

SISTER MARY WILLIAM McGLONE



HOME OF GOOD SHEPHERD PROJECT

SR. MARY WILLIAM McGLONE

TAPE NO. 7S 1/2 A

Interviewer: Toby Harris

Location: Good Shepherd Convent, St. Paul, MN

Date of Interview: May 5, 1999

TRANSCRIPT

TAPE 7S 1/1

SIDE A

This is an interview with Sister Mary William McGlone. Today is May 5, 1999. This is Toby Harris and we are at the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Convent in St. Paul, Minnesota. Sister Mary William will be talking about her years serving at the Seattle Home.

Tell me when you first knew you had a calling to become a nun, and why you chose the Good Shepherd Order.

People used to tell me, because I was a daily communicant that I was going to be a nun, but I wasn't going to be a nun. [laughter]. In no way! My only sister and the oldest in our family was a Good Shepherd nun. When she left, my parents cried; it was the first time I ever saw them cry. I said I'd never do it to them but it was after I had finished college and a friend of mine was going to enter the Sisters of Laureto and I took her around to see friends for the last time, and that sort of thing, and we talked. It was at that time - and I remember the very spot - as a bunch of college girls, we had volunteered at an Italian neighborhood house where we taught youngsters catechism, things like that. As I was leaving to catch the streetcar in those days, on my way to the streetcar I just had that calling, and knew I was going to the convent. I had a hard time because my dad didn't think I'd last. He was an Irishman who, if you left the convent was the greatest disaster that could be, not like these days. I wanted his blessing, I was finally going to leave without it. Are you Catholic?

No.

Anyhow, Dad, the day I was going to leave, he came home just in time to send the express wagon without my trunk. He called the Superior and said, "Would you please talk to this young lady, she is so stubborn." And she said, "She's a chip off the old block." That night, we were poor, he walked the mile to church and went to confession and talked to Father and came home. The next morning he came in to wipe the dishes I washed and he said, "You can go at anytime." So I had all my struggle before I

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entered and never an iota of struggle afterwards. It's been a beautiful life and I wouldn't trade a day of it.

Did you work in other Good Shepherd Homes, or just in Seattle?

No, I was in Seattle my first twenty years. Then I was in Omaha about eleven years and I was in Helena, Montana, and in Portland about thirteen years. Then when I finished in Portland - we gave up our program in Portland - I was the Superior, my term was up and so my Provincial said, "You can go where you want to" - which was harder than being told where to go. So after much prayer and spiritual help, I went to Denver to help out with our retired sisters. I suppose I'm semi-retired, I don't know what I am right now because I still keep busy all day long. We were in Denver and then we moved the infirmary to St. Paul about fourteen years ago.

How was the Seattle Home different from the other homes you went to later?

Seattle wasn't that much different from any of them. We had the same type of programs. There were differences. In Omaha we had our Contemplative Sisters which we did not have in Seattle nor in Portland, but we do have here.

I notice that you were in Seattle in 1940 for the Jubilee, how much before that were you there?

I went in '37.

Then you were there for about twenty years?

About twenty years.

You had many roles there over the years, tell me about those.

I think I did everything in the house. I was sent out to be Principal of the school. Then while I was Principal of the school we started the high school program. At that time we had eighth grade and commercial, then we put in the full courses for the high school. At that time none of us were social workers and Catholic Charities in Seattle wanted us to have Sister social workers. At that time we were what we called semi-cloistered and we did not go out, not even to the doctors sometimes because the doctors came to the house, the dentists came to the house. Instead of going to the state ..., the Washington University we got permission for me to go to Seattle U. and I took what was related subjects; they didn't have a social work program so I took a lot of counseling and got my masters in Education there. Then I was okayed to go to the University of Washington, and I got my Master in Social Work there.

I have your thesis here.

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Then in the summertime I helped in the laundry. We did commercial laundry for railroads and hotels. Mostly for railroads. At that time we got very little financial help from the state, none from families. So this was a big help financially. I always felt that the laundry had some negative points - it lessened the school day, the girls weren't as fresh for their school work as they could have been because they worked in the laundry.

Did they work in the morning or in the afternoon?

Both, some worked in the morning, some afternoon. That was the negative part about it. The positive part about it was in the laundry there were varied tasks. Soiled laundry was never touched by the girls; men did that, and washed it. The girls shook the laundry out - like the sheets - they would shake them and get them ready to go through the mangle and they'd fold them at the other end. So somebody could be in charge of the shaking room, somebody could be in charge of the mangle at one end and somebody at the other end and somebody packing. There were all kinds of jobs that could give them some self-esteem, that they were important. Also they had the opportunity to learn to work together, and not fuss and fight. That to me was wonderful. I missed that when we closed the laundry.

Did all of the girls work in the laundry?

No, they had to be old enough to work.

How old did they have to be?

That I don't remember but it was according to whatever the legal age was.

Did they rotate jobs or did they always have the same job?

They probably rotated. Even while still going to school, we always did two or three jobs. I kept being principal of the school, at a distance. We had extra help but I did the directing of it. Then I was the Assistant Superior and then I was finally Superior, the administrator of the program.

