

Time Line  
frater M. Charles A.E. Brandt, erm

1923 Feb. 19, born Kansas City, Missouri. Lived on Euclid Avenue, Father came from farming community, Cole Camp, Missouri Grandmother Brandt with children moved to Kansas City, Mo. about 1915.

Father worked as auto-mechanic/electrician at Simon Wiles Buick. Captain in Airforce in 2nd world war, pilot; later was Park Superintendent, part of Swope Park

Mother: Bridges. see genealogy.

Two brothers and three sisters.

Moved outside Kansas City at age of 3 to small acreage. Had cow and chickens. There was a spring on the property that emptied into small stream where I fished for crawdads, perch. In the spring every tree had a bird's nest. Wonderful.

Went to gradeschool on Bennington just up the street from home. Teacher, Mrs. Alden had me doing watercolors of apple blossom almost everyday. Later transferred to Raytown Grade School to finish up. Raytown outside Kansas City about 10 miles.

1937 Eagle Scout. Earned merit badge in bookbinding. During 3 years in Highschool I taught birdstudy and natural history subjects at Osceola Boyscout Summer Camp, Osceola, Mo. Was a Councilor and elected to the honorary tribe of Mic-O-Say. Eldon Newcomb was a great influence in my life. He became a scientist. He was head of the nature staff at Osceola Boyscout Camp. Studied art on Saturdays at the Kansas City Art Institute. My Aunt, Ms Helen F. Bridges (my mother's sister) was on the board of the Kansas City Art Gallery. She taught math at Westport Highschool, Kansas City and encouraged all of the Brandt children in cultural pursuits, especially my brother, Frank, a good artist, and later an architect.

At age 13 was reading Thoreau. My Aunt Hildred did book reviews for the Kansas City Journal Post (her husband was my Uncle will, a lawyer). I recall and she seemed interested remarking to her that I would like to go to the woods like Thoreau and see what life was all about.

1938-41 Attended Raytown Highschool, Raytown, Missouri. Was active in debating, oratory, band and orchestra, dramatics, sports (earned letter in tennis), art editor of Highschool Annual during senior year and editor of school journal. Won state oratory contest and state tenor solo. became a senior life saver and then lifesaving instructor.

We were required to do a paper on our hoped for vocation I had the idea that I would be a forest ranger and live in a lookout tower.

Experience of the Wild: During the spring of my 2nd year in highschool, having become quite interested in Birdstudy I had an experience one weekend out along the Blue River It was beside a small stream with the rich spring foliage when I begin to see a stream of warblers moving along the stream and in the bushes, feeding and calling. The amazing thing was there were about 9 different species in all of their mating plumage's, migrating through to their nesting grounds. It was an overwhelming experience of beauty and wonder and wild. I wanted to preserve it forever.

Mic-O-Say: Had a great influence on my life. Took vows to God, mother, and country. The country meant the earth to me A vow to preserve and save the earth and the great process of evolution that was unfolding.

1941 Graduated from Raytown Highschool winning cup (plaque) for all-round student-musician, dramatist. Won debating scholarship to William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri

1942 Fall of '42, having completed one year at William Jewell, I entered the University of Missouri, to study Wildlife

Conservation. Studies under Dr. Rudolf Bennett head of the Department. Starker Leopold was a graduate student We shared the same rooming house, just off the campus. He is the son of the father of North American ecology, Aldo Leopold I did not know that then. Starker was studying the Wild Turkey in the Ozarks of Missouri.

Interrupted university studies to enter Enlisted Reserve Corps of the U. S. Signal Corps (war was on) and was sent to Colorado to study radar technology at the State Teacher's collage, Trinidad, Colorado. Met Dr. Bailey head of the Colorado Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado, who encouraged me in my natural history, ornithology interests as did Eldon Newcomb. Begin to think a little more seriously about religion, and attended the Baptist Church in Trinidad.

