Chapter VII

FAIRFIELD -- THE PREP AND THE UNIVERSITY BEGIN (1941-1950)

When permission was granted by Bishop Maurice Francis McAuliffe in September 1941 for the New England Jesuits to open a secondary school in the Bridgeport area of the Hartford Diocese (then covering all of Connecticut), it was the culmination of many requests and long periods of waiting. During the vice-province years (1921-26), when Bishop George Albert Guertin of Manchester, New Hampshire, was inviting the Society to open a retreat house in one of three areas in his diocese, one of the reasons expressed in province consultors' meetings for hesitation and refusal was a preference for a location in the Diocese of Hartford. Yet despite its large and growing Catholic population, the Hartford diocese extended no invitation for a retreat house or a school. The diocese was satisfied with Jesuit week-end help from Keyser Island, Holy Cross, Shadowbrook, and, after 1935, from Pomfret. In the war years, requests even went to Boston College for weekends in Glastonbury, Beacon Falls and Montville.

Diocesan or parish high schools for boys were then unknown elements in that diocese. Aside from the high school division of St. Thomas Seminary (a six-year minor seminary), there was but one secondary school for boys within the diocese. This was Canterbury, a private school in New Milford owned and operated by laymen though under the high patronage of the Bishop of Hartford. For many years its headmaster was Nelson Hume who had occasional Jesuit aid for religious instruction from Keyser
Island, and for Jesuit retreats to its students.

The number of Jesuits from Connecticut prior to the opening of Fairfield was relatively small. The city of Waterbury gave the largest number either directly from its public schools or through study at Holy Cross. As Holy Cross-inspired were the Hutchinson brothers (John and Gerald), Tom Shanahan, Ed Wolff, Ben Finnegan, Jim Deeley, John R. Sullivan and Bill Phelan. Many, but not all the others, were influenced by Fr. (later Msgr.) Connie Tuelings. Among those coming directly from Waterbury schools were W. W. Kennedy, Dick Dowling, John L. Bonn, Joe Le Roy, Bob Phelan and Jimmy Ring. Other Connecticut places contributed a few: William. H. Coyle (Bridgeport via St. Francis Xavier College), F. X. Downey and Hank Cronin (New Haven), Fred Gallagher and Bob Sullivan (Stamford), Dave Nugent (Windsor Locks), J. L. Purke (Manchester) and John R. Post (Manchester by birth and Bridgeport by entrance). Among the coadjutor brothers were the following Connecticut recruits: Tom Howarth (Putnam), John J. Kelley (Willimantic), Joe Ring (Ansonia), Italo Parnoff (Bridgeport).

The first known approach for a school in the Hartford diocese was made by Fr. James T. McCormick in a 1934 summer visit to the newly installed Bishop Maurice F. McAuliffe (1934-44). The bishop was favorable, but timid. Such a giant step as having a private high school for boys needed consultation. For girls, the diocese was accustomed to academies. These would be found in such places as Hartford, Wilford, Waterbury, Baltic, Putnam. But gains and losses had to be considered before authorization was
given for a boys' secondary school. One in the Hartford area might be in competition with the high school division of St. Thomas Seminary, and the diocese counted on it for recruits.

So well off did the diocese seem at this time with its minor seminary that acceptances of college graduates into the diocesan ranks were not encouraged. Prior, let us say to 1930, Holy Cross had given many of its graduates as candidates for the priesthood. Thereafter, preference went to those who had gone through the diocesan seminary. This was true even though from 1910 to 1930, the diocese had been enriched by many Holy Cross alumni -- Leo, Francis and Vincent Finn; William and Michael Kearney; William J. Collins, Patrick Mahoney, Raymond O'Callaghan, Joseph Finney, John Shea, Frank Sughrue, John Barney, Raymond Mulcahy, Robert Beardsley, Thomas Hayes, Charles L. Hewitt, John J. Delaney, James Travers, to mention the names that occur off-hand.

In understanding the delay in a response from 1934 to 1941, the untypical views of this diocese on secondary schools for boys has to be grasped. This form of Catholic education had not caught on there under Bishop Michael Tierney (1894-1908) or Bishop John J. Nilan (1910-34) as it had in such places as Boston, Brooklyn and Philadelphia. There was no notable influx of German Catholics into this diocese and it was these people and their priests who had encouraged Catholic education elsewhere.