Did you have contact with the girls still?

Yes. I couldn't give that up. You'd see them when they came, you'd go over where they had their recreation at the time. The girls had a big recreation yard, as you know. At the time I was there we didn't have the swimming pool yet, that was put in later. We played ball and different activities in the yard. They had music, we had a wonderful music teacher.

Was that all part of the school day?

That was part of the school.

The recreation time was built into the school day.

No, recreation was recreation. Music may have been sometimes on Saturdays, they had music. Interesting enough, those days, in the early days, the girls- you know how we got our girls? They were placed by the juvenile court. Few were placed by parents. We preferred taking them from the clerk because then we had a backup, if they wanted to go home, they had the clerk to say they had to wait a little while yet. If they were placed by the parents, the parents get soft-hearted and take them home before they were really ready.

Did you ever have girls just show u p at the convent?

I don't think I ever remember any that did. They may have been but I don't recall any. They would be placed with us for about a year to begin with. Their problems - I think parents would wish their children had those problems today instead of the ones they have.

How did their needs change over the years?

To be placed in Good Shepherd then, you'd run away from home, or your parents couldn't do too much with you. There was very little crime and no drugs. People used to think we took unwed mothers, but we didn't.

That was one of my questions, why is that? Why do people think that?

Because the saying was that we took girls with problems and so the only problem some people could see was being an unwed mother.

So there were never unwed mothers there?

I can't say never. [lots of laughter.] One Christmas we had an Indian girl with us. We had a seamstress who made all new dresses, they wore uniforms those days, and she made all new dresses for Christmas for them. They were pretty little white dresses with puffy sleeves and a little bit of lacy trim on them and full blouse and full skirts, very special for Christmas. When she fitted this girl, Marie I think was her name, she said, "You're getting so fat." This one job I didn't mention I had, we had a Sister who was directress of the girls; she had full charge of them except in the school. If they misbehaved in school I could send them over to her. She was their mother. And they called us mother for years. In fact I just got two Mother's Day cards, one from a former Seattle and one from an Omaha girl. They always called us mother, and then later on

we changed to just being called Sister.

When did you change that?

Many years ago, maybe twenty-five, thirty years ago. The Superior was always called Mother; in fact, most Sisters don't even use Sister but I'm old fashioned. Anyhow, I started to tell you the story of this little girl.

Of Marie.

I was the Assistant, I was Principal of the school but I was also the Assistant. I'd go over and help out at recreation time and meal time and things like that too. Christmas morning they were sleeping in from late mass, so I took a couple of girls down to get breakfast started. One of the girls said, "Mother, Marie had terrible pains during the night, cramps." So I stopped in the directress' office and got some Midol and sent it back up to Marie. The next thing I heard the directress on the telephone calling the hospital. A little baby boy had been born in the dormitory. Surprise to everybody. Even the girl said, "I did not know." I suppose it's possible.

So she must have been pregnant when she first came?

Yes, and didn't know what it was all about.

And what happened?

While we were in the chapel in Seattle, on the third floor, where the chapel was, on the other side of the chapel was a big dormitory and Marie was in that dormitory. When they came from the hospital to take her to the hospital, they brought her through the chapel to the elevator, [laughter] and we were at morning prayer [laughter]. The young doctor, he was an intern and he had come with..., and he later on was on our Board. Wasn't that an interesting story? But the little boy only lived about three months. We made other arrangements for the girl and the baby soon after the birth, of course. That was the only unwed mother that I have known.

Tell me about the dormitories. How many dormitories were there and how was it decided who lived where?

We had a large group of girls. In those days we had one large group of girls, say one hundred girls. I don't know how many we had at a time in Seattle but I'm sure that it's around one hundred to one hundred fifty. We had three dormitories I think in Seattle, maybe two.

I have this 1952 Euphrasia. Some of the pages, I think it does have a little bit about the dorms. [looking at pictures] And there you are.

Back then this was my most favorite person in the world.

Who is that?

Mother Francis Borgia. She was my novice mistress, she trained me in the beginning.

Did you say that this was your first mission.

Yes.

So how old were you?

I had finished college before I entered so I was about twenty- four. I had got some school.

There was a page that described the dormitories.

There's part of it.

Actually there's another picture here of the dormitories. Is this typical of what they all looked like?

Yes.

So, one was right next to the chapel. Now when you say third floor, did you call the basement the basement?

Yes.

So, basement, first, second , third.

We probably had two large dormitories and then we had an infirmary. In the dormitories there were honorary positions. One of the girls might have charge, although a sister slept right next to- for instance this might be a Sister's room up here, [looking at a picture] her room would be adjacent to the dormitory.

Was that the house mother?

Well, it could be. The directress would have one dormitory, and I might have had another, or somebody else might have had another. Just whoever was working with the girls would be assigned to be in the dormitory. Then there would be a girl or two in the dormitory that would have charge of different things in the dormitory.

How did they earn that privilege?

By their behavior.

Tell me about some of the rules and privileges.

