

**Transcript of audio files Mary DeLoof [1] to Mary DeLoof [6]**

Recorded August 13, 2014

London, Ontario

Interviewer: Mary Kosta

Interviewee [Creator]: Mary De Loof

MK: OK, alright, so I guess, do you want to start talking about your being in the orphanage, or do you want to talk about...

MD: Whatever you want.

MK: Sacred Heart Commercial?

MD: Do you want to talk about what I know about the Sisters, or what I learned about the Sisters while I was in the orphanage?

MK: More just about what you remember being in the orphanage, like what was a day like for you? Or yes. What was it like being there? Do you... what was your earliest memory from the orphanage?

MD: Well, I would... we... I suppose you could say maybe December of '41 when my brother Frank and sister Dorothy came into the care of the Sisters.

MK: So were you there first, Mary? Before the...

MD: With the, no the... [overlap].

MK: No?

MD: Three went in at the same time.

MK: Oh, you all three did? OK. Yes, and you miss them, don't you?

MD: Yes, and they're both dead now too so...

MK: Yes... yes...

MD: I didn't think I would do this.

MK: Oh, that's OK.

**1:08/1:08 on Mary\_DeLoof [1].wav**

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MD: I had the boys and...

MK: So you entered in 1941? And... with your brother and your sister?

MD: Yes [overlap].

MK: How old were you then, Mary?

MD: I was eight, and Frank was seven, and Dorothy was six.

MK: You were the oldest then?

MD: Oh yes, out of seven.

MK: Yes, seven kids.

MD: And there's three of us alive, yes.

MK: Yes.

MD: Three sisters...

MK: Right.

[Laughing]

MD: ...that were getting together on, next Sunday for their wedding anniversaries. One is July the 31<sup>st</sup>, and the other one is August the 15th.

MK: Aw.

MD: So we're getting together on Sunday...

MK: Oh, that's nice [overlap].

MD: For dinner, yes.

MK: So you have three...three... So there's... they're all together seven and still living are...

MD: Is Irene and Jeanette and they were two that mother raised.

MK: Right...

MD: And she took them with her when she left...

MK: Right...

MD: OK...

MK: And you and your brother and sister went into the orphanage?

MD: Yes, that's right. She left the three oldest ones with our dad...

MK: Right.

MD: And then... [overlap].

MK: So that was in 1941 you went into the orphanage?

MD: Mhmm.

MK: So the war was on then, wasn't it [overlap]?

MD: Oh yes, yes [overlap].

ML: So, what do you remember from those years being the early years of the war?

MD: Well I really don't remember much. I just know that we were very poor and dad was like a hired hand on a farm and I really don't remember very much about that time, Mary. I know I didn't see an inside toilet until [laughing] I went into the orphanage [laughing].

MK: Oh yes, you were living on a farm then?

MD: Yes, yes, it was, and it was almost just like, say a garage that had been converted into rooms that...

MK: Right [overlap].

MD: ...I can remember. At least, that was one place and another place, it was a big house but you had to have the old fashioned stoves with the boiler on the end of the stove to keep the water hot and stuff like that but...

MK: Right [overlap].

MD: Very little. We went to a country school in Shrewsbury. I don't even remember the name of the teacher. And we walked to school, we didn't have buses or anything and the only time we got a ride was in the winter time. Dad would hook up the farmer's team of horses and a sleigh of some kind that they had and come down to the school and pick us up. Prior to that, I remember very little of...just maybe started when I went into the orphanage. Of course I was eight years old then.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: And I think I just remember having my own bed to sleep in and clothes to wear, kind of second hand clothes, or used clothes like, were always something that we had, because people would give them to us because, we just, we had nothing. We had nothing.

MK: So it was a little bit better standard of living for you in the orphanage?

MD: Oh, yes [overlap]. Oh much, much better, Mary. Much, much better. At home all I can remember is that we might have had a table this size and our chairs were two chairs with a plank between them for us to sit on. Like, we had nothing. Nothing, nothing [overlap].

MK: Yes [overlap].

MD: And I can remember the Sunday that we found out that mom was gone, we three kids had come home from Sunday school and dad was going through an old fashioned bureau which I think today [we] would use as a side board to put dishes in...

MK: Mhmm [overlap].

MD: You know? He was going through that, and I have no idea what he was looking for. I just said "Oh, where's mom and the other kids?" 'Cause there was another three, and he just looked at us and said, "They're gone and they won't be back."

MK: Oh so...

MD: Didn't say where they went to or anything, he just said they were gone.

MK: That must have been hard for you kids [overlap].

MD: Well...

MK: Yes...[overlap].

MD: I don't know Mary, it didn't seem to maybe [fizz?] on us that she was gone like I don't know...

MK: Yes...[overlap].

MD: I really don't [overlap].

MK: When you're little it's...

MD: No, we just knew she was gone and...

MK: So your dad brought you to the orphanage.

MD: Yes, my dad and his parents brought us down and brought us into the orphanage. What I can remember from first being there...I can't say I really remember too much because... maybe things picked up mentally for me in the summer of '42 when Sister Agatha came to look after the girls and she stayed. Well, she was still in charge of the girls when I left in December of '51. She was still there, and I noticed the changes that she herself had made, you know, so things were different then. Like, I don't know, Sister, maybe because she came from a large family, she could deal with us a lot better. Like, there was no yelling or harsh punishment like. There was no beatings, there was never anything like that. Your punishment was sitting on a bench and watching everyone else have their fun and you're sitting there, and if you wanted to go back and play with the kids you had to go to Sister and ask for permission, and saying that you were sorry what you had done. "Well, don't apologize to me, Mary, you go and speak to the girl that you made cry because you pulled her hair or you took her coloring book away from her." And then

you could sit and play with the other kids. That was her punishment. It wasn't anything really like I said, harsh.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: We did...I did my grade school at the orphanage, we had two classrooms. One was from grades one to four, and I do not remember the Sister that had that grade, but five to eight was Sister Dionysia, yes Dionysia was her name. And that was one teacher for all those different grades and that. There wasn't when I got into grade eight, there wasn't anybody in the orphanage that was grade eight but we had kids from surrounding areas...

MK: Oh [overlap].

MD: ...that came in to attend school there, and the only family that I do remember was Barnardo was the last name, and there was, I think, one girl and one boy. The girl's name was Rita, I think, and the boy's name was like different, Otto, I think was his name, Otto and Rita Barnardo, and there was us three kids. They're the three that I can remember, there may have been other ones, but those are the ones. And we had Sister Edith, and she was an older Sister. And they had converted Sister...what did they call them in those days...Sister Superior, she wasn't called Mother, but she was in charge of the whole operation in the orphanage...I think it was Sister Superior's office. They converted that into a classroom for us kids, and we had Sister Edith.