- 1943 Entered active service in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was trained as a radar-navigator. Prior to this cadet training, or rather part of it I was sent to Walla-Walla State Teachers College, Ellensburg, Washington to study math, physics in preparation for Air Corps service. While there, I soloed in a pipe cub after a 5 months training period.
- 1943-44 As an Air Corps cadet, took gunnery training at Kingman Arizona
- 1945 Did navigation training at Hondo, Texas. My father was stationed nearby. Earned my wings in 1945 and was appointed a Flight Officer in U. Army Air Force.
- 1945-45 Sent to Victorville, California to do bombardier training. while there the U. S. Dropped the bomb on Nagasaki, Japan.
- 1945 Sent to Clovis, New Mexico to form an air crew that would possibly see European duty. Was trained as a Radar navigator. Wanted to get things straight about religion. Read "The Parson " in the Clovis News Journal in the Officer's Club. It was written by Dr. Calvin, rector of St. James Episcopal Church, Clovis, The article was

interesting in that Dr. Calvin spoke about the flora and fauna in New Mexico as he journeyed between parishes. Here was someone who was religious and knowledgeable about science. I went in and introduced myself etc. Became friends with his family. His wife was the niece of Governor P. Hence who founded an Episcopalian religious community, Brothers of St. Barnabas who care for incurable men and boys. During my 2nd year at Cornell I spend the summer there, and met Rev. Francis P. Voelcker, and Episcopalian priest who gave me guidance towards the Anglican priesthood. This was near Pittsburg, Penna.

1946 Discharged at Lowry Field, Denver, Colorado. Had applied to Cornell University because they had a department of ornithology under Dr. Arthur A. Allen.

1947 Accepted to Cornell U.. Entered in January of '47. Dr. Peter Paul Kellogg was appointed as my advisor. He was an engineer who taught and set up the birdsound recording made famous by Cornell. During my second year at Cornell I was awarded the A.R. Brand fellowship in bird sound recording. I received a desk just outside the graduate students area.

During first summer at Cornell I worked at the Edwin S. George Reserve near Ann Arbor, Michigan, assisting Dr. George M. Sutton in his studies of the flora and fauna of the Reserve. We worked specifically on nesting birds

During second summer I spent my time at St. Barnabas Brotherhood. There I met Rev. Francis Voelcker who me to study for the Anglican priesthood..

Elected to Phi Kappa Phi (honorary scientific society), Cornell U.

Attended St. John's Episcopal Church in Ithaca during my

time at Cornell. Attended services with C.C. a friend I met in one of my English courses. We spent considerable time together.

- 1948 Spring: Had my first scientific article published in WILSON BULLETIN, Anne Arbor, Michigan, titled "The Parasitism of the Acadian Flycatcher".
- 1948 January. Earned my B.S.(biology) degree from Cornell, graduating cum laude, graduating class Marshall (1st in class)

Made a decision to study for holy orders.

- 1948 January to Sept.-1948: Visited various Episcopal seminaries in U.S. Then moved to Trinidad, Colorado where I had been before my war service. Stayed with Rev. K. Nale and his wife in the Episcopal rectory. Became a candidate for the priesthood. Accepted by Bishop Bowen and board in the Diocese of Colorado

Sept. Entered Nashotah House Seminary, near Delafield, Wisconsin. Three year course.

There was a daily community mass. We sang the office from choir stalls, with a high mass on Sundays. Had blessed sacrament chapel, confession every Friday.

Was having difficult time finding meaningful Anglican spirituality.

Read Jeremy Taylor and Law and Fr. Benson of the Cowley Fathers, England.

Beginning of 2nd year, new seminarian arrived and asked me if I had heard of or read Seven Story Mountain by Thomas Merton. He loaned me his copy. This is what I had always been looking for. Blew me away.

A group of us seminarians made arrangements to go to Gethsemani at Easter, but changed our minds at the last

moment

We wanted to meet Merton and experience the Trappist life for a few days.