For a long time they stayed without ever going home when I first went there, until they went for good. They didn't have days off or a vacation. I can remember the first girl when the Sister decided, the Sister Directress decided to try out going home for a day. This one girl who'd been there quite a while, was given that privilege and of course we all waited patiently to see that she came home.

And did she?

She did. So then , that was the beginning and they began having days out, a day off a month, or a weekend a month.

Do you remember when that was? When they started that, about?

I know who started it but I don't know when she was there. Sister Annunciata started it, but I don't know what year or anything. [Sr. Annunicata was there 1942-43.]

So before that , they could not have days out, and could they have visitors?

Yes.

They still had parlor days?

There was a parlor Sunday.

Every Sunday?

Every Sunday. It was divided, they didn't go every Sunday because of the number. Probably every other Sunday.

What sorts of rules were there for the girls.

Just like in school, like any school. Didn't play around during the classes and things like that. Don't get in fights. There was silence in the dormitories certain hours.

What would happen if they broke rules?

Well, they might get a demerit. It depended on their conduct, whether they got their days off or not.

When they got days off did they have to have someone that was going to escort them?

Yes.

So what if a girl did not have family?

That would be provided, we'd get volunteers to do it for them.

Did they earn income, or have money of their own while there?

No.

What happened at holiday time?

We would have special parties and activities for the holiday time. One of the wonderful things while I was there was the Seattle Times, every Christmas, had a big drive for all the agencies. Robert Heileman was the man at the Seattle Times who was responsible for that and wrote the articles and everything. He would come out to our place very often, we became close friends. They would give us a very substantial amount of money. We could buy coats and outfits for the girls and things for Christmas; we always had a big celebration for the holidays. On the Fourth of July there would be big picnics in the backyard with hot dogs and popcorn and all this sort of stuff, games and prizes. It left a lot to the Sisters to have to do, to bring up all the things for the girls, and of course, the girls helped with that too. Some of the girls would stay to finish high school. In fact, both of these that I heard from today, one from Omaha, she finished high school with us. They might have been asked by the court to stay here, but they may stay two or three years.

So they could choose to stay longer.

Yes.

Who decided when a girl was ready to leave?

Well, the Directress were more or less responsible for that decision, but she certainly didn't do it by herself, she consulted with every Sister that worked with her. Sisters in the laundry, Sisters at school, Sisters in the living area.

So if a girl wasn't ready to leave, would she be allowed to stay?

Yes, she would be encouraged to stay. It was rare that we didn't keep a girl. A girl that was a very bad influence that wasn't changing at all after many chances, then we might return her to the court. That was rare.

What about when they reached eighteen?

Well, they were free to go, very few of them reached eighteen. They came in thirteen, fourteen years old. If they reached eighteen then they had been there for a while.

Some of the girls were fairly hostile and maybe even violent, were you ever frightened?

No. They were hostile, but I didn't see them as violent. They'd say, "I hate this place" and that sort of thing.

So it was usually more verbal?

Yes.

What was the procedure when a girl first arrived?

The Sister in charge of the girls, the Directress would be the one who would first meet her and talk with her, and then depending on what grade she was in she was sent to school, then depending on...

END OF SIDE A.

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SIDE B

The older girls who had been there for a while and had done well would have the new girl for her little sister. So then the big sister would watch over her till she got settled in.

How long would they be paired?

They made friends all the time they were there.

Let me ask you about some more of these pictures. Do you recognize that room?

I think that's the summer house.

Behind the building?

Back part of the building. I didn't remember it being closed in but that's what it looks like. That may have been after I left.

So when you were there it just had a roof and it was a cement floor?

Yes.

We're looking at a photograph of girls playing ping pong and bowling in a room which is now the pavilion and in this photograph it shows that it was closed in. There's several pictures that say before and after, I don't know if you can identify- this looks like a kitchen, but I'm not sure. Was there more than one kitchen?

This is the kitchen that I remember here.

Which kitchen is that?

We called it the big kitchen, and I don't know why.

But there were two dining halls?

This may still be part of that kitchen but all this out here looks like this is from the big kitchen. But I don't remember all these little drapes. The Sister who had charge of it I don't think had drapes when I was there.

Was that kitchen in the basement?

Yes, adjacent, there was the kitchen; then just over here was the dining room, across the hall. The kitchen was here and then here was the dining room and here was the corridor. On this side there were other rooms, we called it the clothes room. It was where they made, after the clothes were washed, they were bundled and taken care of.

So it was at the end of the building that was closest to the laundry?

Yes.

Was there another dining room on the other end of the hall?

Well, the Sister's.

The Sister's dining room.

The Sister's dining room. The building - to get to the kitchen here, now this was the kitchen, then here was what we called another room, seems to me we called that the storeroom there from the kitchen. Here was the door, the double door, into this corridor. This was the girl's side of the house.

The North side?

Here's the stairway going up here.

Let's look at the floor plans and see if... Okay, this would be the basement. So this is Sunnyside so this is the front of the building, so the laundry would have been over here.

Yes, well no.

Well the laundry's not attached, not shown on this floor plan.

No, there's the stairway to the laundry.

So this is where the big kitchen was?

No, no. The big kitchen would have been here.

Let's write that down.

