

**JACKIE (MOEN) KALANI**



HOME OF GOOD SHEPHERD PROJECT

JACKIE (MOEN) KALANI

TAPE NO. 17 R 1/2

Interviewer: Toby Harris

Location: Good Shepherd Center, Seattle, Washington

Date of Interview: August 27, 1999

TRANSCRIPT

17 R 1/2

SIDE A

Recording Error at 00-41 on counter:

Introduction and beginning of interview inadvertently erased and recorded over during interview. For purposes of understanding transcript, this portion has been inserted in 17 R 2/2, Side A, where it occurred during the interview.

Beginning of interview continues:

.....  
I had already missed some school because I had decided that I wanted to quit school. That was the most disturbing thing to my family, why they had me pronounced incorrigible and sent me to a youth correctional institution to get corrected. My twin sister had married in February and she quit school and -

*And this is back in 1949?*

Yes. And I said "well, if she can get married and quit school, I can quit school and not get married." And they didn't like that idea very well. And they were spending alot of money sending me to St. Mary's Academy in Portland. And so my uncle who was the sheriff in Wahkiakum County had access to the court system. His best friend was a judge. And he said "what this girl needs is a man's firm hand." And he meant the judge. We lived right across the street from the courthouse in Cathlamet. So with my uncle's influence, the judge pronounced me incorrigible and I was driven here late Monday night in February in 1949 by the Deputy. I was 17 already.

*By the Deputy?*

By the Deputy Sheriff who said "well, honey, you want to stop at a motel tonight?" I said "just take me where I'm going." It was a dark, stormy night. He was a creepy guy. And so we got here and on Monday nights, Mother Serena went to bed early, right after dinner. She handed out clean sheets and clean pajamas, the girls made their beds and they went to bed directly. So when I got here, it was late. Mother William, Mother Assistant Superior then, answered the door and I had my music under my arm, my Beethoven, my Bach from St. Mary's. And she said "what is that there?" And I said "oh, that's my music. I'm from St. Mary's" in my very best cultivated girls' school voice. And she said "you won't be needing that." And she took it and to this day, I don't know where it is. It disappeared.

*That was Mother William.*

That was Mother William. And took me up with a little flashlight and showed me a bed. And I looked and I saw the wire across the window- I went to brush my teeth.

at that little basin- all the others girls were asleep in the dormitory - so I had to be very quiet and brush my teeth. And I looked up and saw the wire-

*The wire?*

The wire, the window and then the wire, like bars in front of the window. I thought "I am in jail." It was not a pleasant night. I was pissed off. So the next morning I went to the refectory and I had a bad attitude, I remember that. And you only got butter once a week and they didn't have butter for their bread...I just thought this was so low class, not to have butter every day. It was nothing like that with the Holy Name nuns at St. Mary's Academy- everything was "yes, my dear." They were very soft-spoken. Everything was very serene. And the first thing I heard was Mother Serena's rasping voice saying "Where you pussyfooting to, you smart Jack?" Or something like "slop cart". She had these names and it sounded like swearing. She could say it in a way that would send shivers up your back. "Don't you twitch your tail at me," she'd say. And I thought, "this is not like the nuns that I knew at St. Mary's" so when we went out of the refectory to the yard, she came up to me and actually put her arm around me, kind of, and I didn't realize then that that was a big thing, to have Mother Serena pay that kind of semi-affectionate attention. And she says, "how's my girl?" That's what she said to me, sort of like introductory. I said, "she's not your girl" and I shrugged her off. I had a bad attitude. She let me go and then later on that morning when we were out there, she called Betty and Virginia and Catherine over and she introduced me to them and said, "show this girl around. Show her how to have a good time." That's what she said.

And looking back, I realize that's very unusual for her to show that much affection in that way. And they were the girls, the older girls that ran the school. They were Catherine Hogan, and Betty Cobb and Virginia Smith. They ran the school so she was plugging me- I was an older girl- she plugged me in there and it made my life change then because I became really good friends with those 3 girls. And they were all older than I was. Katherine was a few years older than I. I think she was 22 or something already. She might have been 4 or 5 years older than I was at the time.

*And she was still there?*

She was still here.

*She was living on the girls' side?*

She was living on the girls' side. She later became a nun, of the Good Shepherd Order. They made a special dispensation for her to be a regular nun. But she was Mother Serena's right hand. I named my oldest daughter after Katherine, as a matter of fact.

*Did they call her a consecrate? Or did she have a title?*

No. She was a girl. She was Mother's right hand. She went on errands. She was always busy. She had the keys on her belt. She did whatever she did, I don't know. When I left here, she was the one that came and got me out of the laundry. She said "Mother Serena wants to see you." Mother Serena led me to the double doors and my bags were packed but she was the one that did that, packed the bags, got the girls ready to leave, and kept silent about it because you never knew.

*It was a complete surprise to you?*

Oh, absolutely. There was no closure, no saying goodbye when you left. The whole thing was you didn't want to connect any of these girls with the outside world. This was like a cloister.

*What did she say to you? Do you remember?*

She said, "the social worker is coming to take you to the train. You're going home." And I started to cry. I remember that. She says, "go on out there and make a woman out of yourself."