MK: So Sister Dionysia was the lower grades?

MD: No she was the seven to eight, oh I mean five to eight.

MK: Five to eight, and then you had Sister Edith, what grades was that?

MD: She just had grade eight.

MK: Grade eight.

MD: OK, because there was no other. I was the only one in grade eight that would have been in Dionysia's class, but just one wasn't really enough, so they had a classroom for the three of us that I can remember.

MK: You've just told me something I never knew. I never knew that children came in from outside the orphanage to attend school there.

MD: Mhmm, well see, they were certified teachers, and it wasn't somebody like a Sister who was a retired teacher, they were full class teachers and so, maybe when the orphanage closed, they would have been assigned to other schools in the city of London.

MK: Yes.

MD: I don't know.

MK: Do you know, were the kids coming from a farm or from within the city?

MD: I know that the Barnardos lived on Epworth Avenue, which is down across from the Richmond Street entrance to the University, so I don't know how they knew about it, or how they got in, I just know that they were there, eh? You don't know all the rules [laughs].

MK: Yes, for sure.

MD: And things like that, but as I told you upstairs, Sister Philomene, yes, Philomene because she became Mother General, she was something to do with the separate school board, and she would have to be making her rounds to the different schools and of course, we would still be classed as a school, and she would come and do whatever she had to do with the teachers and that, but she seemed to always have boxes of candy done up in little packages, and each one in the class got a little package. We didn't have to earn it, we just got it [laughs].

MK: So, the highest the school went at the orphanage was to grade eight and then after that you went out to school?

MD: I went out.

MK: OK.

MD: OK, so I failed, under Sister Edith, my grade eight and I was sent to St. Peter's School to do my grade eight and I had Sister Norita and I passed, second time around I passed [laughs]. Yes, thumbs up. And then, from there I went to Sacred Heart Commercial.

MK: So that was for grade nine on, you were at Sacred Heart Commercial?

MD: That's right, and at that time, Mary Martha was my grade nine teacher, Sister, oh she died, oh, I can't think of her name, she had cancer it seems to me, and there was another Sister named after her, I can't think of what her name was, and I had... Mary Angela was my principal. Sister Lucille, she died I think at the old place, I don't think she died here, she died at the new Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse and Academy. Lucille, and there, it seems to me there was, no, I just had the four, Mary Martha, and the grade 10 teacher, Mary Angela, and Sister Lucille. They were my high school teachers.

MK: So Sacred Heart Commercial School was it both boys and girls at that school?

MD: No.

MK: Just girls?

MD: No, oh no, it was both, but how many boys went into commercial work?

MK: Not too many, I suppose.

MD: Not too many, but there was two or three of them. I can't remember their names though, but they did, they were there. And then when we went into the Sacred Heart Convent, in, well it would have been my last year in high school, my fourth year in high school, nine, ten, eleven, yes, fourth year in high school, it seems to me we had, maybe a couple more boys that came in, because some of the students from Central Collegiate, who wanted say, to take a commercial, special commercial, course that was just strictly like shorthand, typing, business machines, they came over to our school and took it, because we had one. Sister Lucille taught the typing, Mary Angela did the bookkeeping, it seems like different Sisters took responsibility for different subjects, so we did have the boys. The boys basically were De La Salle.

MK: OK.

MD: And that was run by an order of Brothers I think...

MK: Right, Christian Brothers, was it?

MD: I don't remember, They used to be just a little bit in behind the old St. Peter's Elementary. They were back in there, someplace, because they had, in those days, most high schools had an air cadet group and the boys would practice their parades in our school yard, so [laughs] you know the girls' uniforms? We would be sitting there watching the boys doing their parading around.

MK: So De La Salle was over by St. Peter's Basilica there?

MD: Yes, sort of, I don't know what's in there now that the school itself did eventually get torn down and built up as part of the Diocese of London offices or something. But it seemed like once I left there, like I didn't have anything more to do with it, so it didn't interest...

MK: One thing you said, that you were at the Sacred Heart Convent at grade 12. Where was the Sacred Heart Commercial before that?

MD: In a building right on the same grounds as the Sacred Heart Convent was.

MK: OK, so then it moved inside the convent after a while.

MD: Yes.

MK: But it was in a separate building but on the same grounds? OK, didn't know that.

MD: Oh yes, it was a two-story and we had three classrooms. The fourth classroom was where the typing and the shorthand and all that was.

MK: OK, so you had the Sacred Heart Convent building and then you had another two-story building on the same grounds.

MD: Mhmm.

MK: Were there any other buildings on the grounds?

MD: No.

MK: Just those two.

MD: Just those two. Nothing like it is today.

MK: Right.

MD: No, because you see the Sisters were still in the Sacred Heart Convent and I can remember they had a lovely grotto of Our Lady, I think it was Our Lady of Lourdes, on the grounds, and the front part that was facing I think Colborne...Colborne and Dundas...was an orchard.

MK: Oh.

MD: And I can remember that, from being taken with Sister Agatha, or by Sister Agatha, down to the Motherhouse when some of the girls were being received into the order. And so we saw the girls go down in their bridal dresses and then come back, you know, with their black habits on and, oh, yes, I think I went down maybe two or three times to see it.

MK: Oh [overlap].

MD: To see it take place. But to go back to the original time in there and that, that's like really, like kind of a blank time. I can remember, you know, going to school there, getting up between 5:30 and 6:00, having to get up, make your bed, get dressed, put your night clothes and that away, and you wash yourself, then you help little kids in your dorm to get up and get dressed. Then we...you got them...then you had to go over and help the little three, four, and five year olds, and you'd get them up, and bathe them, and strip their beds, and dress them, and then remake their beds, you know. And then you'd get out and say your morning prayers in the hallway, and you'd be down in the chapel for 7:00 for Mass.

MK: Wow, you're already [overlap] busy before...

MD: [laughs} Yes, and that was done before you even had breakfast, because in those days you didn't eat before you went to communion.

MK: You had communion every day.