I think. This would have been the dining room. These would be the clothes room area; there may have been showers or tubs in there too, I'm not sure.

Here's the stairway.

Yes. Here would have been the double door and the stairway here, and the elevator there. Then this side was the Sister's side of the house, except that on the first floor level was the school.

Right, okay. So the Sisters had their own dining room and kitchen?

The Sisters had their own dining room and kitchen on this side. We had a linen room, that's where our clothes were taken care of, there.

Where did the Sisters live?

This is the basement, then the first floor was the school, and then the Sisters lived on the second and third floor above, they had rooms above.

And so the other dormitories were on the other side of the building.

On the other side.

So above the south end.

Yes.

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I was noticing in this photograph, this is from 1957, and the girls look very dressed up, it looks like a play of some sort. There's a scene showing two Chinese people, I'm just wondering what that was about, if you remember that.

Well, the Sister who was the directress I think at that time was really gifted in putting on programs, you know, shows. This could have been "Mercado" or something like that. I don't know why, I wouldn't remember that at all. The one thing I do remember, one time she did put on, I think of it every time around Christmas time they show the parade of the wooden soldiers. With their costumes on. I can see Sister's wooden soldiers looking just like those professional ones on the T.V. That's how good she was. I don't know, the Blessed Mother there in the background. It almost looks like the May crowning but I don't know why...the Japanese. I wonder if that isn't a scenery there, the stage. To me that looks like the stage background.

Well it does but I was wondering why there would be other cultures in there, if they were learning about them or if there was a story.

We had a Chinese girl, this is a background to something they had, a play. They could really get dressed up, and we had proms and dances for them. I don't remember where Sister got the boys. In Omaha I know we got some from Boys Town.

So boys were allowed to come in? At the Prom?

At prom, yes, at rare occasions like that. And we had very good graduation programs and everything for them.

On the third floor, it would be the second floor on this end above the school, was there a cloistered community there at one time or was there ever a Magdalen community or other communities of Sisters?

There could have been. I wouldn't have that information. I think vaguely, I do remember there was, that they started there. You see they are all, they're not an isolated group, they belong to a world wide group. And so I think that they started a little group in Seattle and then they moved it to Spokane I think. But I'm not at all sure of that, it's just a vague hearsay. Sister Marjorie would have that.

I was noticing this picture and I think it was probably much earlier than when you were there, but it says on the back that they were consecrates.

We never had consecrates in Seattle while I was there nor after I was there. However that was one difference in Omaha, we did have Consecrates, and they were girls who were in our group, our class, we always called it the class, and they wanted to stay longer. So they'd consecrate a year of their life to stay. Then they had a certain

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program of prayers and that too during the day made it a religious affiliation, and then they took, made promises for a year and then they could renew them next year. In Omaha the ones I knew, we had one die here in the infirmary at ninety-nine years old. A very delightful person. Up until the end of her life she was a baseball fan. The Twins if they lost she hung a black drape over their picture. Those were the girls who wanted to stay longer and dedicate a year of their life to God.

Do you remember any girls during the years you were in Seattle that chose to stay and they would have come to the provincial house in St. Paul?

No, I don't. I remember one girl went to Los Angeles and became a Good Shepherd Sister.

So these girls could become a Good Shepherd Sister?

They could but usually they didn't, they just stayed Consecrates. Then when we left Omaha, I wasn't there when we closed Omaha, but the Consecrates there had a choice of becoming Good Shepherd Sisters, and some of them did. And then too, in my early stay in Seattle, the Sister in charge of the girls at that time did have consecrates. She probably had about three or four girls but they didn't wear a habit, they just were consecrates, they may have worn a little medal to show that they were consecrate.

But in Seattle there were no Consecrates while you were there?

Those kind, not with the habit. These were girls who consecrated a year. Sort of this, modified.

They were in Seattle?

Yes. And that lasted as long as, maybe five or six years and then they died out.

Were they cloistered?

No, they could go out and do shopping for us. They were girls trusted. They were great helpers to the Sisters. They were quite mature young women. Some of the girls became very close to the Sisters and stayed on for a year or two after just to help out.

What was the relationship with the other Catholic churches in the area and the Catholic hierarchy?

I think it was very good. St. Benedict's parish down the hill were our chaplains and they said Mass in our chapel everyday at Good Shepherd. They were the girls' confessions. They helped teach, I remember one of the oblate fathers, father

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confessors. He was a young priest when I was out there, the young nun, he used to help, we'd teach catechism together. Then years later, he had been missioned around and was in Denver. I went to visit my brother in Denver and here was Father McCullough so we had a good visit exchanging memories. They were a wonderful relationship there.

What were some of your favorite places in the building or on the grounds?

Well, the yard was lovely, the girls' yard. But we had, outside of the girls' yard, down on the field there, we had gorgeous flowers. We had a gardener and gladiolas and the flowers in Seattle were wonderful. Of course, the chapel was my favorite place but I liked that yard. I liked the girls' yard but I also liked the side that we went out ourselves to recreate on the other side of the fence that they had around the girl's yard. There's a roadway that comes in the back. This side was the girls' and this side was ours.