Connecticut Catholic youth had learned to live amicably with their Yankee, if not their northern Ireland neighbors, to go to school with them totally at the primary level, and also
sufficiently at the secondary school level. This writer lived in a Connecticut town of 18,000 which had no parochial grammar school in either of its two parishes until one began in 1922. It took time before the need of any college education came to the minds of Catholics there, even though the town was prosperous due to paper and silk industries and easy access to work for the insurance, firearms, typewriter companies of Hartford. So it can be more easily understood why a request to start a private secondary school for boys in 1934 seemed unusual, unneeded and upsetting. It took seven years to resolve these unusual doubts.

There were occasions between 1934 and 1941 when the initial request could come to the mind of the bishop or be brought to his attention. When Fr. James H. Dolan as Socius searched in the Hartford area for a tertianship location in late 1934, he met the bishop. Immediately the bishop referred to the Summer 1934 request as one still being favorably considered. One of the favorable individuals in this matter in the bishop's curia was, according to Fr. Peter J. Dolin, S. J., a Holy Cross alumnus of 1914, Monsignor William Kearney, for many years assistant chancellor of the Hartford diocese.

In December 1934, when Bishop McAuliffe was approached on the location of the tertianship in Pomfret, Conn., he was reminded of the earlier request. The bishop himself referred to the matter when he blessed St. Robert's Hall in December 1935. So that the request might be kept alive, Fr. Dolan, after he had settled down as provincial after his Roman session, reiterated it in August 1937.
The permission was finally granted orally on September 4, 1941 when Fr. Dolan with Fr. Hewitt visited Bishop McAuliffe. The school, they were told, should be located in the Bridgeport area. There was also the understanding that, after a time, a college would be added to the initial secondary school. All of this was confirmed in writing on September 15, 1941. The bishop, in this written permission, envisaged the later college as a strong center of learning.

The search for property began at once. On September 15, the very day on which the bishop's written permission was dated, Fr. Provincial and Fr. Thomas L. McLaughlin went to Bridgeport to inspect property. Fr. Daniel Mahoney, the superior of Keyser Island, was asked to keep his eye out for locations. On October 28, Fr. Dolan and Fr. Hewitt visited Monsignor Lee Finn, pastor of St. Peter's in Bridgeport, on possible places and local reactions. There appeared one very satisfactory site in Bridgeport, but its early sale precluded its consideration.

Some one (and fathers of desirable locations are legion), had in this search spotted Nailands, the former estate of Oliver Gould Jennings, consisting of some 100 acres, a huge dwelling among other structures. On his return from the October 28 visit, Fr. Dolan was enthusiastic about its prospective purchase. He hoped to close the purchase on a visit on November 30, 1941. It was only on a December 15 visit that he was able to purchase the Jennings estate. The transaction was concluded at five in the afternoon in the office of Mr. Cornwall, the lawyer for the Jennings' family. Fr. Dolan returned to Boston by way of
Hartford and informed Bishop McAuliffe of the purchase.

Within two days, Fr. McLaughlin was in Bridgeport looking into the insurance arrangements on the property. Fr. Mahoney instructed Paul Connery, a South Norwalk lawyer, to arrange an early incorporation of Bellarmine College. Fr. Dolan, Fr. William L. Keleher and Fr. McLaughlin were to be the incorporators. If a resident of Connecticut should be required, Fr. Mahoney was to add his own name. If more incorporators were needed, the names of Edward A. Sullivan and Robert A. Hewitt could be used. In the event that the incorporation should be dissolved, the property would revert first to the Society of Jesus of New England, secondly to the Catholic Bishop of Hartford, and thirdly to the State of Connecticut. This policy followed the one used in the incorporation of St. Robert's Hall.

The mansion on the Jennings property, quickly named McAuliffe Hall, was the work of Oliver Gould Jennings. He had been born in New York City and was educated at Phillips-Exeter, Yale College and Columbia Law School. He had been active in a variety of business endeavors -- Bethlehem Steel, U.S. Industrial Alcohol, Grocery Store Products. From his home in Fairfield he was an active town and state citizen. For many years he was the Chairman of the Fairfield Board of Finance, Director of the Fairfield Bank and Trust Company, of the Fairfield Land and Title company, the Penfield Reef Company, and the Fairfield Historical Society. He also served in the state legislature. In the very early years of the twentieth century, he expended a million dollars in constructing his mansion overlooking the sound, though
a few miles back from it. Wall Street architects and fifty laborers completed the structure in less than a year.