MD: Mass was every day, yes, the only time you didn't have Mass every day was Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Like, you followed the church rules all the way along. You had your three

Masses on Christmas Eve, but the children just stayed up for one Mass, and the Sisters stayed for the additional two, so there was really no Mass on Christmas Day itself, because your three Masses had been said at midnight. And Mass, the priest would say it fast enough, you'd be half an hour and you'd be downstairs at 7:30 for your breakfast. So you'd have your breakfast, and then you'd go and you'd have a chore to do, and the chore would be... this was one thing Sister Agatha did when she came...every chore that had to be done, like, it would be dusting the bedroom floors up on the third floor, and you would have helping in the chapel, doing something in the kitchen, working in the nursery because we had little babies that were put there by the Children's Aid, like from unborn [sic] mothers and that, so we'd have them to look after and help out with.... just all chores that had to be done, Sister would put them all in a container and you would draw them out. So that you wouldn't be doing the same thing all the time. And I can't remember, Mary, if it was every week it changed or if it was every two weeks or once a month, but you would go and do those little chores, and if something was big enough that required two or three, well that chore would be put in the basket two or three times, and then, you know, you'd have different...but if you picked out that same chore again, it went back in the basket, you took another chore [laughs]. You didn't get the same one all the time, so you had that to do, and then you were back downstairs in what we called the playroom, and you might have say, 15 or 20 minutes to maybe, look at a coloring book or something that you pulled out of the toy container, and then you'd be lined up to go to school.

MK: And you get to school...bus?

MD: No, no! Right there.

MK: Oh, in the orphanage school. I was thinking when you were ready to go to Sacred Heart Commercial...

MD: No, this...

MK: This was before, in grade eight, before grade eight.

MD: I'm talking about my early days in there.

MK: OK.

MD: Yes, so you'd have [to] go down to your classroom, you'd have your classes, you'd have your recess time, and you'd be back in the classroom, I forget what time, school must have been out at 11:30 or something, because it seems to me we would just get out of school and we'd be lined up to go into the dining room. And the dining room was... it was the boys were at one end

of it and the girls were at the other, and there was no partition or anything to separate us. It was like one open room, and the Sister would be there in charge of the girls and then one for the boys, and we always had two Sisters in charge of the children, so that would be like four. So two Sisters would be in having their dinner while the one Sister would be looking after us in the dining room having our dinner. So we'd have our dinner, wash our dishes, put the stools up on the table, so that... We talked about the three girls, the Ritchie girls...

MK: Right.

MD: Well, Mary Lou would wash the dining room floor every day. Now the girls would sweep and clean up their end of it and I don't know if the boys did their end, or if Mary Lou did their end of it, but the girls, we had to clean that up and make it ready for Mary Lou to look after, and then the stools were put up on the tables so then, once you had your dinner, you went back to the dining room, now you're...[unclear]. Yes, dining, back to the playroom, and if you hadn't finished your chore before you went to school, you went and you finished that up. Well, then you would come back and you'd be in the playroom, and you'd be lined up to go back for your afternoon classes...

MK: OK.

MD: And then you'd have your recess time, and recess was just going back to the playroom because you weren't going outside or anything because you...probably 15 minutes or something like that, I can't remember what it was, and after you went back to your second grades for the rest of your afternoon, and then you were out of the classroom. And I, here again, I don't remember what time it was because you have to be at supper by 5:00. And then, you'd you know, clean up, do your dishes, and set the tables for breakfast, and those of us that say, maybe chore was to be in the kitchen, well, you'd be in the kitchen helping to clean up the dishes and stuff from that, made the meal for the thing. And then, you went and had an hour or so of studying or homework. Like kids complain today about homework and hunh! Here we were in an orphanage and had... following the rules...we had our homework to do.

MK: Yes.

MD: And we studied. Well, then you'd go back to the playroom and then, I think it was 8:00, might even have been 7:30 or something, there was like an age break-off time, that went up to bed earlier, and then there was some of us older kids, I don't know if we were 11 or 12, what we

were, we would stay up maybe half an hour later or an hour later, and then we would all be in bed by 9:00.

MK: Because you had such an early day.

MD: Yes, and then you're up you know, that's your day.

MK: It was a really structured day wasn't it?

MD: Well, it had to be.

MK: Yes with all the children [overlap].

MD: Yes, but I think if you, maybe, it's just me, if you look at it in a positive way, it kind of prepared you for the rules and the regulations of working.

MK: Yes.

MD: And then like, and everything is neat and tidy, and it's done up correctly, and I think that's what I carried forward to my working. My desk was always clean and the girls could never understand that. Even when I was sewing, I had a paper bag or something down by my sewing machine...and to this day, I do... all the extra threads or little pieces went into that garbage bag [overlap].

MK: You taught yourself self-discipline.

MD: I think so, yes, and it, and then another way, that might have been harmful because you didn't question.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: Or, by when you get out into the working world, well, you want to question this, you want to question that, and...

MK: But you didn't sort of learn how to do...

MD: No, I didn't and then [laughs] they tell me that...like it was me, "a spade is a spade, don't try to tell me it's a shovel because they are two different things!" [laughs]

MK: Well, we'll just stop there for a sec, Mary.

MD: Yes.

**23:52/23:52 on Mary\_DeLoof [2].wav**

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MK: OK it's back on now. So, Mondays was laundry day?

MD: Mondays was laundry day, and even the Sisters came down and helped in the laundry and sometimes we got to know the Sisters [interview interrupted and tape stopped].

**0:20/0:20 on Mary\_DeLoof [3].wav**

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MK: I got the recorder going, so you were telling me about a disaster that happened at Hellmuth College where the orphanage was [overlap].

MD: Well, it actually happened at the orphan...

MK: Mount St. Joseph.

MD: Yes, Mount St. Joseph Orphanage. One winter, the snow was so heavy 'cause these roofs were slate, and the snow came down and landed on the roof of this half of the porch because...[overlap].

MK: Sun porch?

MD: Well, yes, I guess you could call it the sun porch because it went straight across the whole building, it took half of it out.

MK: Wow.

MD: And it was never rebuilt.

MK: OK.

MD: OK, and what happened the sun porch was only used by the Sisters, and they would have chairs and sitting out there...that the Sisters would come out and sit out there in the evening, after they had their night prayers. They would have night prayers at a certain time. Or it might even have been earlier, I don't recall now. And they would sit out there on the porch. But us kids were never, ever allowed on the porch.

MK: Or verandah.

MD: It might have been more like a verandah at that time.

MK: So, you said that the Sisters lived in a different part?

MD: They lived right in here. Now their rooms were on the second floor.

MK: Of the former Hellmuth College. So Sisters lived right in the orphanage building,

MD: Yes.

MK: On the second floor. And where were your rooms?

MD: Our sleeping [rooms?] were on the third floor.

MK: The children on the third floor...

MD: And the boys were on the fourth floor.

MK: Oh, so girls on the third floor, boys on the fourth floor.

MD: Oh, yes! [laughs]

MK: And Sisters on the second floor...

MD: And the first floor was all offices.

MK: OK.

MD: And the chapel.

MK: OK.

MD: And the nursery for the little babies, that were put there by the Children's Aid, like I said, unwed mothers, that was on the first floor. Our playrooms and school rooms were in the basement, this is the front part that you're looking at here, and let's see, this end of the building, in the basement was our dining room for the boys and the girls, and this part was the boys' playrooms and that. The girls' playrooms were at the back of the building. You'd never see them at the front.

