: Everybody pretty, it was a small university like that a lot of people became involved in that they had intermural track meets and what have you - they had all sorts of intermural idears going there that materialized into something or other and eventually they used a lot of field days that would be another type of sporting event. There was a lot of people we'd get involved with what more college people that ever would become involved I that's even though they could just they'd get involved and just run around the track and have fun in that manner then they also got involved in swimming meets and things like that with other universities and high schools and what have you.

AB: It was an all male school?

HB: Oh, yes, it was an all male. I don't know, I'd think maybe the cook was a female I'm not too sure. Even the maintenance man, he was a man too. I don't recall I think the only time there'd be many women in there is when our parents were invited over to something special and we...

AB: Your mothers would be there.

HB: Mothers and sisters and what have you.

AB: Did you have any kind of dances or anything like that?

HB: Well we didn't have any kind of dances there but we used to get invited out to Mount Saint Vincent we used to get invited out there to their dances where all the girls were but that way we wouldn't have to worry about takin' em home cause most of em lived right there. I think they used to have those pretty well every Friday night or every second Friday night and the fellows would go out there and have a dance and That was it, it was say goodnight and go home.

But I enjoyed the life - I would classify it as very, very tame to what's going on today because the fellas - they didn't go downtown after a hockey game or football game to the bars because the just weren't any so it was pretty tame by today's standards but everybody seemed to enjoy it and they all did well afterwards there wasn't any great problem there. I don't ever recall while I was there, anybody being expelled for deportment purposes or anything like that. I don't recall, I know sometimes people failed, failed in their exams but I don't think anybody was ever expelled. I don't think anybody was ever turned away because of lack of funds by their parents. I think they were very good that way cause I know they questioned my folks about that but there wasn't any - I know my father didn't make very much money but we were able to pay our way anyway.

So there was another thing - during the war there's a number I don't know hundreds and hundreds of people that volunteered during the war that went into the army or all the services - the army the navy and the air force and a lot of em lost their lives and it's a very strange thing. Where I presently live there a number of the streets in here are named after people from Halifax and some of them that went to our university that lost their lives during the war like the streets in there like Robert Murphy, Doug Smith, Peter Lowe and William Fox and George [Dauphney] and Ralph Devon. These are all local people, local young men that lost their lives during the war and some of them went to Saint

Mary's. I forgot to mention before - one of the most notable people that I think we should mention that went to school at Saint Mary's was a chap by the name James Martin Hayes who later became Arch Bishop of Halifax - he's very prominent.

AB: Did you go to school with him?

HB: Well he was a year ahead of me, a year ahead of me. This must've been something I wrote when I was there...commerce notes. But oh yes, there's another chap, there's Richard Murphy - Monsignor Murphy, and there's another chap that was a year ahead of me that we became very close friends. He's also deceased but he, his wife, my wife and myself we for about seventeen years we traveled over Canada and the US together. And even today there's another chap who was a year ahead of me - we used to walk to high school together and eventually we both got married and I was at his wedding and then we went our separate ways for a while and raised our families and then we got together and now every two weeks we get together and we play cards or something like that so that friendship has lasted a long, long time. We travel together on bus tours and what have you. He took commerce as well and he became a teacher and he's retired and we're gonna be going on a bus tour sometime later this year together.

AB: So are you still in touch with quite a few people?

HB: Oh well whenever I see them oh yes [inaudible]. Well I see these fellows at church sometimes. I know him from when I got to church at Saint Thomas' [inaudible] know this sort of stuff. He's passed away. He got all these books when he was doing something for alumni and here this chap here but a number of them as I say had passed away. Whenever I see them we always say hi and are very pleased to see one another. As I said before in our class there were only nine and a couple of them had passed away; two or three of them are living in Ontario somewhere - the chances of meeting you know your fellow commerce graduate of 1944 is very, very remote I would say. I was just looking at the photos here - this fellow here I see all the time and we speak to one another and this fellow here I yeah, there's a lot of fellows you bump into and you see them and have done well for themselves - this fella here he got married and he raised a family and he decided to become a priest, he went back in the priesthood. He was a year ahead of me.

AB: Did many of your fellow students become priests?

HB: Yes well I mean not in the commerce but in the arts they did. As happens today a number of men went in, a few of them decided to come out but two, two of them had passed away. When I get to this section here I'll show it to you. Yeah, I'd say of the year ahead and the year behind, the year ahead and the year I was in I would say it was at least seven men who decided to become priests so it was a large number. So we, they did very well. I think in a way the Jesuits sort of tried to foster people along that line that were taking an arts course. I know they had my mother over and tried to get her to talk me into it but it just wasn't along in my lines though. I didn't pursue that avenue at all but we still on tape? We still talking or what? Oh my goodness.

AB: I can turn it off now if you [inaudible]

HB: Oh no, I can - it doesn't make any difference. I'm just looking over here - I'm just looking at a picture here of the ...where am I?...oh, yes the arts classes were fairly large in those days but the commerce classes were...

AB: And you say you had a son that went to Saint Mary's?

HB: Yeah, a son and he took a bachelor of science and also got his bachelor of education and he graduated in 1974 so he taught a few years which well it just wasn't his cup of tea so he decided to go somewhere else and that's where he is right now he's working for the government. So I'm just reminiscing here - here's a picture of a college play: Arsenic and Old Lace.

AB: Men were dressed as women for the women parts?

HB: Yeah, and everybody's your friend there, that's boys [inaudible]. Yeah, yeah, but all in all I think there was an excellent closeness between the Irish Christian Brothers and the Jesuits with their students and I think it was a good rapport all along the line. I think as a result of that most people that graduated well during the mid '40s and early '40s were intoned with the proper life values and they continued that on for the rest of their lives so even though it was a very, very small building and had many drawbacks as far as heat is concerned - and what have you no elevators either - even up to the third floor you had to walk but I think that my basic memories are they are pleasant memories. I don't have too many unhappy memories of my university days. Just like anybody else you got fed up and asked why am I doing this but in those days too when you graduated the opportunities for jobs were much greater and most of us that graduated from '41 to '44 at least had that little ticket waiting for us to either be conscripted into the army or to join on a voluntary basis. So I went into the navy myself. I think I got out in May and I was in the navy in June. So you had to do that and a few days later I got my notice to go out and register for the army. But as I had already joined the navy I didn't have any reason to go to the army. But in those days it was necessary and a lot of young men that did go in sometimes some of them were lost at sea or killed in battle or were shot down in the Air Force planes.

AB: Did you go overseas at all?

HB: No, I had signed to go over and had signed to go over to Japan when the hostilities stopped. It was fortunate for me I suppose but I would have enjoyed going over there. You don't feel that you are doing anything dangerous or anything like that. You just feel that you are doing your duty to your country. I guess you could say that I was just young and stupid but you don't seem. It doesn't seem to bother you. Well the navy was another experience...an educational experience.

AB: I can imagine...I can probably turn that off now [end of recording]