So where the orchard was, was your side?

Yes. We had the orchard there and gardens and flowers and garage. Then we had another yard, they called it the Sisters' yard. It was fenced off right close to that end of the house by the school.

Where the statue was and the pond?

Yes.

That was shared by the Sisters and the girls or just the Sisters?

No, just the Sisters, that was the Sisters'.

This is a photograph of another room, and I'm wondering what room that is, what it was used for, where it was.

That was a big - that's on the first floor. You go in, that's the auditorium, and that was used for assemblies. You know, Sister would have all the girls there and give them little pep talks and ideas of what to do about the future. That way she'd get them all together and remind them of what we, she expected of them.

Where were the Proms held?

The Prom? It'd be in here.

What was the penthouse? Or Paradise room?

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I think we called it the penthouse. It was the attic actually. I never had much to do with that. I think they went up and did more rough and tumble up there than down here.

And that was above the chapel?

No, nothing above the chapel. Chapel would include the attic.

Let's look on the floor plan here. It would have been level four, there's the chapel.

Here's the chapel all the way across and here's the dormitories. Then above this dormitory, see the chapel would be say thirty feet high and these would be fifteen feet high, well the other fifteen feet would be the penthouse.

And Sisters lived on this side?

Yes, and do you know what we called our rooms?

What?

Cells. The old monastic word for our room.

Did you each have your own cell?

We each had our own cell.

Then there were big bathrooms and showers, shared.

Yes.

Do you remember any of the girls attending Lincoln High School when you were there?

No, but some of them stayed enough and wanted to stay, that the Sisters saw that they went to Seattle U. One, my girl from Seattle U. she's a social worker in Hawaii now. They probably wouldn't have finished Seattle U. but just get a start there and on their own finish up. Look at how many chairs there are there. That tells you how many girls we had at one time. That's well over one hundred chairs there. [looking at photograph of Assembly Room]

How did things change while you were there?

Not very much, but then they began to change to where instead of having one large group, we broke down into smaller groups. For instance here in St. Paul we don't have any girls here anymore, but we have five cottages. So we had twelve girls in

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each cottage. That's very different from what we had in the early Seattle. I don't think, let's see, Helena, Omaha, Seattle, Portland. Portland, we began to break down in groups while I was there and that was in the seventies.

So Seattle was still a large group while you were there.

When I was there Seattle was still a large group. The change was we went into the high school program and we kept trying to improve whatever we were doing for the girls.

Besides the laundry did you make altar bread during those years also?

It seems to me that that room off of the kitchen I wanted to call it altar bread room but I don't have much recollection, it wasn't much in altar bread.

What about fruit, were there other means of income?

No, the main source of income was our laundry and then we gradually got to where we were on United Way. In fact when I went there that's one of the first things the Sister gave me, the budget for United Way and I'd never seen one of those detailed budgets in my life. [laughter] And I soon got used to them. United Way was very good to us.

Was that different from Seattle Community Chest?

Well, it was Community Chest. Same thing. Along the way it changed its name. It was Community Chest to begin with and then it was United Way. Is it still United Way?

Now it's United Way.

They were very good to us. Boeing was very good to us. Boeing furnished our typewriters for the typewriting room.

What about the Archdiocese?

The Archdiocese, the Catholic Charities was very good to us. The Archdiocese never gave us money, we were supposed to be self-supporting when we went there. We weren't depending on the Archdiocese at all, nor in any of our houses do we depend on the Archdiocese, we are independent of them. Here we do our own fund raising, we don't even, we stay away as much as possible from federal government. You end up working with papers instead of people. We want to work with people.

Do you have any other memories that you would like to share about the convent?

Well, I loved it. We had our ups and downs, you know you always had problem girls

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and sometimes some of them weren't behaving but we got through it. We had wonderful girls who were wonderful and were wonderful friends. We loved them and they loved us. It was work that I really didn't know what it was all about when I entered but I have never regretted. It's been wonderful, the lives of over two thousand girls have touched me.

Thank you.

END OF SIDE B.

HOME OF GOOD SHEPHERD PROJECT

SR, MARY WILLIAM McGLONE

TAPE NO. 9 S2/2

Interviewer: Toby Harris

Location: St. Paul, MN

Date of Interview: June 6, 1999

TRANSCRIPT

TAPE 9 S 2/2

SIDE A

This is a follow up interview with Sr. Mary William McGlone. I'm Toby Harris; the date is May 6, 1999. We're at the Sisters of the Good Shepherd convent in St. Paul, MN. You had some afterthoughts.

Yes I did. First of all, I'm sure Marjorie has acquainted you with our congregation, that we're worldwide and we were founded in France. You asked about Archdiocese and the church. When we go into an area, like into Seattle, we either are invited by the bishops to come there, or we ask to come and are approved but never with the financial backing, that I know of. Although they are very morally supportive and we are able to get auxiliaries and people in the churches to help us, they always do that. I wanted to clarify that. That was the conditions that we go into the cities on, an invitation or approval, not that I have ever heard of financial backing. Maybe a check now and then but not to depend on. But very supportive.