*Now this was after you'd been here how long?*

I'd been here 3 years.

*So you'd graduated, then went to Seattle University, had the college courses here...*

Yes. And she says, "you were just a pup when you came in here." I still get goosebumps when I think of that day. That was a big day. You never got to say goodbye to your friends, people you were bonded to, was pretty interesting. And so she pushed me out the door and when I got home, I found that she had stuffed little hand lotions and little candy bars in the corners of my suitcase.

*There was a social worker waiting for you?*

Yes, Helen....what's her name.....I've forgotten what her name was. I think she was a Third Order of St. Francis or something like that. She worked here. She was late order. I remember just minimally.

*You've been writing about your experiences here, is that right?*

Yes.

*What feelings get stirred up when you think about that time?*

Well, the anger and resentment of being locked up first off. I was pretty angry when I came here but Mother Serena, she was a complex woman. She ran this school with an iron hand. And it didn't take me long to figure out that the way to get out of here was to get in here - to take part because Mother Serena had absolute power. She was the one that decided how long you stayed. If I wanted to get out of here, I had to get into Mother Serena's corner, so to speak. So at first it was sort of a manipulation to try to do good so I could get out. And then I got locked in to what's going on here, the music, your friends....there were parts of it I liked alot. And Mother Serena - I don't know how anyone can describe her character because she was very complex. She had some nervous twitches; she was always working her mouth, tongue thrusting. Later, after I studied medication, I wondered if she was on some sort of a psychotropic medication because she had tongue thrusting and she had involuntary movements. Later, looking back at it, I wonder. It was a huge responsibility. She had alot of girls from Indian reservations; she had girls, every strata of society girls; in here, and she had to keep them under control and control was the key word. And she didn't let other nuns come over here and run her show. It was definitely her show.

*You said there were, at the most, about 206 girls -were there nuns that assisted her?*

At refectory time, she would stay there until we all got our food and then she would tap the little bell, say that we could have recreation, she'd say, "God be blessed", tap the little bell, and we could talk to each other. And then she-

*You couldn't talk before that?*

No. We didn't talk while we ate, and sometimes during that, we got too loud, we would lose the privilege of talking. Then she would leave in the middle of that meal and Mother Dominic would come and sit there on the other chair on this podium. Mother Serena would nod to her. I don't think there was a great affection between....the girls liked Mother Dominic...she was young and sort of "with it". There might have been some jealousy, I don't know. But Mother Serena did not let Mother Dominic touch the mail or have any power over what the girls did. She was just there, a warm body needed to be there.

*So there was one nun in charge of all those girls?*

Yes. And most of the time it was Mother Serena.

*And she had control?*

She had control. And if you wanted to talk to Mother, you would stand back by where she would have this raised platform where she sat reading the mail, tongue thrusting, doing weird stuff with her mouth.

*While you were eating, she was reading your mail?*

Yes. And she'd look up alot and then she'd read our mail. And if you wanted to talk to her about anything, about a problem or anything, you would come up and stand until she would nod. She wouldn't look at you, she would just nod, like that. Then you'd come up and kneel right by her chair. Or if you were in trouble, she would call you up. She'd tell Catherine or one of the officers- I was an officer- to go get this girl. And you could hear her scolding the girl. She had this loud voice. She had a huge voice. She had a huge voice that was probably damaged, the vocal chords, from screaming at girls for so many years that her voice is undescribable...raspy....very distinguishable voice.

*Did you ever get in trouble?*

I did get in trouble....I didn't get in major trouble; I didn't run away or any of those things. I wasn't a mushpot. If she thought that you might be in love with another girl, she'd call you a mushpot and that was like the worst thing you could call a girl. Maybe when you've interviewed other people, they've told you this. Mushpot was anything but what you wanted to be. One girl, she took her out and turned the hose on her and said she was kicking her out. Of course she never did, was always a huge scene, turning the hose on her, humiliating her, calling her a mushpot, screaming and yelling at her and then the officers, Catherine Hogan would say things. We were expected to say things also.

*To call girls names?*

Like "drop your eyes, you bold stump." Or "don't you look like that."

*What prompted this?*

Mother Serena would maybe catch the girl looking at another girl too long. Or just something in her mind would think that this girl was a mushpot. It was that it had sexual overtones. So that was a bad thing. And it seems to me we couldn't wear hair on our forehead. If you wore your hair on your forehead, you risked getting it shaved, the whole piece of your hair. Because only "bold stumps" wore their hair on their forehead. Those prostitutes down on Second Avenue wore their hair on their forehead, curls, like Betty Grable. They had pompadours like this, hair on their forehead. So we could not wear our hair on our forehead.

*What did she do-*

We had to comb it back. The girls had elaborate ways at keeping their hair....little pincurls up here so it was always up here but there would still be curls up here and then the pompadour look.

*Was the beauty school here?*

Yes, that's right. That was across the hall over here. The beauty school, that's right. I think I had one of the worst fried permanents I ever had was here. They were learning on our hair.

*What other things prompted Mother Serena to...?*

I remember she scolded me. I broke up...I wrote to my boyfriend for awhile when I was here and then he wrote me a "Dear John" letter saying that he didn't want to be in this relationship with me anymore or maybe he got another girlfriend. I was sad, crying and she said "quit sniffing".