MK: OK, and where was your dining room where you ate?

MD: With the boys, down here [overlap].

MK: In the basement of the school?

MD: Uh huh, yes, yes [overlap].

MK: So, the Sisters' dining room was on another floor?

MD: No, all the dining [rooms] were in the basement, the kitchen was in the basement...our... the playrooms for both the boys and the girls was in the basement. A root cellar was in the basement, and the two classrooms were in the basement. And there was a section, but you went down the hallway between the two classrooms, that some of the hired help had another section in there, that they lived in, but nobody really went in there, because they looked after their own rooms and everything. And us girls went in once a week and we cleaned out, we would dust and clean. I don't know if it was ever mentioned, there was a man by the name of Peter, and I think he had Parkinsons or palsy very, very badly, and he would take the scraps from the kitchen and take it out and feed it to the chickens.

MK: Oh, there were chickens?

MD: We had chickens and a horse. I can't remember having anything else. The horse I remember, because they used to go and get the priest in the winter time from St. Peter's Seminary to come and say Mass, and the engineer who was Harry Ade [?] would go and get Father and bring him over to the orphanage, and then take him back again after Mass was done. So, we did have a horse and a sleigh, and we had a tractor.

MK: Oh?

MD: Because we grew our own vegetables and that.

MK: So did the children ever work in the garden?

MD: Yes, we did.

MK: You did that, [overlap], oh, it was part of your chores too?

MD: Yes, yes, uh huh, well, everybody did sort of in the summertime. Maybe, I don't know if that even took place, maybe, say playing a lot outside. But you were outside, and you were working in the earth, and you were learning that vegetables grew and what they looked like, and weeding and everything. Oh yes, we had a big, big garden [unclear]. The hill, up at the Mount now, well, they built it into a hill, but that was flat at one time and we had a garden. That used to be our garden and orchard. The raspberry bushes, currant, gooseberries, which you never hear of anymore, that was all the orphanage there.

MK: So, it wasn't such a hill as it is now though?

MD: No.

MK: Oh [unclear].

MD: Well, it was, but there was always an area that was sort of level, you know, and [unclear].

MK: Right.

MD: I don't know how they got that hill that people came and did snow sledding down, I don't know how [overlap].

MK It wasn't like that when you were a kid.

MD: No, no. It was not like that.

MK: So, you were saying the Sisters ate by themselves?

MD: Mhmm.

MK: They didn't eat with the children?

MD: No.

MK: They had their own dining area.

MD: Yes, mmmm, and they looked after it.

MK: OK, and then, so did you spend any time with any of the other Sisters or just the ones who were in charge of the orphanage?

MD: No, not really, we didn't because they were like retired Sisters.

MK: Mmmm.

MD: They were not, like I don't know at what age the Sisters that came out there, or were sent there, what age they were, but we always were considered them as the senior Sisters.

MK: Oh, so the younger ones were over at Sacred Heart then, were they?

MD: Yes, uh huh.

MK: OK, so it was more like a residence for the older Sisters and the orphans?

MD: And the orphanage, yes.

MK: Oh, OK, another thing I didn't know, Mary.

MD: Oh yes, yes, they weren't teachers or anything that left [?] there. As far as I know of, all the...your elementary school teachers...came out of the Sacred Heart Convent downtown. In those days, the only ones that we had were, as I said, the two that had the two classrooms that were the younger Sisters, and then the Sisters that looked after the children. The other Sisters were senior Sisters, and that's why when it came around say, 7:00, 7:30 and if we were outside, we could not be hollering and screaming and that, because some of those Sisters would already retired for bed.

MK: Oh.

MD: 'Cause if they're up at, say five o'clock in the morning, they're [laughs] not going to be up until eight o'clock at night or nine o'clock at night. No, we're kind of shut down at a certain time and that was complete... to everybody, even the hired hands like Mary Lou, Sophie and them. They were in bed by the same time everybody was.

MK: Do you remember the names of any of those people who lived in the back where there were apartments? The workers was there? I heard that some of the children when they got older, they just stayed on at the orphanage and then helped, or I mean, with the Sisters, and helped with chores and worked. Like Annabelle Leed was one of them, I heard.

MD: Well, they lived in the orphanage, and just may have had a room that they retired to at nighttime, like, I don't know if you'd say a bedroom. Because you didn't have TVs in those days. They may have had their radio, and they could have read or played cards or...

MK: So Mary Lou Ritchie...

MD: And Sophie and Cecilia were three sisters

MK: [overlap] Sophie and Cecilia.

MD: Mary Lou, Cecilia, and Sophie, there were three sisters.

MK: And they were older than you?

MD: Oh yes, much, much older.

MK: And they worked, they helped out?

MD: Yes, they worked there.

MK: In the orphanage?

MD: Mhmm, they worked there.

MK: And then, do you remember Annabelle Leed?

MD: Yes, Annabelle, but she was a worker.

MK: So, she was older too?

MD: Oh yes, much older, much older.

MK: So, did they all have their own rooms, [overlap] those girls?

MD: Mhmm, they all had their...just like...well, the room wouldn't be quite this big, but it was like a bed and maybe a dresser and that, but they looked after that room themselves as well.

MK: And then you said there was a man downstairs who used to feed the scraps to the chickens. He lived down there [overlap].

MD: He lived down there, but he lived in that section where I said that you had to go down the hallway between the... but he was back in there, and, I don't know really that much about Peter outside of him gathering the kitchen stuff, and having Parkinsons, and he sat at a little table by himself where these hired people would say, secular people, ate. And I think he sat at that table because he was so shaky and that, and it might have upset the other ones. I don't know. But they all sat at one big table and they would have their dishes. But we looked after cleaning that up. They didn't do that themselves.

MK: Oh so...

MD The girls did.

MK: The hired help?

MD: Yes, that's what they were.

MK: They ate in the same dining room as you children?

MD: No, they had their own little dining room.

MK: Oh.

MD: And it was right off of the kitchen.

MK: Oh, I see.

MD: But no, the children were on the opposite side of the building [laughs]. They were on the back side. You never see anything about the back side of the orphanage. I haven't yet seen a picture.

MK: [overlap] There aren't many [pictures]...I haven't seen. I can't think of any pictures I've seen of the interior of that building yet.

MD: Yes.

MK: Only the outside of the building.

MD: The outside, yes. And there was the, well, we used to call it the boiler room or the furnace room. It was attached to the orphanage, and you had to go through the girls' playroom...

MK: Oh.

MD: ...to get to it.

MK: Oh, so the boys and girls had separate playrooms?

