

Oral History Interview with Mr. Joseph Augustin Grandy
Interviewed By Angela Baker July 20 1993

Transcription By: Armin Shujaatullah February 15 2000

SOME WORDS ARE CUT OFF AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TAPE

AB: [Start] off with your full name

JG: Joseph Augustin Grandy

AB: And your date and place of birth?

JG: Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1914. 30th of March

AB: Okay so when did you attend Saint Mary's?

JG: From 1936 to 1939.

AB: Okay, so you started in high school...

JG: Yeah, grade ten

AB: So what was a the high school like at the time

JG: Well it was excellent, we had a small number in the class I'd say maybe 15 to 18.
But it was a very interesting place to be

AB: M-hmm. What was the course work like?

JG: Well I think it was excellent, it was probably as good as or better than -than the
public school, because of the dedication of the brothers.

AB: What were they like as teachers?

JG: Christian brothers, and they were excellent teachers. Excellent teachers and they
made the work interesting and it was easy going to school.

AB: So you walked back and forth to school.

JG: Yeah, yeah of course—distance too. You know, well in those days to walk a
couple of miles to school was nothing. Today you gotta have a bus.

AB: Yeah, hahaha. That's right. So what were the type of courses that you had to take
in high school?

JG: Well, we took all the usual courses, it was the very same curriculum as the as the city classes had you know we did Latin and French and English mathematics and so on, same as everywhere.

AB: Was it a heavy workload?

JG: Fairly heavy, yes because each professor expected...you know, he thought he was the only one giving you work to do. So we had plenty of work to do. Wasn't easy.

AB: Yeah. What were the rules and regulations put on you as a student?

JG: Well, the-the rules were well I don't know it's a matter of time and difference of the differences in those days and now but they there were rules you -you had to follow certain rules and they were they were very rigid. There were no, there was no fooling around we had lots of fun though, of course, but when you're in class it was a pretty serious business.

AB: Yeah yeah, what was the discipline like?

JG: Well, the discipline was they threw you [out of the class] that was what would happen to you.

AB: A hahaha

JG: But there was no physical... nothing physical. Yeah

AB: Okay, what were the recreational activities?

JG: God yeah, we had a lot of fun. We had a [la romp] which was hahaha ah a [rink] we call it the [romp] and it was a whole building uh [on the out on] on upper northern side and there's some pretty wild hockey games there. I remember the - the boys from the seminary Holy [Harris] seminary used to come over to play and they were probably the roughest hockey players I ever saw in my life, I played there and got a few bang up's but we had a lot of fun and as a matter of fact there were two hand ball [alleys] there, and we all played hand ball, that was a great game. And we-at that time it was the first time American football had been ever seen around here and of course the brothers who were Americans were able to put this in to effect and we played it wasn't a real big formal game, in in our class and it was a lot of fun.

AB: M-hmm

JG: Hmm. There were many other activities too. But we had a lot of fun. hahaha

AB: What other activities besides sports went on?

JG: Well I-I was in dramatics. There was dramatics there and, two or three, I was in two or three things there and, I can't think of much else.

AB: So you s-then you went on to the college?

JG: Yeah, I spent two years in high school and went to, to freshman and sophomore. Got a medal here I'd like to show ya. It, I I won that for Elocution in grade 10.

AB: In [thirty seven]

JG: It's kind of, you know I'm very pleased to have that. Saint Mary's "SMC" on the top and. Elocution in grade 10, I was an elocutionist in those days. That's my fathers watch my [oh]

AB: So elocution?

JG: Yeah

AB: What type of things did you do?

JG: Well, you know, this is high school grade ten and and one of the things that the brothers want you to be able to do is to be able to express yourself so, of course you get up in fear and trembling trying to speak. But they brought us along little by little so that after a while, didn't bother you too much. And of course I won the medal, I guess I was pretty loud and so I got the medal. hahaha

AB: So , so what were the courses like at college?.

JG: [oh yeah]

AB: What, what faculty were you in

JG: I was in arts and I thought it was very interesting. Those two years were very very very good as a matter of fact and I remember taking things like ethics and you know psychology and things like that were very interesting to me. And I got along very well.

AB: What were the class sizes there?

JG: They weren't that big they, maybe well as a matter of fact I was in, in a Greek class, I -I got talked in to taking Greek which I hated every minute of, but there was only six of us, so you come in, in the morning and the professor, and there's no way you can hide. You had your lessons then or you were found out very quickly

AB: Yeah

JG: Yeah, you know it was fun, it was fun. And and there were small classes, maybe six, eight, ten, twelve, fifteen, maybe in a class at the time? Yeah

AB: And was the work load heavy at that level?