I was thinking about the dormitories, there were four dorms. Two large and two small. The house was divided, the large rooms were on the front side, the narrower ones were on this side. There was a smaller dormitory here on each floor and a larger dormitory.

The larger dormitories were on the side closer to the laundry?

No. The large dormitory was right next to the chapel, remember?

Right.

You go out the chapel and there's a corridor. The half of the side of the building was the large dormitory, then there was the hallway and then the smaller side was a smaller dormitory. When the girl first came, she was put in what we called a reception dormitory or an infirmary for a few weeks until everybody got to know her better, and then she was placed into one of the bigger dormitories. Things come back to my mind.

I was also going to ask you about one of these other rooms. A room that was right above the front door. So it was on the second floor, that's where it was in the building. If you looked out the windows you were right above the front door. So you looked out at the monkey tail tree and it had a kitchen in it.

It may have been Sisters' infirmary.

There was a nurse there?

Yes.

Then you asked me- and that kind of threw me- my favorite spot. First of all I have to change that, Chapel was one but wherever the girls were was my next favorite spot. In school, in the yard, or in the dining room, wherever they were - I loved the girls. And then the garden. I wanted to emphasize that I was never afraid. The girls were never violent. They were nasty sometimes, I hate you or something, it's like any of us have a fit of temper, but never, not like the children today at all. So I wanted to re-emphasize, and then I don't know if you understood what I meant when I said we were semi-cloistered.

The cloisters like the Carmelite Sisters, they're a very cloistered order and they never go out, nor do they work with people that much. Their life is a life of prayer and penance and fasting and things like that. If they talk to people, it's usually through a grill or a grate you know, the Carmelites. But we were semi-cloistered, we worked with people and we have a prayer life, scheduled times for prayers and our own prayer life. When we were semi-cloistered, we did not go out to a movie or out to lunch or out to any recreational, if we had to go to a doctor outside, that was okay. We traveled and we always had a companion; one of the other Sisters usually traveled with us but that was the semi-cloistered idea that we had. Our life was focused right on our work, the girls. We were able to give the girls a lot of knowledge of God, it helped them in that way to better their lives, that was the means that we had to help them better their lives. Of course that made it easier for them if we weren't running around and driving around the town and going to lunch and things like that; it made it easier for the life that they had to live too. So then that semi-cloistered aspect was removed and we are no longer semi-cloistered.

When did that change?

The church asked, you're either cloistered or not, so we're not.

Was that something that came out of the Vatican II council?

Yes. And so now we can do things. We can go to movies and we can go to lunches

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and we can go to rides and picnics. We never went home. When I left home it was with the knowledge my parents knew that I would never be back home. So when the cloister, semi-cloister, was taken away, then we had home visits. My parents were both in heaven by the time that came but my sister and I, we would both go to my brother's house for a week or two.

So even though you were only semi-cloistered you still didn't see your family during all those years?

We would see them, for instance...

But they could visit you?

Yes. If there was a good excuse for business, like in Denver, I'd get to go and they could come out. And then when my parents had their golden jubilee, the convent held it. We had Mass in the chapel and they had a big brunch for the family and relatives and guests at the convent. My sister and I were both there. Now we can take time out for a vacation, might have a home visit, down in Portland, down on the beach- the Province has a house. It's a big place, Rockaway, I don't know if you're familiar with Tillamook, it's about fifteen miles North of Tillamook, between Cannon Beach and Tillamook. It's a large house and we converted the garage into an apartment, and so a lot of people can go there and Sisters often have their families come and spend their vacations there with them.

During the years that you were in Seattle when you were semi-cloistered, did you have many interactions with the community?

Yes, because they would come, like United Way they'd come out, they'd tour the place and the building. And we had an auxiliary and we had communication with the women, they'd be leading women in the city. Had a Board, not of directors, but an Advisory Board, of prominent men in the city. Then we'd have different volunteers. We had good contacts, but then you didn't want too many either. I had contacts with Jesuits from Seattle U. who, one of them came over and taught speech to the girls, and one of his girls won the second prize in the state in elocution. We had a lot of contacts but you can't have too many and do your work either.

Who led your daily Mass, did you have daily Mass?

Yes, we had daily mass and the Priest from St. Benedicts took care of us. They took care of most of our spiritual needs, confession.

When did you go to school, when did you start attending school?

The University?

Well, did you go to Seattle University first?

Yes.

And then you went to the University of Washington?

Then the University of Washington. It was probably in the late forties or early fifties.

So that was allowed.

Yes, that was by special permission that I went to Seattle U, nothing like that now, we go wherever we want to go to school. Most of the Sisters, Sister Joan, I think has her Masters, her PhD in Theology, she went to a school in Chicago. Different Sisters have gone to St. Louis University. We have St. Thomas University here and the Sisters have attended there.

So you had to get special permission.

You get permission from your Provincial. You just don't do what you want, you have to do what is best for your order, you know. Sister Dorothy, I don't know if you met Sister Dorothy, she got hers at St. Louis U., her Social Work, but some Sisters have gotten it at Minnesota U., their Graduate School work and Social Work.