I ran the projector for the films here and I was pretty good. I was an older girl. It was mostly the little kids that got in trouble or the kids that were really like wayward, rebellious. I kind of got into knowing where the boundaries were.

*Did Mother Dominic ever reprimand as well?*

No, Mother Dominic was not allowed to reprimand the girls. If she did, Mother Serena took the girl's side. That was the dynamic that was going on there. And Mother John Eudes, though, was here before Mother Dominic. And I think Mother Serena might have....she was a very different personality and very easygoing.

*You think she got along better with Mother Serena?*

I think she did. I just get that idea. And I wasn't here when she left. So I didn't know her well. Although she did say she remembers me. I don't remember her alot. One of the things that I remember, the little angel guardian kids, they would save their butter for us big kids, officers and they would give us their butter and we would hold it under our cups so we would have butter. You only got it on Sunday. So we had all this stored butter under our cups and the one that had the most, it was a status to have alot of butter under your cup because that showed how popular you were with the little kids. I guess every institution has their little status; in prison it was the cigarettes, in here, it was the butter.

*What other nuns do you remember?*

I remember Mother Michael who was hard working and just always very kind but preoccupied, always preoccupied. She didn't interact in any kind of way other than overseeing the mangles and the laundry and getting the laundry out on time and showing us how to do things like that, instructional and that way. Mother Cyril, I think, was her sister. She was sour; she always had a sour look on her face. She took care of the sacristy. She was not approachable. She didn't have anything to do with us anyway. And Mother Martina in the kitchen, very sweet, but I didn't work in the kitchen. But the girls that worked in the kitchen loved Mother Martina. She was very kind, motherly.

And Mother Serena, I'd go in her office....I did some tutoring here for a little boy somewhere in this neighborhood here. He needed some tutoring so maybe I was being groomed to be a teacher but I taught him some geography and something else in one of the classrooms. That might have been up there, that's why that's vaguely familiar, on the other side.

*How was that connection made?*

I have no idea but I got paid for it, I remember. I got paid for another thing, it was just the weirdest thing. I'm sure that somebody was doing a study from the university. This guy came and handed me a mimeographed book on supersonic wind tunnels, something I knew nothing about and I was to write something about what I gleaned from that. I'm sure it was just part of a study. I remember I got paid for that so Mother Serena had that money and she had some money from my tutoring the boy who was maybe 10 or something like that. And I remember when I left, she couldn't find the money. She looked all over, through the checks, and I was in her office.

There were some moments with Mother Serena that were wonderful, when she would take you into her confidences. I remember one time she changed her shoes in front of me and rolled down her socks and I saw her feet. And I realized that she was a human being, she had feet. She was pretty nice to me most of the time.

*Were the girls afraid of Mother Serena?*

Yes. It's very complicated. Yes, of course, we were all....we could hear her coming. She had this nervous habit. She had her keys in her pocket. We could hear those keys coming from far off. Our ears...we were hyper-vigilant to those keys. And our spines would straighten. We would do whatever it was we were supposed to be doing. But then there were some relaxed moments with Mother Serena that were wonderful. She had a jolly side of her and would laugh. We waited for those moments. We all wanted to please her. I say we all - the kids I hung out with, the older kids - we wanted to please her and help her. She was pretty strict with some of those kids but it was mostly kids that didn't have parents. I'd see that dynamic there. She never slapped me or pulled my hair but she did some of the other kids. Take a ruler and slap them until the ruler broke, some pretty-

*And she did that in front of everyone?*

Uh hum. Or sometimes we went to the penthouse with Mary Mabe because Mary had run away, I guess. That's when she took the ruler and broke the ruler over her. It

was just us officers that were there at the time. She didn't do that in front of the whole class but she would frequently grab a girl's hair, slap her, backhand her. She was tough and of course, she probably thought that's what you were supposed to do. Now we know that doesn't help people, it makes them worse. But she was not psychologically oriented at all. If a girl would cry and say she was nervous, she'd say, "clean up your conscience." That was her response. If a girl talked about home, "home, home, home, when you get home, you won't be home for 5 minutes. You'll be out on Second Avenue with the sailors." She'd say stuff like that. [unintelligible.] She would shame girls. A girl that wet her bed had to wear her sheets with a big sign on it that said "fish". Not psychologically oriented at all. I don't know what her educational background was but, of course, we know more now. This was 50 years ago; this was the dark ages. I'm sure that would not wash today at all. And she wouldn't be the same today but in those times....And she was getting old already. I think that her patience was wearing thin. That's a hard job to keep 200 girls-

**17 R 1/2**  
**SIDE B**

I forgot what I was saying.

*We were talking about Mother Serena and if the other sisters were aware of how she-*

I'm sure that news leaked out but Mother John Eudes who is now Sister Valerie, said that she was a very unusual, she uses the word "unusual" and I'm sure that Mother Serena was very unusual in her approach with girls. She had a very powerful personality and she did well to manage these girls. The order of nuns had shrunk; there was 13 nuns here then. Some of them were pretty old. They couldn't have handled what she did. Some of them were young, like Mother Dominic, and couldn't have handled it. So she was the one. And they gave her free rein. Mother William was more of an educator and she became Mother Superior later. But she's the one that kind of ran it behind the scenes. Mother Serena had to answer to Mother William but Mother William, I think, gave her free rein. Mother William is a very wise woman, stepped back probably at the right time.