Originally the entrance way to the dwelling had a White House type of two-story porch extending three-fifths of the central portion of the house as it was approached from North Benson Road at the juncture of Osborne Hill Road. Due to rotting conditions, this picturesque facade was taken down about 1920, and a severe unadorned front was all that remained. Some have been unkind enough to imply that the Jesuits tore down the facade, and left or put up a severe jansenistic exterior. But the task had been done a good twenty years before their arrival. As the mansion had somewhat deteriorated prior to 1941 and was then, necessarily, cut up for use as a school, the beauty of its interior was dimmed. It can, however, be glimpsed in pictures taken in its early and grand social days.

Since the interests of Mr. Jennings were broad and variegated, the property had other features than the mansion, its lawns and its driveways. There was a large farm with dairy cattle, Rhode Island chickens, turkeys and horses. It also possessed a vegetable garden, orchards, and a vast greenhouse, only the ruins of which were visible at the time of its purchase in 1941. After Mr. Jennings died in 1937, subsequent death taxes and lack of interest by other Jenningses led to the deterioration in its appointments. Hence, it could be bought by the Society.

Very quickly after the purchase of the Jennings estate on December 15, 1941, there was news of the availability for sale due to a tax default of the adjoining Walter Lasher estate. This
property occupied one half of a large rectangle so divided that
the Jennings and Lasher estates were adjoining triangles, though
Mr. Jennings had a right of way at the top of Mr. Lasher's
property to give him direct access to Round Hill Road. At a
province consultors' meeting on December 30, 1941, it was voted
three to one not to purchase this adjoining Lasher property at
that time. Despite this negative vote, it did not take much time
for this estate to be acquired from the town of Fairfield.

The first selectman of Fairfield, a Mr. Ferguson, was
very helpful in this purchase. He was viewed as so invidiously
useful by some Fairfield residents that an attempt was made to
vote him out of this office which he had held for some time. The
Hungarian pastor of nearby St. Emery's in Fairfield urged his
flock to rally round Mr. Ferguson because he had helped both the
Jesuits and the cause of Catholic education. Mr. Ferguson was
not defeated. The Society procured this estate from the town.

The Lasher estate was a trifle smaller than the
Jennings' one. It had some ninety acres and was crowned by a
Norman mansion also overlooking the sound but at a bit lower
elevation than the Jennings' mansion. The Lasher house became
the faculty residence. It could easily supply switchboard and
parlor space, rector's office, a chapel, kitchen, refectory,
community rooms and living quarters. Over the years many of
these rooms changed their functions.

In the earliest days connecting pathways and roads now
running between the prep area and Bellarmine were either not
there, or there only in embryo. Paths and finally roads
traversed wooded areas, long since cleared away, from one estate to the other. Walking down North Benson Road to Barlow Road and up past the pond to Bellarmine was a common activity. Nor was there then any fleet of cars such as later characterized the place when roads were pushed through and paved. Darkness encompassed the campus at night and an evening stroll from McAuliffe to Bellarmine and back was fraught with peril both of darkness and animals -- some odorous.

Plans for opening a school in September, 1942, were hurried along. At first there was some doubt whether Fr. John J. McEleney should remain at Shadowbrook as a novice master and rector, or be assigned to inaugurate Fairfield. Whatever doubts existed on some local matters at Shadowbrook were clarified, and Fr. McEleney was assigned to Fairfield although his appointment as rector became official only on July 10, 1942. Initially, when he arrived in mid-March, he found two cold houses, and he was commuting from Keyser Island.

The original announcement of the opening of the preparatory school presumed the acceptance merely of first-year students. However, so great was the enthusiasm for the projected prep, that it was quickly decided to admit students to all four years. By the end of June, 200 hundred students, all having taken entrance examinations, had been accepted. By August, the number had swelled to 300. The school actually opened with 319 and an all Jesuit faculty of nineteen Jesuits. The increase in enrollment and the spreading of students over four years led to the addition of other Jesuits at the mid-term.
The province catalogue for the school year 1942-1943 (ineunte 1943) listed at Fairfield twelve priests, seven scholastics and one brother (Robert J. Clifford). The twelve priests were Fathers McEleney (Rector), Edward J. Whalen (Minister), Leo A. Reilly (Principal), John W. Doherty (Treasurer) and the following priest-teachers: James H. Parry, John L. Barry, Eugene P. Burns, T. Augustine Fay, Bernard J. FinneGAN, John J. Kelleher, Walter W. Kennedy and Gerard K. Landrey. The Scholastics included two third-year regents, John J. Donovan and Charles L. Duggan, and five first-year regents, Paul A. FitzGerald, Eliado Garcia, Howard Harris, Edward S. Stanton and Maurice B. Walsh.