MD: Oh, yes, they were never allowed together.

MK: [overlap] Never played together or anything?

MD: No, no.

MK: OK.

MD: No, and they had their own playground area and girls had their own playground, yes. Now, we did have, I think, we had our own teeter totters and swings, but no, your inside playrooms were separate. The boys was on the front of the building, the girls were on the back.

MK: What about classes though, did they... [overlap].

MD: Classes were... [overlap].

MK: They were both together?

MD: Both, yes, yes. Mhmm. They were together. And you sat in the chapel. Girls were up in the front, two Sisters in between, and then the boys and the two Sisters that looked after them.

MK: Oh, and then the rest of the Sisters were there at Mass too?

MD: On the opposite side.

MK: OK.

MD: See, this would be a good example of...the girls sat here, the boys sat here, the Sisters sat here, and there was the main aisle of the chapel.

MK: Oh.

MD: And your altar was up here.

MK: OK.

MD: And the confessional was back here [laughs].

MK: And when did you go to confession, on Sunday?

MD: Oh, no, just if you thought you want to go to confession, the priest would stay at the back for a few minutes before he came up to say Mass, and if you wanted to go to confession, you went to the back of the chapel and you knelt there.

MK: You knelt there?

MD: Yes, mmmm.

MK: And what did you do on Saturday and Sunday then, when there wasn't school?

MD: Well, you kind of...I guess...would be a down time. You'd be playing, or like with the older kids, we might be watching Sister Agatha do sewing, or watching her crochet hats, or just play, just rest. There wasn't really anything we did. When it came Easter time, of course, we'd be cleaning the floors, shining it up for Easter Sunday, or getting our hair washed, and putting curlers in it, getting ready for our Easter parade [laughs]. And Sister Agatha would be getting us upstairs into the cloakroom and we'd be picking out different dresses for wearing for Sunday. In those days, you had hats. That would be going on for Easter. For Christmas time, well, a lot of us, I shouldn't say a lot of us, it would be the older children who no longer say, knew about Santa Claus, and we would help Sister Agatha wrap gifts that would come in, like from the Rotary Clubs or from the Catholic Women's League. 'Cause a lot of clubs or associations would order gifts, but they would have them sort of like, boy 12 years old, girl 13, and that, and then we would take them and put names of the person on it, and maybe put a bow and that. And they would be kept hidden so the little ones wouldn't see them. And they always had a big tree, and Mary, it was so big! And they probably had, you know back in those days, you know, ten or twelve foot ceilings, you know?

MK: Wow!

MD: And they'd have the big tree that would go right up to the ceiling, you know. And, I don't recall if there was strings of lights, I don't recall that. But I do recall that we would take hankies, and put pins, safety pins in them, and hang them on the tips of the trees here and there. That was the decorations.

MK: Hankies?

MD: Yes, yes, because hankies at one time were very popular decoration or something to dress up. You wore them in your pocket on a blouse, if you remember back, you wouldn't remember [laughs], how graduate nurses always had a fancy hankie and they had their pin or something attached to keep the hankie in place in their pockets and that. And then, and I don't know who decorated the tree, if it was us older kids or if the Sisters did that [laughs], I don't remember, I just remember the tree being there and the hankies on it, and then when it comes, and I don't know if it was done before we went to midnight Mass or after midnight Mass, the gifts would then be put under the tree. And some of the gifts were like, say, could be teddy bears or dolls or something, and they were sat in the branches of the tree. So your tree was actually filled because it had all these little gifts in it. And then after, well, we still did our little chores after we had breakfast and that, but we gathered, I think, it was around 10:00 in the main hallway where the tree was, and then Santa would come. And I kind of was always under the impression that it was Father Simpson, who was the one at that time who was chaplain, and he would stay and he would dress up as Santa Claus, and he would give out the Christmas gifts or presents and that. And then, after that, it couldn't be too long because we'd be downstairs for dinner at 11:30, and that was kind of like your Christmas day. You'd have your dinner, and it was always turkey. It was an actual Christmas dinner. And then the rest of the day you're playing with your gifts and swapping candies that you didn't want with somebody that had candies that you... [laughs]. It was a good day. I kind of think that maybe you forgot everything else that happened to you, because Santa had come and given you all these little gifts and that. You know, you just... I can remember it just being a good time, a happy time. And maybe it took away, because I think I found out in the book that you showed me, it was December of '41 when we came, so we were only here a short while before Christmas.

MK: Oh yes, that's true.

MD: Mhmm, so you see that, and that might have taken away that edge of missing...

MK: Yes.

MD: ...you know, your parents, because you had your mind occupied on what you had.

MK: Yes.

MD: You know, but anyways, no, that's the Christmas section. We'd better get back to the laundry day on Monday [laughs].

MK: Oh, that's the story [unclear]. OK.

MD: [laughs] Now is this thing still recording, oh, gosh [laughs].

MK: We're good.

MD: So on Mondays, everybody helped in the laundry room. Harry Ade [?], who was engineer at the time, he would be up early and having the big, big tubs of laundry washed and that. By the time we got out after having our breakfast and that, we'd be in there and we would... they had big dryers, Mary, that had...they went into a wall and you'd pull them out, and they had wooden racks and we would take the bedding and hang it on these wooden racks and then shove it back in because there was heat in there somehow.

MK: Oh.

MD: And it dried all the clothes and then, you know, we just kept checking them and as they dried we put other wet ones on and took them off, sheets and things that at a certain point were run through big irons.

MK: Mangles.

MD: Mangles?

MK: Mangle.

MD: Mangles? Yes, mangles. What's the name of the fruit? Mango is the fruit [laughs]. And then we would fold them up and the towels and the bedding and our underwear and everything. And the Sisters came down but we got to know some of the Sisters' numbers because they never had their names, they had religious numbers on it, and we wouldn't have to look at Sister Anselm, not Anselm Oswald's, because she was a heavy set Sister. She would kind of [whispers Sister Oswald]...[laughs]...kids learned, well the older girls learned to cold starch the Sisters' guimpes and their bands.

MK: Oh, how did you do that?

MD: Well, OK, you started out with one guimpe and you'd rub it down really good, that it was all smoothed out. Then you'd put another guimpe on top of that, because they'd be all... you run them out of the cold starch that they used for stiffening things?

MK: So, I've only ever used the spray starch.

MD: No, oh, no.

MK: So what's cold starch like? You have to describe it.

MD: [laughs] It's like corn starch, [laughs] corn starch.

MK: Oh, corn starch, OK.

MD: Well, I'd say it was probably, I don't know, I would say it was corn starch and it was mixed with water.

MK: OK, like a paste.