*You worked in the laundry?*

Yes.

*Tell me about that. When you worked-*

When we first went there, when we first went to the laundry, we were in the shake room. And the shake room was big, canvas bags on rollers, frames, these big bins that were rolled out through the double doors. The double doors hit about waist high or a little bit lower than waist high. And the men, you could see their legs underneath there, did the washing part. And when the washing was through and the wringing of the sheets, they would send these things out on rollers and we would shake them and put them on long tables, stretch them out. The sheets were folded once over lengthwise and then once again, and laid on a big shaking table, called a shaking table, a sheet table. And when it got high enough and they were running out of it at the main mangle, then we would roll the whole table over by the mangle and then the girls, one girl on each end, would feed the sheets into these big belts that would go through the mangle.

*What is a mangle?*

A huge iron, a mangle. Big conveyor belt, big canvas conveyor belt, but the length of a sheet. And they're wet when they go on there and you stretch them tight. They were going slowly, stretch 'em tight. You could speed it up but at first when you're learning, you stretch 'em tight, make all the wrinkles...and then you'd put it through, and it would go through these big rollers, I think there was 3 big rollers, would go round and round and round and then come out the other side. A girl would start in the laundry room by shaking. First you started with small things like napkins, shaking, making piles of totally straight napkins. And then those napkins, the girl at the napkin mangle - there were 3 mangles in there. One was a sheet mangle, one was a tableware or tablecloth and napkin mangle. She'd yell "stack" and then you'd have to bring a stack to her which was different than the sheet mangle. You'd have to wheel the whole thing over.

Well, I was very bored with shaking. I shook and shook and shook. It was a very boring job. Shake it out, put it on the pile, stretch it out, make it perfectly flat, it's all wet stuff. So I wanted to learn the mangle right away and that's what I did. Then the next step was to learn to run the sheet mangle. And I worked at the sheet mangle and then I wanted to learn to pick up and I liked that job a lot because it's physical. There's two girls on each end; the sheet would come out this way, you'd flip it over this way, then flip it over this way, and then the girl that would end up folding it would push it up this way, make the ends match like this, and then go around to a table back here and fold it, fold one, two, three, into threes like that so that the sheet ended up like this. And then the next most responsible job was to be the packer of the sheets. So I ended up being the sheet packer and that was a very responsible job. I got to pack the sheets into the big canvas bags and then they would go out at the end of the day. The men would come and pick them up. We never saw the men. God forbid that we would see men. Couldn't even have men's voices on music. We could not talk about our fathers, our brothers, we couldn't talk about the outside world. Could not talk about the outside.

When we first came in, you got a charge, somebody that was in charge of you. And that girl was in charge of telling you what the rules were and you were a new girl for 6 months. After your 6 months, you could go and ask Mother Serena, can I get rid of my charge, especially if you didn't like her. I was in charge of Charmaine when she came in as a new girl. And I was pretty strict teaching her the rules. And I think Mother Serena actually told me to lighten up.

*What did you wear when you worked in the laundry?*

We had a variety of cotton clothes that we wore, Mother Hubbards kind of, white shirt, we had the ballerina skirt sometimes, 8 gored skirt; we had a peasant blouse at a different time. Then for chapel, we wore the satin, taffeta blue, the officers, that was us, we were important, we wore little capes and beanies with white plumes in them, white feathers. That was for special occasions. But for regular, we were called blue-bands, we had a blue cord around our neck with a scapular, no it wasn't a scapular, it was immaculate conception, what was on the other side, was it sacred heart? Anyway, that's what we wore on this medal. But on Sundays, we would wear a satin band that came across here like that, a band, officers got to wear those.

*How did you get to be an officer? Was there some kind of special procedure?*

Mother Serena chose. And I don't know how you got to be an officer. Nobody else had any say. A unilateral decision, Mother Serena's decision. But you kind of worked your way up. I was a blue-band, then I was a counselor, below the officers would be the counselor. And then there's the officer and there was prefect which was Catherine Hogan and vice-prefect - we had a couple different ones, Martha Washington, I've forgotten. And then Charmaine was a new girl, later she became the sodality prefect, after I left. But she was just a little kid, she's 3 years younger than I am, I think.

And I was in charge of music; I was like the music librarian. I got to do music things. Mother Serena liked that. I think that that pleased her, that I did music.

*Did you have music instruction?*

I don't remember having music instruction other....I just don't remember. I'd had alot of music instruction before I came here. It was just Mother Serena played the organ and directed the choir and I sang in the choir. They handed me a violin once and told me to teach some little kids how to play the violin. I never knew how to play the violin. Somebody told me where the fingering was, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" or something. So I taught some little kids "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star".

*Did you play the piano?*

A little bit but not alot.

*It was singing that you-*

It was singing, yes.

*So the Armstrongs-*

Miss Armstrong, yes, Miss Armstrong was here and she taught but I don't remember taking....maybe I did. My major music education came from St. Mary's Academy before.