Before the year was half over, there had been added Fathers Thomas A. Murphy, Lawrence C. Langguth, and Harold C. Kirley as minister replacing Fr. Whalen. Of all this early faculty, two had extended tenure. Fr. Murphy was still at Fairfield in the province jubilee year, widely acquainted with the old friends of the school and with the priests of the area. Fr. Walter W. Kennedy remained at Fairfield in a variety of capacities until his death on August 24, 1963.

On August 5, 1942, Bishop McAuliffe came to bless the faculty residence, "Bellarmine," as the Lasher mansion was called. During the time after their completion of theology and their next assignment, Fr. McEleneny was assisted by Fr. Michael Walsh, a later president of Boston College and Fordham, and by Fr. Michael J. McCarthy, later a local superior at Baghdad College and the superior of the Baghdad College and the superior
of the Baghdad Mission. On September 19, 1942, Bishop McAuliffe blessed the school building and solemnized benediction in its school chapel. A few days earlier, on September 11, a Pontifical Schola Brevis Mass of the Holy Spirit had been offered by Bishop Henry J. O'Brien, then the Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford.

There were persistent financial problems in inaugurating the school in its first and later years. Bishop McAuliffe gave a $10,000 gift and promised aid to the school in an emergency. Groups of friends, attracted to and stimulated by the rector, were helpful. There was the early formation of a Bellarmine Guild divided into a Mothers' and Fathers' Club. Although the first class to be graduated on June 16, 1943 had but eight students, the commencement was presided over by Bishop O'Brien, and Governor Raymond Baldwin gave the commencement address. The practice was then begun of having these exercises, when possible, on the lawn to the rear of Bellarmine with its porch serving as a platform for the notables.

In a short time it was evident, with the increasing enrollment, that new buildings were needed even though only a secondary school was in existence and the college was only in a remote future. The war rationed or severely curtailed the use of needed materials. Hence, such questions as these arose: Should some temporary building be attempted? Should one or even two permanent structures be planned? What should be done about space even before any other building could be on hand?
By the fall of 1943, Fr. McEleney had formulated plans for a million-dollar drive and received explicit permission from Bishop McAuliffe for its implications. Later, however, the bishop wrote restricting the area of the drive to Fairfield County. This was disappointing news since it cut off New Haven County from which many early prep students came and made the goal of a million dollars more precarious.

With the aid of an architect, Mr. Oliver Regan, possibilities were explored of adapting structures on the grounds such as the garage and greenhouse, and incorporating them into a temporary building. The $50,000 to $60,000 expenses of such a conversion was judged too expensive for temporary space, and any plan along these lines was abandoned. Thoughts turned to leasing a building in the town. Finally, the architect was authorized to draw up a plan for a freshman-sophomore building, later to be matched by one for juniors and seniors. On June 26, 1944, these first plans were given out for bids with an estimated cost of $300,000.

The next and insuperable hurdle was not planning or money but clearance of material by the War Production Board. Plans and specifications were submitted to the local board, which after a long delay and initial favorable comments rejected the application. In its reply, the board chairman, a Mr. French, asserted that there was plenty of room in the Fairfield and Bridgeport public schools. Hence, it was implied that there was no urgent need for material for a private school.
Senator Francis Maloney prevailed on the board to reconsider its decision. A second petition was submitted on July 31, 1944 with the strong backing of this U. S. senator from Connecticut. Since the appeal was to go to the Washington office of the War Production Board through its Boston regional office, assistance came not only from Senator Maloney, but also from Congressman John W. McCormick, Bishop O'Brien and the boards of education in Fairfield and Bridgeport. Phone calls to assist the grant came from Mrs. Claire Booth Luce and others. But this request, even on appeal and with strong political, civic and religious backing, did not succeed.