JG: Yes it was heavy. Quite heavy as a matter of fact. We worked pretty hard, you know. Fellows used to get together to study. I remember a friend of mine he's in Montreal now, George Janigan. He and I used to study together. He became an engineer. I came in to social work later on, but that's after I was in the service in the war and then I went back to school to the Maritime School of Social work and took social work education.

AB: I see, so you went in to the forces in...

JG: yeah

AB: '39?

JG: I was in the navy during the war for five years, yeah. Yeah.

AB: Okay, so let's see what else we can talk about... What role did religion play at the school?

JG: Well religion, religion was a pretty well thought of in in those days. We as a matter of fact [really well] very excellent teachers and the brothers were quite good at, and I thought it was excellent myself. But the religious education, it was strong. Because as a matter of fact, you know, like the boy-hah the boys from when when the [dinner] was on and you had to have a girl, it was the one time that you could go to the Mount and get a girl from the Mount to go to a party with you or dance or whatever you want. But it was, and of course it was there were only boys in our place, there were no girls at Saint Mary's at that time

AB: Yeah. So, were there like any type of prayers that went on?

JG: Oh yeah we had prayers everyday before class in the morning, first class in the morning, yeah and then there was I think if I -I can remember [rightly] I think there was an education class that started for about twenty minutes or something in the morning.

AB: Were there students there who were not Roman Catholic?

JG: Well they- yeah but they were very minor they -they may have been an odd one or two but that's all not too many. It was considered to be a Catholic's boys school in those days but that's all. I can't quite remember anyone being in my class that was a non-Catholic.

- AB:** So where did the students, your fellow students come from geographically?
- JG:** Oh yeah, they came—there were Americans, there were Newfoundlanders, one boy who was in my class was from Bermuda, so they came from all over really, Saint Mary's at that time was considered to be a good place to go and parents would send their children from afar.
- AB:** What were the family backgrounds of your fellow students?
- JG:** Well, ha, I guess there were all types, there certainly were you know the people from away, the parents were able to afford to send them, and they must have been fairly well off, but by and large [were] there very ordinary family people in the Halifax area.
- AB:** Was there any type of student government or anything at that time?
- JG:** Not really, not student government. I was one of the cheer leaders at the time at Saint Mary's and we had that. We used to hold, pep rallies and stuff things like that but being involved in the administrative side, no, there was nothing of that nature.
- AB:** I see.
- JG:** Brothers ran the show that was the [size] of the [time]. I liked the brothers they were very good. But they were the bosses.
- AB:** [I guess] hahah. So there-are there any memorable experiences or events that stand out in your mind looking back?
- JG:** Well, there's lots of experiences. You know like at the games and I can remember winning the -the provincial championship in rugby and things you know that nature that that I felt pretty good about. And we were a small university in a small place and yet we were able to hold our heads up with the rest of the universities around.
- AB:** Are there any personalities that stand out in your mind, from the, the school?
- JG:** Well there's, yes I remember all kinds of them, I remember the brothers in particular, and some of them used to have some very weird expressions like "sit up boy, or you'll have a back like a banana." See they had, very very very many unique expressions those brothers they were funny. Yeah, I had a lot of fun at Saint Mary's.
- AB:** You remember anything else they used to say?

JG: No, I can't. You know, it's hard to remember, you know this is fifty odd years ago and my memory is not that great so I can't remember too many, but there were some very very funny incidents and things and [that] but I can't quite remember them, I was trying to think of them [last night] but I couldn't come up with them. Oh we certainly enjoyed ourselves there I'll tell you that!

AB: Yeah.

JG: That's very good, had a nice time

AB: Are you ever, do you keep in touch with Saint Mary's

JG: Yeah. [Well] in the last couple of years I haven't been that close, but I have been up until then some of the you know, I -I followed the Saint Mary's teams, I followed the hockey up until a couple of years ago, except the damn rink is so cold now I don't want to go there any more.

AB: Yeah

JG: But I yeah, up until a couple of years ago I followed them quite closely. Yeah and you know I recall a few of the guys down there, like, what's his name, oh, Smith! Who, he's the ho- well he's with the hockey down there.

AB: I see. Are you ever in, are you in touch with any of the people that you went to school with. Are you still in touch with any of them?

JG: Gee, I -I seldom see them, well I saw Ed Morris a while ago. Yeah he's one and that's all, but the rest—there's so many of them that died. It's unbelievable you know and I can't recall too many [seeing them] an odd time though you bump in to somebody you know and oh, you know I remember you from Saint Mary's you know but. I don't see too many of them, cause they're gone!

AB: [Good] that's about it

JG: Yeah

END OF TAPE