*When did you work in the laundry?*

I worked in the laundry, you mean the time-

*What times of the day and how often?*

I went to work in the morning and the deal was, I had missed alot of school by that time, and if you want to graduate with your graduating class, here's your books. When you're through with this book, come take a test with Mother William. Come and take a test and we'll test you out of that. So that's how I finished my education in high school except that I also took multigraph, mimeograph, comptometer, and calcator, totally useless machines, at least nowadays.

*So you didn't go to regular classes.*

I think I went to a math class. Mother William was a teacher of that math class and then I had office machines. But history and all the rest of that stuff, I learned on my own and tested out of it when I was ready. I finished way ahead of....I just read the book and tested.

*So while the other girls would go to school, you would be working?*

I worked in the laundry and went to school in the afternoon. Or went and studied, like study hall, is what I did.

*How many hours in a row would you work in the laundry?*

Probably 4 hours. And then, the last time I was here, I didn't work in the laundry. I was Mother Serena's helper and I wasn't really assigned anyplace. I just did errands like Catherine did.

*You came back after-*

I came back. I went to Seattle University and lived on campus for awhile and discovered...some of my fellow students there, musicians....I always gravitated to the music people. I discovered bebop. And I thought I had died and gone to heaven. I heard Charlie Parker for the first time. And fell in love with black music. And so most of my friends that I gravitated toward were Auggie Boone who later became a pretty well known jazz pianist in New York, was one of my best friends and she's a black woman. And we all hung out together. I'm from a small town, there's no blacks there. So this was really a cultural experience for me and I loved it. And Mother Serena's name was Dixie in her other life and she was very prejudiced against blacks. She had gotten word through the grapevine somehow that I was hanging out with all those black kids, dancin', doing the bebop in the music rooms, and listening to this weird music, and it just didn't seem right to her. So she got my mother to come and pick me up and bring me here and when I got here, she said...it was the end of the semester...

*So you had only been gone for one semester?*

One semester. And the semester was over and she talked me into staying here. I don't know how she did that. I felt very coerced. I really felt at that point that I had no choice. My mother said, "this is where you're staying." Mother Serena had talked her into putting her foot down. My mother wasn't one to really put her foot down. She didn't and Mother Serena put her foot down. My mother left and here I am.

*And that was when you were about 20 now?*

Yes. And Mother Serena said, "I need you to help me with Mother General's Feast Day coming up and come and help me with the music." And then I stayed for that and then something else came up. It was always another...Mother Serena wasn't ready to let go. I knew I couldn't leave until Mother Serena said I could. I was here for another year. I was 20 when I left. But I was accustomed to minding mother by that time. The brainwashing works. And she didn't make me go back to the laundry. I sort of drifted around. I did this and that and the other thing. I liked that. It was enjoyable, some of it.

*When you came back, which dormitory did you live in? And the first time...*

The first time I was in Blessed Mother. The second one I was in Sacred Heart, up by her, in her dormitory upstairs.

*Sacred Heart was the one that was next to the chapel?*

Yes.

*Where was Blessed Mother?*

Blessed Mother was down, the floor below, underneath, yes. Angel Guardian, is that a name?

*Mother Serena was upstairs in Sacred Heart; you showed me where her cell was, up in the north end of that dormitory. There were no other sisters that slept in the other dormitories at all? The girls were just there with the officers?*

Mother Dominic may have had a cell. I don't remember that, there might've been a cell, another nun. There might have been. There must have been, I'm sure, yes.

*But when you came back, you lived at Sacred Heart.*

Yes, and that's the one I remember most, I guess.

*What were some of the other daily rituals that you remember?*

During lent, we would kneel and say the rosary after our meal. We had May crowning. That was the big deal of the year, was the big May crowning. And Betty was Mother Serena's favorite. She got to crown - she was the main queen - no, she got to carry Our Lady of Fatima statue that came around, that was on a pilgrimage. This Lady of Fatima statue was on a pilgrimage and Betty had a devotion to Our Lady of Fatima and she got to carry the statue. I forget who was the May Queen but that was kind of a big deal.

And then the newspaper in town raised funds for us to have clothes, like real clothes, not clothes from the clothes room. And we got to go down and buy clothes in a small shopping spree that we went on, buy a suit, like our graduation, that was for seniors.

*It wasn't just the officers-*

No. I think it was all the seniors.

*In a large group or did they-*

It was like 5 girls at a time, something like that.

*And Mother Serena would take you?*

No. The social worker, Miss....

*So the social workers were around and doing-*

Oh, I remember the social worker, I can't remember her name, it was Miss somebody, anyway she called me in her office after I came back the second time and said, "maybe you would like to go into sociology." I was offended because I knew that she knew I had hung out with these black kids and I was offended that she would think I had a social worker view of my black friends. And I said "never, I'm not at all interested in social work." And then years later, I became a social worker. 11

fought against that; I didn't want to do that at all because I thought that's what she meant. That was that since you like to hang-out with other black kids, maybe you should be a social worker. I hated that.