So the school opened for its third year in September, 1944 with 512 students crowded into McAuliffe. The faculty had increased to thirty-two. December of that year was to see changes in province and diocesan personnel. On December 15, Bishop McAuliffe, long a victim of Parkinson's disease, died. One week earlier, Fr. McElaney had replaced Fr. Dolan as provincial and, on December 18, Fr. Dolan became the second rector of Fairfield. In the following spring, Bishop O'Brien became the Bishop of Hartford after five years as auxiliary. With a new cast, there came new approaches.

The current and future crowded conditions at the prep demanded some new facilities other than any new structure stymied, while the war went on, by the War Production Board. The "Chimneys," a property in Fairfield in the hands of a bank, seemed a temporary solution. This property was so rapidly bought up that it seemed to be as a way to prevent its purchase by
Fairfield for its prep students. On January 31, 1945, Fr. Dolan wrote of his favorable visit to a Morgan estate at 300 Park Place in Bridgeport and noted its acceptability. On April 13, a contract of sale was signed and the purchase was completed by May 10, 1945. It could accommodate 175 students as well as seven Jesuits who in a small community would have their own chapel and office-reception room as well as private rooms. The building was given the common but undistinctive name of Loyola Hall. On September 3, 1945, in a private ceremony, the house and grounds were blessed, and an open house for parents and friends took place the next day. Thus, the fourth year of the prep opened with added, if temporary, accommodations.

To prepare for the day when a college would be added as had been understood from the beginning by Bishop McAuliffe and as was conformable to the view of Bishop O'Brien, Fr. Dolan arranged for a master plan of buildings and their locations and functions. A sketch of a campus of forty-two buildings was drawn up by Mr. Oliver Regan. This master plan of the university that never was, as someone has written, had to be modified severely. But it was chiefly designed not as an exact blueprint of a future campus, but to be useful as a visual aid in presenting definite aspirations to public officials, foundation officers, and the general public. The plan was geared to show the permanence of the Fairfield dream and the variety of activities it could bring forth in time.
To give legal permanence to the institution, petition for a university charter was made to the state legislature. The original charter was not of university stature but a temporary permit for a preparatory school from the Board of Education (it later required an indefinite permit). This new petition was carefully drawn up by E. Gaynor Brennan of Stamford, Connecticut. Bishop O'Brien wrote a laudatory accompanying letter.

On April 26, 1945, the Bridgeport Post carried notice of the approval of the charter by the state senate on the previous day. After the bill had passed in the lower house and was ready for the governor's signature, a snag arose. A member of the State Board of Education pointed out that, prior to any legislative action, a charter of this character should first have been approved by the state board. While this technicality was a source of disappointment to Fr. Dolan, he wished that definitive legislative action be postponed until this board approval had been granted.

The state board had no objections, and their approval was conveyed to Fr. Dolan in a personal interview with Governor Baldwin. Thus, by waiting for this formality, there could be no cloud on the university title. On May 29, 1945 the university charter, engrossed and officially sealed, was signed by the governor. There had been a delay of but one month and three days. Thus was established the Fairfield University of Saint Robert Bellarmine, Inc., with the right and power to teach studies and disciplines commonly taught in secondary schools, colleges and universities, and to confer the degrees granted by
colleges and universities in the United States.

As the final stages on the charter were being completed, a new petition was being readied for presentation to the War Production Board. The layout and the specifications for this building — the future Berchmans along North Benson Road — were the work of Mr. Regan. Matters moved slowly and not always favorably. On August 9, 1944 Fr. Dolan appeared before the War Production Board in Washington. This board, after a careful examination, granted approval although an adverse report had been submitted by the local board. It was at this stage in the work for Berchmans Hall that supervision passed to J. Gerald Phelan, an architect and partner in Fletcher and Thompson, Engineers of Bridgeport. This began a long architectural connection between Mr. Phelan and Fairfield as well as with the New England Province.

Financial arrangements had been inaugurated to facilitate the first building, Berchmans, for which the breaking of ground took place on June 6, 1947. Approval for this first building was granted on July 10, 1945 but a request for a province loan of $100,000 was refused. Later that same month, Fr. Zacheus Maher, American Assistant, opposed borrowing $400,000 for the building and urged a drive for funds. However, Fr. Vicar Norbert De Roynes, by letter on November 9, 1945 did allow Fairfield to contract a debt as requested. It was concerning this permission that Fr. Dolan inquired, a year later, whether he could also use an additional $75,000 since he had this money on hand. A special request took up this matter.
If search for funds for a building on the campus for the expanding prep was not enough of a burden, Fr. Dolan, in February, 1947, announced at a Fathers' and Sons' Dinner that a freshman class would be admitted to a newly inaugurated college in September 1947. This meant the need of more space and more money. The prep students organized themselves to raise money and in two months raised $25,000. One year earlier an anonymous benefactress, hitherto unknown to any Jesuits at Fairfield, had given $30,000. Then in the spring of 1947 a larger scale building drive was inaugurated under the leadership of Colonel Alphonsus J. Donahue of Stamford. It was able to raise $800,000.