During my summers at Nashotah:

- 1947 Worked as assistant Campmaster at Camp Schlueter Gaylordsville, New York where Fr. Paul Week was the chaplain, a man of deep prayer (who later attended my ordination to Catholic priesthood in Courtenay, B.C.) and whom I had met through Francis F. Voelcker and Mrs. Madelene Hart Jenkins.
- 1948 Summer: worked as layreader Episcopal parish in Trinidad Colorado. Visited Our Lady of Guadeloupe Trappist Monastery, Pecos, N.M. and met the Abbot Fr. Bede O'Leary, their theologian. I had been reading Poulain's MYSTICAL PRAYER and had some questions and had some questions. Bede became a great help in the years ahead. Wrote to him after returning to seminary
- 1950 Spend summer in Orange City, Florida, at an Episcopal religious contemplative house. Planned to enter there. Rev. Peoples was superior, Community of St. Augustine.
- 1948-51 Graduate work in theology and history at Nashotah House.
- 1950 Dec. 7, ordained Deacon, St. Andrew's, Denver, Colorado by Bishop Harold Bowen. My father came, my mother did not.
- 1951 Earned B.D. from Nashotah House, cum laude Hoped to enter the Augustinians but friends in New York and Philadelphia (Weed, Schleuter, Jenkins, Voelcker) dissuaded me and arranged for me to travel to England to investigate the contemplative life there. Francis Voelcker accompanied me.

Visit Chevetogne, made famous by Dom Lambert Beauduin, OSB who was involved with Malines conversations. I was troubled about Anglican Orders. They had been proclaimed invalid by the Vatican in 1896. Beauduin felt they were valid. He was not really interested in individual conversations, but in the whole Anglican Communion coming into union with Rome. Chevetogne is in Belgium

- 1951                    October. Became a postulant at the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, West Riding Yorkshire. Was allowed to spend much time in prayer.
- 1952                    Jan 7: ordained to Anglican priesthood by the Bishop of Wakefield. Still wanted the contemplative life.. see PHOTO of my ordination day.
- 1953                    Left Mirfield. Spent January and February on the continent. Met the Abbe Couturier in Lyons who developed the good prayers of week of Christian Unity He was a friend of Dom Beauduin, and Pere Mochanin, one of the founders of Forest of Peace.+99 Fr. Geoffrey Curtis, CR, had arranged a series of introductions for me in France and Rome. Spent 10 days in Assisi, and several weeks in Rome, staying at the Monastino de San Jeralimo (St. Jerome) . Met Fr. Dennis Statham, OSB studying in Rome, from St. Gregory's Monastery, in Shawnee, Oklahoma, where I was later received into the Catholic Church.
- 1953                    March: Arrived at Gaylordsville. On property of Paul C. Weed, an oblate of Holy Cross. Holy Cross had been interested in forming a contemplative community. Emily Babcock, a protege of Fr. Hughson was living at Gaylordsville. I eventually built a small hermitage there from railroad ties... the group was in the It was a form of a laura.
- Sept. Became chaplain at Kent School at Kent, Conn.

Said a daily early mass.  
Did gardening for Fr. Schlueter, retired in Kent.

1954 Left Gaylordsville from Anglican Benedictines at Three Rivers, Michigan, becoming a postulant there in Advent, Nov. 31 Began to learn Latin. All in Latin, the office, that is. Dom Benedict was my novice-master.

Read Bede Griffith's THE GOLDEN STRING  
and John Henry Cardinal Newman's APOLOGIA PRO  
VITA SUA.

These moved me heavily towards Rome.

1955 June: left Three Rivers. The only priest that I knew was Fr. Bede O'Leary on leave from his monastery of St. Joseph's, Mass. and in a parish in Louisiana. I had met him before when I was a lay reader in Trinidad, Colo. 1949 and went to visit the Trappist Monastery at Pecos near Santa Fe, N.M. south of Trinidad about 200 miles. I drove down with a doctor from the parish and on arriving at the monastery I asked to speak with a theologian. They brought out Bede O'Leary who was most helpful.