*When we were walking around, you were telling me about that back [south] stairwell and that's the stairwell that you used to get around and you never even went beyond the metal doors-*

Yes, the metal door-

*to even where the front door is. You were only on the girls' side, you went into the chapel from the back stairwell.*

From the top floor, from Sacred Heart, that little hallway there, where we went into the chapel, that's where we entered and exited, from that door. We had veils that were handed out; on Sundays, we got white veils in a box. Somebody'd hand out the veils and during the week, we had black veils. Is that right? Sometimes I get it mixed up with St. Mary's. When you're in two convents as a boarder...I have to think about that again, maybe. We had to wear something on our heads. Oh, yes, we wore little beanies. And sometimes we had like a soldier's hat. We wore different hats. We didn't wear veils. Little hats.

*Did the stairwell look the same..was the floor the same?*

The floor looked exactly the same, the railing, pretty dreary looking.

*And the windows were all just like that one window, on the bottom floor, the bottom landing, the frosted-*

Frosted...we did not see into the outside world. We were totally kept from looking outward. Our job was to stay in here and concentrate on making a woman out of ourselves, as Mother Serena put it.

*And there were statues on every landing? Devotional statues.*

Yes. I went to chapel every day, even though there were certain days that we could sleep in. I was one of those that went to chapel every day. Just did. We could sleep in on Saturdays, and maybe Mondays, I forget. There were two days we could sleep in without going to chapel. But the rest of the time was compulsory and we had benediction often at nighttime.

*And you said Monday nights were early-*

Early, go to bed early, get your clean sheets. Mother Serena would call out the numbers during dinner. You couldn't talk during dinner on Monday nights. My number was 147; some things you never forget.

*Was that your bed number?*

That was my number. All my clothes were marked 147. All of our clothes were marked with our numbers. When they were washed, they were returned to us. We got one sheet every week. We'd take the bottom one and put it on the top. We'd get a clean bottom one. I think that's the way it went. We got one sheet and clean

pajamas and a clean pillowslip once a week. And she would call out according to the pajamas, our number.

*Where were the numbers printed?*

On the back of the collar for the pajamas. The sheets weren't numbered.

*What about your clothes?*

All our clothes were numbered.

*On labels or right on the outside of the clothing?*

Marking pen. Black marking pen, discreetly in the collar or something.

*How did your clothes get washed? Did you have a place....how did all that work?*

We would leave- how did our clothes get washed? I knew they went into the clothes room. At the end of our bed, did we have.....I can't remember that part. Somebody'll remember that part, I don't remember it.

There were no curtains between the beds. I remember that. When I was at St. Mary's, I had curtains between our beds. We learned to dress inside our flannel nightgowns. Modestly. To this day, I dress myself this way. It's just a habit of a lifetime. It's crazy.

*So you dress underneath your pajamas?*

Yes, you learn how to put on your clothes this way and you don't ever get cold.

*That's how you had to do it?*

That's how we had to do it. We couldn't expose our skin. We were not allowed. We had to dress modestly, dress and undress modestly. That was a rule.

*Do you remember what time you got up?*

We didn't have clocks. We got up early.

*How did you get woken up?*

The bell. Mother Serena would come in, ring the bell and say, "glory to God"...and we had to answer it, be on our knees by the bed. Probably I don't remember it because I was half asleep most of the time. But she would ring the bell and say this first part of the prayer and we'd have to answer it.

*And then what time did you usually go to bed? Except Monday nights.*

I don't know. I have no idea.

*Did you stay up after dinner on other nights?*

Oh, yes. We would get to go out and run around outside. And it was cold so we would run around. There was no sitting down. And you'd run around, round, round-

*And you had to go out there, you couldn't go-*

No, no. It was compulsory. We didn't have time to read outside reading.

*Did you have homework?*

We did our homework in school. We had a study hall, that's when we did it. I don't remember much about school. I remember alot about the laundry.

*You and Betty sang in the choir during chapel?*

Yes, we were singing real loud and Mother Serena didn't like it. She took two hymnals, like that, and hit us both in the back of the head.

*And you said the nuns faced each other?*

Yes, the nuns faced each other.

*Did you go to the confessionals?*

Yes, we went to confession every Saturday.

*And was it the same priest?*

Yes, I can't remember his name, Father ...

*And when you went out to the pavilion, you were telling me some of the activities that you did, out in the pavilion and out in the yard.*

Roller skating, kids played basketball a little bit. There wasn't really a basketball floor but there was baskets to shoot baskets.

*And the skates and bats and balls were kept at the bottom of the basement stairs there [in the closet]?*

Yes. I remember once in awhile I'd skate but most of the time us older girls would dance.

*So you had a record player that was set up in the pavilion?*

Right. And Mother Serena's song was "South of the Border Down Mexico Way". And when that song went on- Catherine Hogan pretty well controlled that record player- and if she put that song on, all the girls had to stand up and sing it.

*How does that song go?*

You never heard that song? [singing] "South of the border, down Mexico Way, that's where I found.... stars above came out to play." It's a long saga of somebody that left somebody, went off to war or something. We all had fantasies that Mother Serena's lover had gone off - probably none of it was true.

*What other songs did y'all play on the record player?*

We played all the Andrew Sisters and Betty Hutton and Harry James, all the big band music of the time, instrumentals. We weren't allowed to hear Perry Como or Frank Sinatra or any of those people because they were men, God forbid.