MD: Like a paste, yes, and you would put your guimpe in there and you would make sure that it was all wet, and you would like wring it out to get as much of the stuff off... of the starch off...and then you laid it out flat and then you rubbed it, which I guess worked it into the material, OK?

MK: Uh huh.

MD: And you just kept piling them up on top of one another, just kept rubbing them down and that. And then after that, you'd tilt them and you'd put them through another small mangle.

MK: Oh.

MD: And you kept putting them through until such time that they were like stiff, white boards.

MK: Boards.

MD: And the bands were the same way because they were stiff, but the cornets weren't starched.

MK: Oh.

MD: That's the part that went around the side of the face and down on the head like a little bib or something that was underneath their guimpes, because the guimpes were tied at the back.

MK: OK.

MD: OK. It was quite a thing and then they had little caps that... they had caps that ... it went on first, and then them, the bands went on, and then the cap went on, and then they had two veils to go on, and the veils were pinned to the little cap.

MK: Oh.

MD: Well, they had a quite a rigmarole to get dressed in the mornings too [laughing].

MK: Oh, yes.

MD: So us kids, the older girls 'cause all the mangles wouldn't be something that the little ones...  
[unintelligible].

MK: Yes.

MD: [unintelligible] And, I can't remember, I keep thinking her name was Sister...Sister Patrick or Saint Patrick, would come out every Monday with a bag of those English mints, the white ones you know?

MK: Mhmm.

MD: And every kid got an English mint if you were there working in the laundry room  
[unintelligible].

MK: Uh.

MD: And then, we only worked there until such time, was time to go to school.

MK: Uh huh.

MD: And then, in the after... when you had your dinner and everything, you would go back to the laundry room because there likely would be folding that had to be done or some more clothes taken off of the racks and other ones put on, and this is what you did in there. And then, after supper in school, we older girls stayed up and we learned how to sew buttons on the clothes, darn socks, because in those days you had the... what would call the Lyle stockings... or rib stockings... that were brown and they were held up with garters or canning jar rings or whatever you could get to hold them up.

MK: Oh, canning jar rings?

MD: Yes.

MK: Really?

MD: Oh yes, I can remember using can..., now I can't, I don't know if I used canning jar rings in the orphanage, or if I used them before I went into the orphanage, but I can remember because your legs are small enough.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: They're... they would hold them up and that, and that's where I learned to darn and I can't remember the Sister who [laughing]... I would curse at her because the hole started out maybe the size of the quarter and because Mary wasn't doing it right, it got cut out and became the size of a fifty cent piece [laughing].

MK: Oh.

MD: And a little bit bigger because she still wasn't... I'm telling you when I got finished that, I knew how to darn socks and we did it with, sort of like the embroidery cotton?

MK: Oh, yes.

MD: That's what we darned with.

MK: Oh.

MD: That's because there were cotton stockings.

MK: Oh.

MD: Yes, oh, that reminds me, I think I have one of the old... what they used to call them mushrooms because it just depended on what it would... it was a wooden, a round wooden circle like this with a handle on it.

MK: Oh.

MD: And you put your stocking over it, this under your stocking, and this is how you learned to darn.

MK: Oh, yes.

MD: But I think the one I have is an egg shape.

MK: Oh.

MD: I got to find that, I have...

MK: Oh [unintelligible].

MD:... I hope I still have it.

MK: Well, I'd love to see that, Mary.

MD: And, and... these are the things that...

MK: Mhmm.

MD: ...you learned and you learned to iron.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: You know, and then on...when a Sister thought it was enough time to call it the night, she would go, Sister Agatha would go, down to the kitchen to see if there was any cake left over, or something that she would bring back to us and we would have this as a treat for staying up and doing the mending and that. And you know there was... there was good times. I can't really say, maybe there was times I was lonesome and I never really realized it.

MK: Well, how many other girls your age were there with you?

MD: There ah...

MK: [unclear] Very many or just a couple?

MD: The only ones that I can remember like, as I said, was Eileen Stokes, Mary M... Martha Miller, and Helen Paquette.

MK: OK, so just a ...

MD: ...and they were...

MK: ...few of you [unclear].

MD: Yes, they were older than I. I don't know how old. The only way you might know is if you go back in the...

MK: Yes, we...[mumbled]... could see...

MD: ...orphanage records and you would know then how old Eileen Stokes was and Helen. I saw Helen Paquette's name but I didn't see Martha Miller's so I don't know how long she was in the orphanage but they were three girls that I do remember being older than I.

MK: But you always had, like, some playmates or somebody, some companions close to your age while you were there?

MD: Not that I can remember.

MK: No?

MD: No, because, as far as I can remember I was, like ...

MK: You were the oldest?

MD: [laughing] I was the old [laughing] ...

MK: Oh, OK, oh.

MD: ...the old babe as far as I can remember.

MK: They were all younger than you, then.

MD: Oh, yes they were.

MK: Oh.

MD: Like the kids didn't stay, because you know...

MK: Yes [mumbled].

MD: They went.

MK: Yes, but you stayed.

MD: But I stayed, yes, because nobody wanted me, and that's why I think that I got kind of, I don't know, maybe separated because of my schooling and my age. Because I had nothing maybe

in common with the other ones you know. I might have been more or less like, what do they call it, a big sister?

MK: Yes.

MD: I really don't know because the kids were...they really didn't stay that long, so you really didn't get too close to any of them. It's the same way, I think with the Sisters. I didn't get close to any of them, except Sister Agatha.

MK: Right.

MD: And I think, I think that maybe I wasn't close-close, like if it was your sisters or something, but she was always there for me.

MK: Yes.

MD: And I have always called her the mentor.

MK: Right.

MD: Yes, 'cause she was the one that helped me along and was my counselor and everything in life. But...

MK: I guess the numbers of children would vary depending, you know, on how many came in any one year, but sort of roughly, like, how many do you remember, like all together? I know you won't know the exact number but like, were there... like just roughly...how many babies and how many, you know, older kids?

MD: Well, based on the nursery I'd say, I can say probably you could've had at least a dozen.

MK: Dozen.

MD: And you know, it might vary depending on how fast the Children's Aid got them into foster homes or adoptive homes, or whatever they were called.

MK: Yes.

MD: And I don't know. I know that there were baby babies because we, a couple of us older girls, and I can't even remember who they were, Mary...We would go up and we would help Sister bathe the babies and would try, how to hold them in the little bathtubs and that, and then dress them, change their diapers, hold them while they had their bottles, you know. I know that they were that age now.

MK: And then there were toddlers after that?

MD: Yes, mhmm.

MK: And then school age children.

MD: Yes, yes you just went up the steps.

MK: So how many do you think altogether of like, not babies but other kids, were there when you were there? Like, you know in a year, like, roughly?