The possibility of added funds and the need for campus space for two institutions led to the request for a second building -- the future Xavier -- even before Berchmans was near being finished. Money for a second building appeared on hand and would require no further borrowing. It was also soon settled that the top floor of the new Xavier would have accommodations for several Jesuits, thus aiding in the current overcrowding of an expanded faculty. It was then believed that these living quarters would be temporary, but they still exist. For this second building ground was broken on August 22, 1947.

A somewhat minor but valuable expansion in land had been affected on April 4, 1946 when the Morehouse property, at the juncture of North Benson and Barlow Road, was acquired. This plot of land rounded off the property of the university and precluded any alien or undesirable element in one of its natural corners. The university paid $28,500 for this land and its
The Fathers' Club, under the leadership of Mr. William Hope, paid the additional fund to meet their sellers' demand for a total of $30,000.

While Perchmans was being completed and Xavier being begun, this narrative might pause to consider Pellarmine, the main faculty residence which was supplemented by some Jesuits dwelling in McAuliffe. There were many changes in locations of functions in Pellarmine even though the kitchen, scullery and refectory remained constant. At one time the community chapel was in the "Chinese Room," once Mrs. Lasher's sewing room. The adjoining so-called "bird cage" then served as a sacristy and contained a private altar.

As the community grew, a fair-sized room on the first floor, not originally allocated to any special purpose, was fitted out for the community chapel. The flagstone foyer outside of this room was its sacristy and contained a series of side altars. Mass was first said on February 2, 1946, in this new main chapel whose altar was designed, as were so many others in the province, by Mr. Richard Dick of Worcester. This newer chapel could accommodate sixty people. It served its function until pews were no longer in vogue, and until people circled around an altar facing them.

At roughly the same time, the foyer chapels were moved. Masses which could be said privately or communally at a variety of hours no longer required the number of private altars chiefly, if not exclusively, used between 5:30 to 8:00 A.M.
While Fairfield was still only a prep school, and a distinguished one with its eclat not yet overshadowed by the university, work on an athletic field began. With much truth the main field could be referred to as the "Loeffler Field" since so much personal labor and leadership of Fr. James D. Loeffler led to its creation. The province loaned $25,000 for the project, but most of the labor was volunteered by faculty, students and friends. This original athletic field served a special cultural opportunity.

The Bridgeport Symphony Committee, motivated by the appearance and growing reputation of the Fairfield campus life, requested permission to erect a stage and to present a series of six symphony concerts during July and August. While they lasted, these concerts drew large audiences of the New York City musical and artistic world, as well as the residents of Fairfield and adjoining Connecticut counties. These summer concerts made the Fairfield campus a parallel cultural center to the nearby Shakespearean Theatre in Stratford which adjoined Bridgeport on the east as Fairfield did on its west. These concerts brought Fairfield no renumeration, but gave it a cultural ambiance.

The year 1947 was a critical one, as has been seen, for Fairfield. In January, ground had been broken for Berchmans which could be ready to be occupied in September. In August, ground was broken for Xavier. All of this might have been a Godsend for the prep. But, with the announcement that the college was to begin in September 1947, this meant that the initial early space on the campus was to go to the college. Well
prior to its opening, Fr. Lawrence C. Langguth of the prep physics department was announced as Dean of the College. Since, by that time curricula with and without the classics were well established in the province, the preparation of such topics was relatively simple.

The college opened in Perchmans with an enrollment of 301 students. Many could commute from the Bridgeport-Fairfield-Stratford area as well as from the valley towns up the Housatonic to Waterbury. Others could be provided with living quarters in neighboring and approved homes. Time was quickly to show the need of campus boarding facilities.

The original college faculty was comprised of nine Jesuits and four lay associates. Of these lay associates two have long been connected with the university: Mr. Chester Stuart who has taught German and education, and Mr. Carmine Donnamura of the history department.