So the girls didn't go on any outings during those years? I noticed a trip to Mt. Rainier.

I think they did, not all of them at one time and not all of them ever, some of them had been there maybe longer, and were, I don't like to say trusted, but that was the word that we used. We knew they wouldn't run away. That was another thing, I didn't tell you about this job I had. I was Principal of the school and I think the Sister who was Directress was ill and had to be sent to another convent. The Superior thought I had good order of the school, that I could also do that job, which was a mammoth job. The school was on this side of the building, and the living area, the home life was on that side of the building. I thought their life on that side of the building should be different and I should be a mother. I soon didn't have, they'd go one by one out the windows. So I didn't have that job very long and I'm surprised they kept me in Seattle but they did. I was a teacher and they behaved in my class, or else. Sister thought I would carry that over to the other side but that wasn't my idea. I thought they needed love, they got love in school too, but they wanted motherly love, you know, kind of soft. It didn't work.

So they ran away? A lot of girls ran away?

Yes, they'd run away and climb out of windows at night.

Weren't they high up?

They'd go down the fire escape. Or different ways, they'd stay out in the yard and go over the fence.

What would you do after that happened?

Well, you'd notify the court, pick them up and bring them back.

Were there alarms on the windows? Was there an alarm system in the building?

No, not at that time I don't think. Things were pretty secure. They probably worked on it, or whatever they did. The easiest way would be when we'd be out in the yard, then we'd go in for lunch or for the end of the day, then two or three of the older girls would make a visit of the yard so that nobody was tucked behind the grotto, or the bushes and things. Because then they could just hop over the fence, climb over.

Do you know who built the grotto?

No, I really don't. My first guess would be the Sister who was in charge of the girls when I went there. She had been there for a while, Mother Angel was her name, and a very dynamic person, a charmer, very wonderful with the girls. To my recollection it was under her initiative that the grotto was built.

But did the Sisters build it themselves?

No. Probably some friends. She had many friends.

Would a girl be released at night? What was the procedure when a girl was released. When she was told, how was she prepared to leave?

Well, if it was time for her to leave, it depended on what her family situation was. Family would be notified and they might bring her clothes and things like that. If she didn't have that support from the family, or if they were poor, then we would provide her clothing and things before she left. That was about all that we had to do. Then the court... we would work with a placing agency too, and they would help with notifying the family and help to see how things were. They knew better the family than we would, sometimes. It was a cooperative gesture between the workers at the court and the placing agencies.

And somebody would come pick up the girl?

Her family would come pick her up, or she might be going to a foster home. That was rare in those days, but if she was going there then the caseworker had to take her

there.

I was noticing in some records that a library and a house were built in 1957? Where was the library?

The school was in the main building on that part, I don't know what side you would call it. Then adjacent to the school we built an addition to the school. The lower floor was the home economics department, it had a kitchen for home ec and a dining room, living room and bedroom on that lower floor for home economics. Then on the top floor there was an art room. What did you say?

A library, and also a house. And it was before, let me make sure of this, no it was after the addition. The addition was put on in 1954.

Yes, when I was still there.

And in 1957 it says a two story library. How about the house, a family dwelling?

I didn't know they had built a house, they may have bought it. No, I need to see whether I'm in Seattle or Portland. No, we didn't have a house in Seattle while I was there. We had a house on the back part of the property but that was there for a long time.

What was that house used for?

While I was there, we had one of our former girls was our cook and she lived there, with her children. It was more of a caretaker's place. I don't remember. We owned a house, no that was Portland.

What was the isolation room? Was it the infirmary?

It could have been in the infirmary because the nurse was there.

Is that where the doctors came, where the dentists and doctors saw the girls?

Yes, we also had a beauty parlor.

Where was the beauty parlor?

It was on that second floor near where the nurse was. We had a woman who ran a beauty shop and she taught beauty work. And I would go up and sit during the classes so I got alot of training, bobby curls and bobby pins.

Were there Sacred Heart classes and Angel Guardian classes, or was that earlier?

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The dormitories may have been called that. The Angel Guardians, I think that was long before I came. One time we had orphans there you know.

Right.

But I don't know if they were in that building or not.

I was noticing that there were four or five Sisters who had been there since almost the beginning and they were still there when you were there. Do you remember any of them? Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, Sister Mary of the Presentation, Sister Mary of Tatiana, and Sister Mary of St. Bernard. Did you know those women?

Yes.

So they were there early on?

I guess they were there for a long time. They were very old when I was there. In fact if we had had this place they would have been here by then, but we took care of them. They were cuties, all of them. Sister Bernard, her niece is presently a Good Shepherd Sister. She joined from Seattle, Sister Mary Brannan.

Is that Sister Valerie?

Yes.

That's her niece?

Yes, she was Irish, she came from Ireland. Bernard.

Bernard, OK.

On St. Patrick's Day, you know we wore those long white habits and we didn't get them washed very often because we wore aprons but on St. Patrick's Day, she had to have a clean habit because it was a holy day. She, if I remember correctly, she went to Mass, received holy communion, and when she went to her room she died. Sister Tatiana was a tiny little old Sister. She was very old. She might embarrass you by walking out in her undergarments. Presentation, she was a cutie. They were all of them very dear old Sisters.