MD: Well, probably altogether, you could basically probably have fifty.

MK: Yes, about that many?

MD: Yes, mmmm, because you know it was wartime, and your family life was really having hard times.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: And how the children would get to the orphanage, I don't know.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: Because I don't know if the parents brought the children themselves or if they got registered to the Children's Aid. I don't know.

MK: Yes, I don't know either.

MD: No, and I don't know if the Children's Aid would even have any kind of records because now everything is so different now, that if you tried to find something, I don't know Mary, where to even begin.

MK: Yes, well you saw how much information there was in those registers [unintelligible].

MD: Oh, yes! I was so, and...

MK: It's some, but it doesn't answer all the questions, like, you don't really know how the children got there from, like you know from... [unintelligible].

MD: No, it doesn't tell you any of that.

MK: But it's interesting, it gives you the ages.

MD: Yes.

MK: And how long they were there.

MD: Yes, yes, and I was surprised to see how they even had how much per day.

MK: Oh yes, for some of the children.

MD: Yes.

MK: That was the case for, for you, wasn't it?

MD: Yes, yes it was. Yes it started out at two dollars a month, and then it came up to some place two fifteen or something a month.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: And I was thinking like, my dad was... he just worked for a cousin on a tobacco farm and I don't know how we would ever pay. Like, I looked at that, and I said, "Well, that would be six dollars a month for each child times three, that'd be eighteen dollars a month."

MK: Mhmm.

MD: Now where would he get that money, because as far as I know of, he was just working for room and board.

MK: Yes.

MD: But yet, when I confronted his, my dad's half-brother on that one just recently, I mentioned...I said, "Well, the Children's Aid called me into their office one day and they kind of just inferred that I should be picking up my dad's neglect of paying." And he looked at me and he said, "Your dad paid for you every month, all the time." And he said "And mother made sure!"

MK: [laughs]

MD: Well, I don't know, just what the score was, because until I started working, like at what time did my dad stop paying for me? What time did he stop paying for Frank and Dorothy?

MK: But they left...

MD: Well, one left at '48, and one left at '49.

MK: '49, OK.

MD: And I went in '51.

MK: Uh huh, and you were already graduated from high school.

MD: I was paying a dollar a day for room and board, so when did my dad stop paying? The Children's Aid thought I should pick up his...

MK: [unintelligible].

MD: So anyway...

MK: Then we would find out those records, yes...

MD: No.

MK: But is...so you were... so then you were at the orphanage going to school, and then when you were in grade nine, you started at Sacred Heart Commercial, right?

MD: Yes.

MK: Like you... no, like you went from St. Peters to Sacred Heart Commercial in grade nine, right?

MD: Yes.

MK: OK, yes.

MD: That, yes, that was like your... the beginning of your high school was grade nine back then.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: I think it's seven or eight now, there's a stepping stone where they cut it off to catch up there but...

MK: So...

MD: At that time, when I was going to grade nine, I was working part-time at St. Joseph's Hospital.

MK: Oh, you were?

MD: Oh, yes.

MK: [unintelligible] When did you start doing that?

MD: I think it was in the summer, between my grade eight and my grade nine, or it might have been nine and ten, I can't remember the exact years, Mary. But I worked at St. Joseph's with Sister Bernadine and she was on Second West.

MK: Oh.

MD: And I was cleaning patients' rooms and all that kind of stuff and my...

### **31:25/31:25 Mary\_DeLoof[4].wav**

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MK: I think we should talk about your time at Sacred Heart Commercial.

MD: Oh, dear [laughs].

MK: [laughs].

MD: Well, I remember going there for three years because the Sacred Heart Commercial actually closed when the three Catholic high schools in London merged and they became known as Catholic Central today. And Catholic Central when it opened, I think it was '51 or '52, while it had to be '51, because I was in the first graduating class... the Sacred Heart Convent. the Motherhouse for the Sisters of Saint Joseph,...and we took over part of the convent for my fourth year in high school. So after say, '49 or '50, Sacred Heart Commercial no longer existed, so, if you were looking for it today, you wouldn't find it [laughs]. But I would have to leave the orphanage rather early in the morning, because I would have to walk down to the gates on Richmond Street that went to the University, because the buses never came out that far. We were

country, so I trot down there and get the bus and I had the same bus driver for my four years in high school, and he could see me coming, and he would wait for me [laughs]. And sometimes that was pretty hectic because in the winter time the streets didn't get plowed like they are today. You walked, either through the snow up to your waist, or you walked down the street and took your chances in getting hit [laughs]. But I was fortunate, nothing happened. So I would get down to my classes at Sacred Heart, but I could never stay after school or the classes, because I would have to get the bus and get back to the orphanage, 'cause the buses again did not go out that far on. Sister Agatha had gotten permission to get one of the rooms – that would have been bedrooms for the girls. She had that made into a bedroom specifically for myself, and she had it done up with the table, and chairs, and a table lamp, so that I would have a place to study 'cause there was... you couldn't study in the play room because the kids would be all down there having a good time [laughs]. So anyways, and Sister Agatha would stop at night time on her way to bed to see if there was anything that she could help me with, and indeed she did help me with my spelling because I was a terrible speller, and with my...[?]. because here again, I had a very difficult time in studying. School did not come easy to me, so I had to really work for what I got, and you know, I would say thanks to her, that probably I passed [laughs]. But anyways, I did my three years there at Sacred Heart and the teachers were Sister Mary Martha, Marcelline [?], Mary Angela, I think she was the principal, and Sister Lucille. They were the four teachers that we had at Sacred Heart, and it was just a four room classroom, where actually the one classroom was where all the typing and shorthand was done. Sister Lucille had us in there. We didn't have a lunch room, and our gym when we had it, was done over at...it was called "Three C's" at that time... Catholic Culture Center or something, I don't know what it's called today. But anyways, that's where we went for our phys ed, but oh, we had Sister Julia, I think was our phys ed 'cause... [overlap].

MK: Mhmm [overlap]...

MD: I understand eventually she was a tennis pro [overlap]...

MK: Mhmm [overlap].

MD: ...from Sarnia? And so we had her for phys ed. Grade nine when we did home economics, we had Sister Marie Louise but was that done in the Sacred Heart Convent.