Fr. Langguth's tenure as Dean lasted from 1947 to 1954 with the exception of the year 1949-50 when he assisted Fr. William E. FitzGerald, S. J., who was dean and, for some months, acting rector prior to his appointment as provincial in October, 1950. From 1954 to 1956, Fr. Langguth, as administrative assistant to Fr. Joseph D. FitzGerald, was responsible for the construction of Loyola Hall which opened in September 1955. In 1957 he began to supervise buildings at Shadowbrook, where he was rector from 1958 to 1964. Then, while living in the provincial residence at 297 Commonwealth from 1964 to 1968, he supervised renovation at Round Hills, at LaFarge
House, and at Bishop Connolly High School. With the inauguration of a physics course at Connolly in 1968, he was assigned there for that work as he had been to Fairfield in February 1943. He has since seen one of his supervised projects (Shadowbrook) be essentially abandoned and sold, and another (Round Hills) sold though it afforded the first province villa with a real beach.

Jesuit teachers with long tenure from the start of Fairfield were Fathers John P. Murray and James A. Walsh. Both had taught in the prep prior to the opening of the college, Fr. Walsh for two years and Fr. Murray for one. In 1976, the jubilee year of the province, Fr. Murray as much known as moderator of the musical clubs as for his work in mathematics, died after a lengthy bout with cancer. Fr. Walsh, combined for many years instruction in French and freshman theology, as well as theology in the nursing department. He was active in diocesan ecumenical work until his death on April 20, 1977. The present Fr. Vincent Leeber began as a regent to teach Spanish in the college. After the conclusion of his regular and graduate studies, he returned to Fairfield's modern language department. Other Jesuits on the original staff of the college had lesser tenures.

In the second year of the university there arrived more Jesuits who had long tenure there. Fr. Francis A. Small joined the history department with which he was associated until the extended work as librarian consumed all energy. As a part-time student, he had acquired a library-science degree from Columbia. He died in January, 1974. Two science chairmen arrived in 1948.
Fr. Frank Wilkie was connected with the biology department until his death on March 8, 1948. Fr. Gerald F. Hutchinson came from Cheverus to the chemistry department and was a link between the early department and later, all but 30 years. Fr. Harry L. Huss became treasurer in 1947 and, until illness crippled him, was still active in that financial department. After a lingering illness, he died on February 25, 1976.

It has been pointed out that Jesuits assigned quite directly to Fairfield from Society or special studies have tended to remain there more contentedly than those who earlier had been assigned closer to the chief cities of Massachusetts. To this later group Fairfield was remote, but much less so to those who had not experienced assignments elsewhere. Even Fr. James E. FitzGerald found it hard, after so many years at Holy Cross as teacher and dean, to realize that Kimball was not the universal name for a students' refectory.

The university which began in Berchmans in 1947, spread to Xavier in 1948, thus necessitating the continued use of Park Place in Bridgeport by the prep school. Plans for a summer school in 1948 were rejected, but by 1949 the Fairfield summer session was operative. Permission had been granted on December 28, 1968. This gave rise to a topic of coeducation either in a graduate program or in undergraduate courses independent of the day-time college of arts and sciences. After a delay and after Fr. General had a feasibility study made by Fr. Edward P. Rooney, Executive Secretary of the National Jesuit Education Association, and by Fr. Arthur J. Sheehan, New England Province Prefect of
Studies, authorization was given on December 12, 1949 for a coeducational graduate program in education. Through such a program it was believed that Catholic graduates of state teachers' colleges could be exposed to a Catholic philosophy of education. It must be said that the efforts of the Jewish convert, Dr. Maurice E. Rogalin, and of Thomas J. Quirk, Principal of the Hartford Public High School, were cardinal aids in this matter. They were also men long and well-versed in secondary education. This graduate program began at the mid-term of 1950. Since it used classroom in late afternoons and on Saturday mornings, it required no added classrooms.

This concludes the early days at Fairfield. The prep had flourished but by the late 1940's was becoming somewhat of a stepchild to the college and its graduate department of education. It was confined to the McAuliffe and Park Place and, finally, was given the use of Xavier. The college, for a time confined, was housed in Berchmans. By 1955 it also had Loyola Hall as a dormitory and, by 1960, another dormitory along with Canisius as a classroom and library building. The formative days were then over.