When I arrived at the parish in Louisiana, Bede welcomed me and sent me to St. Benedict's Monastery, at St. Benedict's La. where I spent a month. The Prior there who taught theology, spoke with me an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon, for a month. I still was not ready to take the step. I returned to Bede's parish and we drove to Mexico City to Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine for a month. On return I went to Santa Fe, through friends visited Fr. Fitzgerald, Hemez Springs. He sent me to St. Gregory's Abbey, Shawnee, Oklahoma

Dennis welcomed me. I began to study Latin and spent an hour every morning with their theology professor discussing the faith.



Learned bookbinding there

1956 Jan 26 was received into the Catholic church in the Benedictine choir by the Abbot. In April was confirmed by the Bishop of Okla in Oklahoma City at the Cathedral Continued bookbinding and taking several courses with the monks.

Easter: went to Gethsemani. Met Thomas Merton who was novice master. I was a potential novice. He said, "Don't come here. We can make you a good monk, but not a good contemplative." I had several chats with him, as I stayed in the guest house.

Returned to Shawnee

June: Went back to St. Benedict's to study more Latin Was offered a scholarship to Rome, St. Anselmo to study for the priesthood by the Bishop of Kansas City. I think this was sponsored by my Uncle Fred, a Catholic married to my father's sister, Esther, who became a Catholic.

I asked the Bishop if I could go to Rome and do my studies and then enter a Trappist monastery. He wrote back that the best place to try my vocation was to begin with the Trappist.

1956 Sept.: entered New Melleray Abbey, Dubuque, Iowa

1958 March 8: Made Simple Profession and was tonsured. Was put in charge of the small bookbindery. Studied philosophy for two years, and theology for five

1964 Uncertain about making my final profession. It was the time of Vatican II and monks were studying their roots. Discovered the first monks were hermits in the middle East and Egypt. I was attracted to the hermit life. Thomas Merton told me at Gethsemani in 1956 that he was quite attracted to the Camaldolese (which is a form of the hermit life and felt that was the great

thing in the American Church at the time. This stuck in my mind. After talking it over with my Abbot he gave me permission to visit them in Ohio. He drove me down. The Camaldolese monks stand for the entire office. I had developed

a back problem at New Melleray and I knew after 10 mts that I could not live that life, after thinking about it for eight years. While there I heard of two other possibilities of the hermit life: Peter Minard in North Carolina who was living a primitive Benedictine life and realized there was a place for hermits, and Fr. Winandy on Vancouver Island who was even then leading a group of hermits. Winandy was a friend of Minard's and greatly admired by T. Merton.

I was given permission to visit Peter Minard and was very impressed. He wanted me to come. On returning to my Abbey I discussed this with Dom Matthias, my abbot. Could I try my vocation with Peter and still keep one foot in New Melleray. He asked me to write to Thomas Merton. This letter (his reply) has been published in one of his journals. Merton said 'yes'.  
(see merton letter)

1964 Nov. 8: Left New Melleray (temporarily) for Oxford N.C . Simple life on an old plantation. Fr. Minard in theory recognized the hermit life eventually. He wanted somebody to do the eventual farm work. I saw that the hermit life was out of the question, at least for a long time. There was the possibility that a brother from Elmira, New York, Dom Winzen's foundation, would come and join Peter as well. We talked about Fr. Winandy's group on Vancouver Island. I thought that might be the answer. Peter wrote to Dom Winandy and Dom Winandy gave me permission to come. So this was a permission within a permission. i.e., I had permission from my Abbot to visit Fr. Peter and he gave me permission to go to Vancouver Island. My sister Frances, paid my bus travel.