*And you would dance.*

And we would dance.

*And you could dance with each other?*

Jitterbug. We wouldn't do slow dancing.

*But you did jitterbug together.*

And then I liked the theatre aspect of preparing programs and teaching some dancing, dance steps to the girls. I taught them tango steps and we'd sort of do-

**17 R 2/2**  
**SIDE A**

[inserted from 17R1/1 Side A]

*You said Mother Serena was from Texas?*

Yes. She was from Texas. So she liked that flavor of music. I invented a whole program for Mother Serena- maybe it was her feast day- we did a whole south of the border program for her. It was my little bit, getting to do theater here. We tap danced, we did a whole St. Patrick's Day thing. We did some tap dancing.

*Did you usually do those kinds of programs in here, in the assembly room? The classroom?*

In here. The stage was up there, there was curtains, big velvet curtains. Yes, performances were there, movies were shown here. I remember somebody sent a movie up that was not a good movie for girls to see. I can't remember what it was but we got into the middle of it, or not even the middle of it, the first part of it and Mother Serena said "take that thing off."

*Do you remember what it was about? What was in it?*

It was about girls that ran away and were in a girls' school. That's what it was about.

*When we walked around the building, you were telling me which room was used for what, after we're done recording, I have a floor plan and maybe we can write down some of those rooms that you remembered.*

*Did you stay here during the holidays?*

Uh hmm. I never went home.

*You never left?*

Nobody did. Nobody went out on furlough or vacation or whatever. You were here.

*So even during Christmas, everybody stayed here.*

Oh, yes. Everybody stayed here. I was Santa Claus. I have pictures of myself being Santa Claus one year.

*After you graduated and went to Seattle U. for that semester-*

Came back here and did some more post-graduate work, another semester.

*And that was the first time you had left?*

Yes.

*Ever went outside of the doors in a couple of years.*

Yes.

*You weren't allowed any freedom at all before that?*

None.

*Did people from the outside come in, ever do entertainment or other programs?*

I don't remember that at all. I don't remember that. I remember that we had a speech competition in which somebody else.....

[End of insert.]

Where were we? The speech, they actually did compete with some other high school, I believe, maybe Catholic schools. Maybe it wasn't, maybe it was all schools did compete in a speech competition. I remember that. But I don't remember outside people coming in doing anything here. Unless it was a retreat where some outside priest would come and do a retreat here. We did that, I think, every year, or periodically, we'd have a retreat.

*Did you have places in this building or on the grounds that were especially memorable for you or that you liked to go to?*

No, because we did everything like ants, in mass. There was no individual space here for you to go be whoever you were.

*When we were outside too, you were telling me, we went out of the basement door and into the pergola and then you saw the wall that was still there. You said that there was a fence that was even higher than that wall. So whenever you were out in the yard, you were surrounded by -*

Fence. There was no way to get out. You knew that you were here, period. That's it. That was probably the hardest thing at first because I was a kid who liked a lot of freedom. In 1949, it was nothing for me and my girlfriend to hitchhike to the dance in Astoria where we lived and in 1949, it wasn't popular for girls to hitchhike around but I was pretty independent. I was a free spirit, I guess, you'd say. It was hard to be confined; it was very hard for me to be confined.

*Did you have any pets here?*

No. We didn't have pets. Maybe there was a kitty in the kitchen but I had nothing to do with that. You didn't have pets. You had your friends, that's what I had, was my friends. But when you left here, you left your friends behind. You couldn't say goodbye. You sort of expected that maybe any day now, I might be leaving and you'd sort of get a feel but....

*Did you ever try to write anybody who was still here?*

I came back here and saw Mother Serena after I was married and had a couple of kids. Mother Serena had a dress made for my little girl and it was by the girls in the sewing room. She took my old formal that I had and had a little dress made for my oldest daughter. I came back a couple of times and she was always very welcoming, was happy to see me.

*Did you ever try to contact any of the other girls?*

I had no way to contact the girls. We obeyed the rules about that so when I called Mother Valerie, Mother John Eudes, after all these years, the first question I asked was about Katherine. She said Katherine had been dead for a couple of years. And I said, "Well, how about Betty Cobb?" And she says, "well, you know, Betty wouldn't forgive me if I didn't give you her number." So I called her, I was actually on my way out. That was a year and a half ago. I was at the airport, I was actually attending a conference at one of those big motels out there by the airport and I called her from there. I said "this is a voice from out of your past." And I said "this is Jackie Moen". She screamed for a solid 15 seconds. "I thought you were dead." She started crying. I didn't realize how important the relationship was to her because she didn't have any family at all so I was probably as close to being a sister as any that she ever had. And she was very connected to this place and to Mother Serena and to us.

*You said that you followed the rules. When you left, Mother Serena told you that you were not to contact-*

She didn't say that. We knew the rules. It's that you weren't to talk about the outside world, you weren't to exchange phone numbers, you weren't supposed to talk about the town you were from, you didn't talk about the mutual people you knew, none of that. So there was no way unless you broke those rules to say, that wasn't a rule, we knew that rule. So she didn't have to say it when we left.

*You said the penthouse was just a place where they stored costumes and things-*

Yes, at that time.

