



This article by Barbara Carpenter was originally published in the [Record Journal](#) - Meriden, CT, Wednesday, 10 April 1991. Top: 25th Religious Jubilee Celebration at Saint Pius X, Middletown CT on 26 August 1965 [right to left]: Oliver J. O'Connor, Capistran Ferrito, Claude Burns, Leo Wollenweber, Peter Claver Eich, Dan Brady, Walter O'Brien, Xaverian Brother, Ignatius Milne and local pastor.

General Visitation, 26 April 1975 at Saint Anthony Friary, Hudson, NH; Daniel pictured with General Paschal Rywalski and General Definitior Aloysius Ward.

WE REMEMBER

Brother Daniel Brady, O.F.M. Cap. Cooked 50 years for the Capuchin Friars

Middletown-The wit of his homeland surfaces in his lyrical Irish brogue as Brother Daniel Brady—a devilish twinkle in his blue eyes—says the reason he is still trim at 86 is because a cook never eats what he’s prepared. “He knows what’s in it.”

Brady spent almost 50 years as a cook for the Capuchin Franciscan Friars. He retired in 1987 and today lives at St. Pius X Friary where he celebrated his 50th Religious Jubilee on 28 November 1990.

Although he doesn’t cook the meals at the friary, he does bake at least 100 loaves of bread each fall which are sold during St. Pius X Church’s annual fair. “I like to keep my hand in the business” says Brady, who gets a head start on the job about a month before the Fair, baking and freezing the two-pound loaves of white, wheat and raisin bread.

Back in his cooking heyday, however, he was satisfying the appetites of 60 or more seminary students. Just one evening meal meant steaming 130 ears of corn and cleaning and plucking the feathers from 20 chickens, then baking them, and then on to tackling a bushel of apples to make 15 pies.

He spent seven years as a cook at Mary Immaculate Friary in Garrison, NY. The “big house” Brady calls it in comparison to the parish houses where he prepared meals for only eight to ten friars at the most.

“It’s better to cook for the young than the old,” says Brady, who preferred cooking for the students with their hearty, unspoiled appetites rather than often having to prepare three different meals because of the dietary restrictions and personal preferences of the parish priests.

“There are no diets in the big house. You eat what’s set before you. Plenty of it, well-cooked, that’s all they wanted.”



- 24 April 1905**
Born in Virginia, County Cavan, Ireland
- 28 November 1940**
Entered St. Bonaventure Novitiate Detroit MI
- 29 November 1941**
First Profession-St. Bonaventure Friary Detroit MI
- 29 November 1944**
Final Profession-Mary Immaculate Friary Garrison NY
- 1942-1947**
Mary Immaculate Friary-Garrison NY
- 1947-1950**
Our Lady of Sorrows Friary-New York NY
- 1950-1952**
St. Joseph Friary-Appleton WI
- 1952-1959**
St. Michael Friary-Brooklyn NY
- 1959-1970**
St. Pius X Friary-Middletown CT
- 26 August 1965**
Celebration of 25th Religious Jubilee St. Pius X-Middletown CT
- 1970-1973**
St. Lawrence Friary-Milton MA
- 1973-1976**
St. Anthony Friary-Hudson NH
- June-October 1976**
St. Francis Chapel-Springfield MA
- 1976-1978**
St. John the Baptist Friary-New York NY
- 1978-1987**
St. Fidelis Friary-Interlaken NY
- 1987-1988**
Mary Immaculate Friary-Garrison NY
- 1988-1994**
St. Pius X Friary-Middletown
- 28 November 1990**
Celebration of 50th Religious Jubilee St. Pius X-Middletown CT
- 14 February 1994-08 April 1994**
St. Clare Friary-Yonkers NY
- 08 April 1994-17 May 1995**
Mount Alverno Center-Warwick NY
- 17 May 1995-11 December 1996**
Schervier Pavilion-Warwick NY

Many of the seminary students were the sons of Wisconsin farmers and would help out in the kitchen between classes. "They were great guys, great workers, they'd eat anything." And when they balked, well, then it was time for Brady to rely on his wits.

Not only was he cooking for a large number of hungry young men, he was doing it during World War II when a lot of food was rationed by the government and given out through a point system.

Oil, shortening and butter, were very high in points, recalls Brady, adding that butter was almost non-existent, so he used margarine. Meat required more ingenuity.