1965 March 6: arrived Vancouver Island, in Courtenay, late

Sunday afternoon. Walked to Catholic church where evening mass was being celebrated and asked about the hermits, where were they. Hank Schlinck drove me out to the hermitage near the old town of Headquarters. It was too late, Fr. Winandy told me to come back in the morning

Following morning I arrived and stayed in the bunkhouse until a small trailer home was available until I located a spot on the 100 acre hermitage, moved the trailer there and proceeded to build my hermitage. Had some help from Hank from Br. John Pare, and some of the students of St. Louies in Victoria (they made my windows).

Completed by Sept.

Had to earn my living. With my bookbinding background decided that was the way. The Trappist monks of Lafayette Oregon, donated some bookbinding equipment which I still have. I started looking for clients.

Went to Campbell River with permission of Ray Cunningham and first visited R. Haig-Brown at his magistrates office, and Anne at the Highschool and Valery at the law office.

At first being ordained to the priesthood was not very acceptable to Fr. Winandy. He then gave permission and I went to Victoria (winandy arranged) and met Remi. He was very good, driving me around Victoria to meet bookbinders Fritz Brunn, etc. He accepted me as a candidate for the priesthood. I had my New Melleray transcript (mostly A) where I had studied theology for 5 years.

1965 Aug. 15: received minor orders and was incardinated in the Diocese of Victoria and so ended my temporary vows with New Melleray (they had kept extending them)

received Sud-Diaconate, St. Andrew's, Victoria.

1966 Feb. 2: Diaconate, Canadian Martyrs, Ct.

1966 Nov. 21: Ordained to sacred priesthood at Can. Martyrs by Remi De Roo. Fr. Weed flew out from New York Mother, Father, sister (Ella) present.

SERMON (Remi preached a great sermon on hermit life)

First hermit-monk ordained in several hundred years in the Catholic Church.

Was appointed Bursar (business manager) for the hermit colony by Dom Winandy.

1968-69      Hired as fisheries technician on Headquarters Creek that ran by my hermitage.

Assisted Fr. Tunner in Cumberland on Sundays.

1969-70      Permission granted by De Roo to find hermitage site some where in his diocese, as we seemed to becoming more of a community. I found sites for several of the hermits: Gold River, Port Alice, Hornby Island, Mayne Island. I begin to plan to move to the Oyster River where I had acquired some property. Moved my hermitage to the Catherwood Road site in the spring of 1970. Knights helped me move and built me a basement at the new site. Bernard went to Horby, Winandy to Mayne Island.

1968           Begin helping Fr. Ray Cunningham in the spring of '68

1973           Studied book restoration and fine binding with Stella Patri Barbara Hillar in San Francisco for three months, saying daily mass at Lone Mountain Teachers's college in San Francisco.  
Studied with Peter Fahey as well.

1973-75      October. Accepted at New England Document Center, North Andover, Mass. to work as a bookbinder and learn paper conservation. Staff member of NEDCC under George Cunha. Did extensive flatwork conservation, working with maps, parchments, prints and drawings. During this time I was appointed Chief-of-the Bindery and also was appointed Field Service Director, the latter which involved disaster control treatments, teaching and conducting work-

shops, work in situ and conducting surveys in 30 institutions.