*Also, it was a place-*

To discipline the girls out of the sight of the class. I was up there maybe twice for one of these disciplining sessions which was pretty.....Mother Serena was very strict and probably nowadays it would be called abusive.

*Was that used as a threat, I'm going to take you up to the penthouse?*

Yes, it could be, yes.

*And you could hear her yelling at the girls?*

Yes.

*Was that from a hallway?*

No, from the refectory. We'd be having our dinner and talking to one another and over the din of 200 girls talking, we would hear her shouting at a girl. And we were supposed to not listen. But we knew what was going on.

*What kinds of behavior would cause her to take you up to the penthouse?*

Girls that ran away and would be returned.

*And the officers needed to come too?*

Yes, she would call certain of us. And we would stand around mainly, just to stand around and look mean at the girl. Charmaine talked about having more of a part in that later. I think it got worse later. I remember her beating Betty, pulling her hair, grabbing her head, banging her head against the floor. I remember that. And I thought Betty is her favorite girl. If she does that to Betty, I better mind my p's and q's.

*Do you remember what Betty did?*

Betty ran away once with another girl. I think that might have been the time. And Mother would threaten to kick you out where you'd have to go to Grand Mound, the state reformatory, and she'd say that she was sending you to Grand Mound. She'd be yelling at the girl and telling her that. And the girl would have to beg to stay here. "Please don't send me to Grand Mound. Let me stay here." This was what she was supposed to say. Some girls, even though they'd rather go to Grand Mound now, would say it anyway. I don't remember any girls going to Grand Mound from here.

*How did girls run away?*

You know, I don't know. One girl ran away when we went out to do shopping, to buy clothes that time. And like, we were afraid that we'd all lose a privilege and it was a big deal.

*So you all saw her running away?*

No. When the car came back, she wasn't in it. And it was always sort of hush hush.

*How did those years have a lasting impact on you? On your life?*

Well, I don't know. It's hard to say. It's hard to say how much in reflecting, how much impact it had. There was a lot of discipline. You learned a lot of self-discipline. There was some good parts there. Lasting impact, I don't know.

*What are you writing? You're writing about your experiences-*

Well, that's only a part of the whole thing that I'm doing.

*Are you planning to publish that?*

No. I'm writing it for myself. I write- I wrote a whole thing for the graduating class of 1949, 50th reunion, just an overview of what's happened from 1931, the songs our parents sang and then the songs we sang, the times- how they've changed, our values- so I wrote those remarks and gave those remarks at the dinner that we had. And then everybody wanted a copy of it so I made copies available to all those people. And that was fun. I like to write things like that. I wrote a play that was produced by the University. It's history. I'm interested in history.

*Do you have any other memories that you'd like to share about the Good Shepherd?*

I can't think of anything that would be useful.

*Okay, thank you.*

[later]

*This is the brochure that Mother William made.*

I remember this! [looking at brochure.] There's Catherine, there's Char....

*Which one is Catherine?*

Right here. With the print dress on, with Mother Serena-  
*where it says guidance.*

And there's Charmaine here.

*Doing art?*

Doing art. She said "I never painted" but I saw this picture before. And this is what the classroom looked like. They call it the assembly hall but we called it the classroom. Oh, yes, we did square dancing...we did square dancing. Beauty shop, beauty school, dining room, home economics. Here I am.

*That's you, the teacher of tomorrow.*

And here's Betty, there.

*Betty's the business woman of tomorrow.*

And Barbara, she just died a couple of months ago. I met with her....Bea Rewitz....oh, yes, I'd forgotten Barbara, what her last name was. Barbara Storm.

*I noticed on here they called it "Girls' Town". Did you refer to it as girls' town?*

Never.

*Nobody ever referred to it that way.*

No. But that was my best friend here, that's Betty. We're both sitting at the same desk, it looks like. Incredible. We all bought these suits with that money from the— we all got a pile of money to go buy a suit. And Bea, she's gone, she's dead now. I hadn't seen this brochure but I remember the pictures. Oh, yes, Margaret, oh, I don't know, what was her name, she was a sodality vice prefect.

*And she's the nurse of tomorrow.*

Yes, she's an Indian girl. She was in the post graduate class. She was post-graduate. I remember these girls' faces but I have lost their names. Interesting. And that must be Mother Martina. Oh, yes, this is our home ec room there. Do you have other pictures?

*I only brought- most of my pictures were a little later than when you were there so I tried to pick ones out that I thought were more--*

Mother Michael, here. This is Mother Dominic.

*The high school. The other pictures I had were later so I didn't bring the other ones. But that one I wasn't sure; it looked like it could've been earlier.*

It might've been earlier from the looks of the- we didn't have to wear long stockings or those kind of shoes. We wore socks. This looks earlier.

*And then alot of the photographs I have are from 1957. So I knew that was after you'd been there.*

This was before. The midi blouses, I don't remember that sailor-

*This was out in the play-yard; you think it was earlier than 1949.*

It doesn't have a year on it?

*No, it doesn't have a year on it.*

That was earlier than 1949, yes.

*Let's go through these...*

Interesting. They're all the same, oh- this is different floors.

*These floor plans are what it is now so it's not exactly the same.*

Well, I think we need to go.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT.**