"I couldn't order meat because I didn't know what the butcher had because he was limited by the government. He would send mostly stew lamb and cow's tongues. "We had an endless supply of cow's tongues," recalls Brady, who would boil the tongues and remove the thick skin. The meat inside, he says, tasted like ham. The students weren't as partial to the flavor as the cook. 'You can get away with it for awhile, and then they'd say, 'What? Cow's tongue again?'"

His greatest moment however, came with the deer meat. It was plentiful in the winter months because the police would bring in the deer carcasses which had been hunted illegally.

The problem came when the carcass wasn't cleaned and hung immediately after the kill and the venison gave off a strong odor while it was cooking. "Try to get the young men to eat it," he says, rolling his eyes. "But we had worked out a scheme," he quickly adds, warming to his subject. "We'd ask the butcher if he could give us five pounds of beef stew and cook that first. The aroma of the beef would go through the house, then you would slip in the venison and they didn't smell it.

Brady came to the United States from Ireland in 1928. He lived with an aunt and worked in a grocery store until 1940 when he applied to the Capuchin Franciscan Order. The lay brothers in the community cook, bake, tailor, and tend to maintenance chores in the friary.

Brother Daniel worked the kitchen with a baker [Brother Guido Schrembs] who had retired from the Bond Bread Company. He would make 90 loaves of bread, three times a week and special raisin bread for Sunday. The loaves were baked in a large oven which was fueled with wood.

"The wood had to be same thickness, you couldn't just throw any old thing in," he recalls. "It was a good system. You had to time it and you had to work quickly."

The fire was made with 65 blocks of wood, approximately six inches long by two inches thick. When they had burned out, the temperature in the oven had reached 700 degrees. The bread was already prepared and in the pans, which were then put into the oven, four at a time, using a device with a wide, flat piece of steel attached to a long wooden handle. By the time all 90 loaves were in the oven, the heat was down to 400 degrees and the bread baked for 35 minutes.

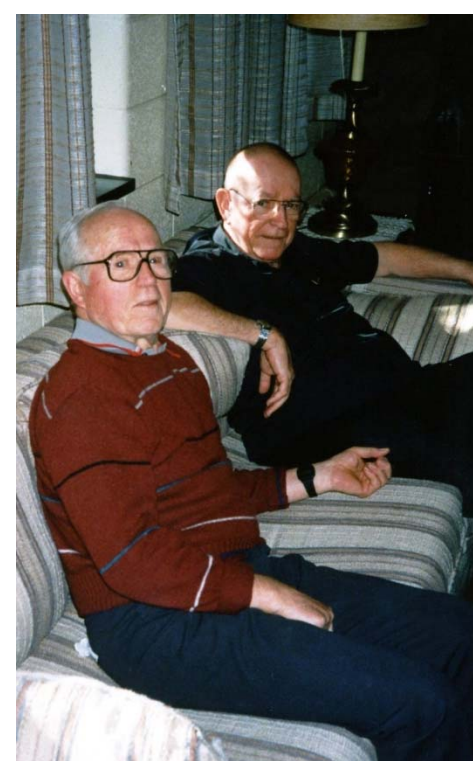
Not only were the cooking methods different from what they are today. Perishable food storage was limited –a wooden ice box which the cooks kept filled with ice and, in the cold months, a protected area located outdoors near the kitchen. Even after the war restrictions were over, cooks weren't able to order cuts of meat such as turkey breast or center-cut chops the way they can today.

"In the old days if you wanted to cook turkey you had to get a whole turkey," Brady said. "And in the old days you could only get the turkey in the fall. Nowadays you can even get a turkey for the Fourth of July if you want one."

"Most people my age think the old days were better. In a lot of ways they were and a lot of ways they're not. The food was better. It was good wholesome food. We baked our own bread and you knew what you were getting."

At one time he even raised his own pigs. After they were slaughtered and skinned, he would cut up the meat into loins and hams and scrape the remaining bones for meat to make sausage.

"Oh, that will never come again. Everything is modern. You can buy it cheaper today."



Top: Daniel and Roderick Brennan at Fraternity Day at Middletown CT-1989;
Dan with his nephew and wife at his 50th Religious Jubilee-28 November 1990;
Dan visiting Seminole Florida-1989-90