- 1975-76 (to Jan.1, 1976) worked and studied in Europe at various conservation centers: Centro del Bel Libro, Ascona, Switzerland; Instituto de Patologia del Libro, Rome; Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence; Institut fur Restauriaenrung, Vienna; Akademie in Vienna; Stattsbibliothek in Munchen; The Research Laboratory of the British Museum, The Public Records Office, the India Office, London, England.
- 1976-Mar79 Employee of the Canadian Conservation Institute, ACC, Moncton, N.B as a professional Book-Paper Conservator, GT-5 with the responsibility for the operation of the paper laboratory; supervision of one junior staff member; supervision from time to time of personnel from other institutions training in he lab. surveying and recommending on collections in institutions in the region; preparing and lecturing for workshops; and recommending improvements and changes to the Regional Director.
- Had a daily noonhour mass at the English speaking Church Moncton
- Restored Audubons's ORNITHOLOGY for the library of the Legislative Assembly, Fredericton, N.B.
- 1979-1981 (Mar 10, 79-Jan2, 1981) When the Atlantic Conservation Center was closed I was transferred to the paper Lab of the C.C.I, in Ottawa, 1030 Innes Road, Ontario. For the first 6 months of C.C.I. I worked on the backlog of materials brought in from the provinces. This consisted almost entirely of works of art on paper. Subsequent to this I had been working on archival materials (MSS, maps, etc.) and bound vols. I was active in preparing for the coming mobile lab sessions, helping to order supplies and equipment for the mobile labs. I spent two weeks in the maritime in October on the mobile lab. In the spring of '79 I was

flown to Whitehorse in the Yukon to work on archival materials damaged by the floods in Dawson City. June-Oct 1980 I was the conservator in charge on three different mobile labs in B.C., Alberta, Ontario & Maritimes as part of C.C.I.'s Mobile Lab program.

Spent many weekends at Combermere, Ontario. Set up a paper conservation lab for the "B" to work on her archives. This was during my stay in Ottawa.

- 1980 June 24. Confirmed in the appointment as Chief conservator, Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg. Between June 24 and Jan.2, 1981 planned and ordered equipment for the new conservation lab. spent a week in Winnipeg at the Archives in 1980 ordering equipment and designing lab.
- 1981 Jan. 5: Assumed position of Chief Conservator, Artistic and Historic Works on Paper, Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg Manitoba.
- Remi wrote me a warm letter, congratulating me
- Had a daily mass at St. Mary's Cathedral the entire time I worked at the archives. I lived in Holiday Towers just across the street from the Cathedral
- From 1981 for ten years I taught a course in curatorial care of paper at the University of Victoria.
- Most Sundays I assisted at Mass the Benedictine centre, Winnipeg, and sometimes celebrated mass for them
- Made a retreat at the Trappist Monastery at Holland, Man. not far from Swam Lake, which I visited.
- 1984 July: left the archives and drove back to my hermitage which I had rented to a couple with their small son and then daughter.

August to September. Added to my hermitage by firm in Campbell River, creating a conservation lab with an upstairs library, study and bedroom and bath, increasing the decks on front and back porch.

1985 Became aware of pollution of Tsolum River and began to work to preserve it.

Continued to teach at U. Victoria.  
Begin to conduct meditation retreats with Sr. Margaret Lalonde at Queenswood on Christian Meditation

1987 Nov-Dec. Shantivanam in India with Fr. Bede.

1990 BEDE GRITTITH LETTER: Remi distributed so,me material from Rome on the dangers of Eastern Meditation I wrote to Bede, Keating, Freeman for their resposes. Bede's letter to me was published in the National Catholic Reporte as well as ICN.

Restored Nurnenburg Chronicle for U. of Alberta

Continue to take the liturgy (2 masses) once a month at St. Patrick's, C. River.

Man Alive aired.

Environmental Awards: Haig-Brown and Kingfisher Awards

Doug Todd's article in Vancouver Sun.

1997 Harper Collins published my MEDITATIONS FROM THE WILDERNESS.

Medio Media/Arthur James published my SELF AND ENVIRONMENT

Speaker at National Conference of Christian Meditation University of Victoria.

2001 May: Keynote speaker at Western Conference of Christian Meditation. Edmonton, Alberta.

Since 1970 have been involved in several environmental groups:

- Steelhead Society of BC
- Haig-Brown Kingfisher Creek Society
- Campbell River Environmental Council
- Tsolum River Enhancement Committee, Chair
- Tsolum River Restoration Society
- Oyster River Enhancement Society
- Oyster River Watershed Management Committee

Various Finebinding exhibits.