So they were not working at that time?

No, they were retired and being taken care of. They didn't have Alzheimers but they were just like little kids almost. They were old but cute as a dickens. I just loved them. Presentation, she used to recite a piece, whenever we wanted to have a little chuckle

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we'd ask Sister to recite that piece. I can't remember, it was something like, if you want to be appreciated, sit down, if you want to be heard, stand up. But it was an awfully cute little piece she would recite for us. I'm getting a lot of memories coming back here of Seattle when we talk here.

So they never talked about the earlier days?

No, I wasn't around them too much, we who worked with the girls were pretty much there.

Did they live...

They lived in the same area that we did, their cell might have been next to mine or close by and we didn't always eat our meals with the community. We might come in at the second meal time, we'd be with the girls for their meal and then come back to our community and eat in our dining room later.

But your dining room was downstairs.

Yes, it was down in the basement that had the Sisters' kitchen and our dining room.

So you didn't have a kitchen up with your living quarters?

We had a kitchen for the Sisters, yes.

You had a kitchen upstairs?

We had a kitchen in the infirmary but we had the big kitchen for the girls on that side of the house and then on the Sisters' side.

On the North end.

We had a kitchen for the Sisters, and then here was the Sisters' dining room at the end of the building.

So that was all down in the basement.

Yes.

What was in your cell?

A bed, closet, I don't remember if we had running water in our cell or not.

A window?

Yes. They were regular bedrooms. A chair, not comfortable chairs. We have nice soft chairs now. I think we had straight chairs there which, when I lived there I'd be in my cell about 11:00 at night until about 5 in the morning and never see it again, you know.

END OF SIDE A

TAPE 9 S 2/2
SIDE B

Where was the Superior's office?

It was down on the first floor. The stairway was here and her office was here by the elevator.

What else was on that main floor, besides the school?

Well, the school, there was a division, a big wall division, and another stairwell, there were double stairwells there. Then the school. Then on this side was the Superior's office, then a parlor. Then the entrance way and then two more parlors. Those were where the girls had visits with their parents in those two parlors. Then on the other side of the corridor, we had what we called a community room. That's where we recreated. Then there was a big porch. Then there was a little kitchenette there, we had a dining room, it was a guest dining room and a little kitchenette so that if we had guests, they never ate with us, or even our families never ate with us, nor did we eat with our families. They were served in the guest dining room and we could be there with them but we couldn't eat with them. We ate in our dining room. Then after the guest dining room, that was the door into the girls side.

So there was a dormitory on that main floor?

No, that was what we called the auditorium, what we called "classroom" but it was the big room where there were all those chairs.

You called that room, classroom?

Classroom, yes. Because we called the group a class, all of them were a class. That didn't mean in school, but it was a class. We would have a class assembly, that meant that all the girls would assemble in that big room. Movies would be in that big room.

That's where the movies were?

Yes, later on when we got TV, they'd watch it in there.

So you had a TV before the Vatican II council?

I'm not sure, I know that we had TV while I was there, I can see the kids sitting on the floor watching it. The girls had things that the Sisters might not have. They weren't nuns.

Well, I don't have anymore questions right now.

No, you stirred up some memories indeed.

Well, thank you.

Wasn't she pretty [looking at pictures].

She was.

You know, we had an earthquake in Seattle. The chimney on the laundry cracked and almost fell down. For a long time after the earthquake you felt like it was trembling, you could feel the tremors. I'd always look up at the chandeliers if I was in chapel because they'd sway if there was a quake. So, if they weren't swaying I knew that it was my imagination.

Where were you during the earthquake?

It was at noon time and the girls would get in ranks to come across and up the stairs to the school, and they were on their way down when the quake happened. I didn't follow them down because there was always a Sister down at the dining room waiting for them, so I thought she'd take care of them. I went across through the double doors, partition there, and she was upstairs, she was not in the dining room. So I went downstairs and the kids were kneeling and a prayer was being led by a little scoundrel, the last one you'd expect to lead the prayer. So they handled it very well.

So the only damage was that laundry chimney?

Yes, that was the biggest damage.

So, looking at the picture of the chapel reminded you of the earthquake?

Well, the chandeliers did.

The chandeliers in the chapel?

They hung and they would sway. On Saturday, these tables had a brass trimming around, copper I guess. They tarnish very easily and we'd spend hours polishing

those tables.

Whose dining room was that?

That's the girls' dining room. All of these are the girls' area, the playground, class room, assembly hall, chapel.

We're looking at a brochure called Seattle's Girls Town which Sister Mary William designed and made.

This is our beauty parlor, well, I have to go up to church, we have eleven o'clock Mass at our house.

Looking at the brochure, Sister Mary William noticed a couple pictures of girls, two of whom she has recently spoken to. One is pictured next to the caption, "The business woman of tomorrow" who's now a grandmother. And then another one, at the bottom, "The teacher of tomorrow" is not a teacher, but was married and had children.

END OF SIDE B

END OF TRANSCRIPT.