4:59/4:59 Mary\_DeLoof[5].wav

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MD: Now, location of the Sacred Heart Commercial High School was a building... it actually faced on Queens Avenue on the same property as the Sacred Heart Motherhouse was, and it was a two-story building, and it just had the four classrooms. We had no gym in there and no cafeteria, and the business machines which was, of course, taught by Sister Lucille at that time. In the 1940s, the couple that I remember mostly, was the Ediphone and Dictaphone and these were... the Ediphone was a round cylinder made of wax, and dictation would be put on to the cylinder and the secretary did the recording of the letters dictated. She would run a machine with a fine blade on it and clean off those records or letters, whatever was there, so that would be available for another day's work. Now the Dictaphone was similar to a small record, I would say, and it was on the same idea. Dictation was done on this little record for the secretary and, of course, I can't remember if it could be erased or it would be tossed out, because there was no way to clean off what was already on there. No. There were other adding machines and so on that were used in those days, but I cannot remember then, because when I went in to the work force those machines were not used in the job that I had worked in. Like when I went to London Furniture, I was in the credit department and my dictation was taken by Pitman shorthand from the credit manager. There wasn't really anything when I went to the credit department at Union Gas. I didn't have any letters or anything to type out. It was all manual work and bookkeeping. London Furniture, Union Gas was the same thing. I didn't need shorthand, so it was just more modern by the time I got into Union Gas and none of that equipment was required in those positions.

MK: Did you find that what you learned at Sacred Heart Commercial prepared you for your jobs in the future?

MD: Oh, I would say yes, because as each job went along, some of what I... us... got through the courses at Sacred Heart like accounting, yes, insofar as adding and subtracting was necessary because you had to keep record of payments made, and you would have to credit the customer's account and then show a balance that was outstanding. As far as that went but, just the shorthand that I used when I went to London Furniture was helpful.

MK: So, what grades were there at Sacred Heart Commercial then? It was from grades...

MD: Nine to twelve [overlap].

MK: [overlap] Oh.

MD: Because grade 13... Sacred Heart Commercial would have been nine, ten, and eleven, because grade twelve was done at Catholic Central High School [overlap].

MK: [overlap] Mhmm.

MD: So, there was no grade 13 per se for the commercial course. Now, there was the students that came from another school that had grade 12 and took the one year special, that might be looked at as a grade 13, but we didn't have one in the commercial course.

MK: So the ones who came for the special...

MD: Mhmm.

MK: ...they came to Sacred Heart?

MD: And Catholic Central 'cause the Sacred Heart closed.

MK: OK.

MD: There wasn't anything more.

MK: So when the special students came, that was the year that you were at... [overlap].

MD: [overlap] That I was there.

MK: [overlap] ...at Catholic Central.

MD: Yes.

MK: OK, so they took a grade 13 and you took a grade 12, and both of you graduated from Catholic Central?

MD: [overlap] Graduated at the same time, mhmm.

MK: OK.

MD: As Catholic Central as you're saying, [overlap] yes.

MK: [overlap] Mhmm, do you know where the special students came from?

MD: The ones that come to mind to me was Central Collegiate which is not all that far away from what was well, even what Catholic Central is today, 'cause Central Collegiate still exists. Because it was not a Catholic high school. It still exists today.

MK: And there was a school run by the Ursulines down the street.

MD: St. Angela's down the street. They were what, I think they called it the general course. If you wanted to be like a nurse or a doctor or somebody other than what would be considered an office secretary, they were at St. Angela's. Music and that was over there and they were just down the street from Sacred Heart Commercial.

MK: So what were your courses that you took at Sacred Heart Commercial then? You took...

MD: Well, you'd have had your typing, and your shorthand, your accounting, your...I can't remember them all [laughs]. You had English Literature, Religion... I can remember that one and I can imagine me being raised by the nuns and having to write Religion in my grade 12 to pass.

MK: Oh.

MD: I couldn't get over that one [laughs].

MK: [laughs]

MD: I can't remember them all Mary, but it was anything pertaining to commercial...

MK: OK, [overlaps] yes.

MD: [overlaps] ...that I took. You know that's a long time to go back [laughs].

MK: [laughs] You're doing great.

MD: And I don't think a lot of it's even being taught today, you know? I don't know.

MK: But you took home ec you said, did you?

MD: Yes, but that was compulsory like for grade seven, eight and nine.

MK: [overlap] Mhmm.

MD: [overlap] You took home economics and... but in that actually, we learnt sewing, which I am very grateful to Sister Maria Louise, because I can really sew and interpret and it also helped me later on when I retired. I think it was when I retired I took a course at Fanshawe in making suits and how to line them and different things like that, so I think my basis was in seven, eight and nine and that's where...

MK: And where did you take grade seven, eight and nine?

MD: Well, grade seven was at the orphanage, grade eight was at St. Peter's and nine was Sacred Heart Commercial.

MK: OK, so can you tell me about what it was like going to school still at the orphanage up to grade seven?

MD: It was probably like any other grade seven, well, three up to seven I guess it was. I was there like any other school. You had your classes in the morning, you had lunch time, your classes in the afternoon, you studied at night time. It would be regimental because you would have to stop and have lunch in there. Your teacher would have to have lunch with the Sisters in the community dining room. Sister, I think, Placidia... who was something to do coming around

and doing school inspection... and she would come and visit us in our classrooms the same as she would do down at St. Peter's or St. Michael's school. We were still checked out and our teachers as far as I know of, were all certified teachers, they weren't just somebody that was knowledge on it. They were teachers.

MK: And you were in class, the boys and the girls [overlap] together in the classroom?

MD: [overlap] Yes, we were together in the classrooms, we weren't separated because in the lower grades you have from grades one to grade four. So, that teacher had four grades to look after, so you had boys and girls in all your classes but we were never say, boys sitting on one side, and girls on the other. You couldn't do that because you had boys and girls in all those classes.

MK: Right, when you were in grade seven, was it grades five, six, and seven in one class?

MD: Yes, it would have been grade eight had there been other students besides myself.

MK: OK. And then you did your grade eight at St. Peter's.

MD: Because I failed grade eight at the orphanage under Sister Edith, and then I had to go to St. Peter's for Sister Norita was the principal and she was the teacher of grade eight.

MK: Ah. OK [overlap].

MD: [overlap] Yes, and it was the same thing. I had to walk to the university gates on Richmond Street to get my bus to go to school, so [laughs], walking is nothing to me today 'cause I've done it [laughs] all my life, you might as well say, yes [laughs]. But Sister Agatha, when I graduated, Sister Agatha did make my graduation dress, now [overlap].

MK: [overlap] This is when you graduated from [overlap] Catholic Central [overlap]?

MD: From [overlap], yes uh huh [overlap].

MK: OK.

MD: There wasn't the big ceremonies that they have now when you finish grade eight. You know, we just passed [laughs]. Lucky to get your certificate [laughs]. I do have my old, elementary certificate. I don't think I gave you that. I possibly could, but it wouldn't be of any, real...well it would see what the papers look like in those days [overlap].

MK: [overlap] Yes.

MD: Well, I have that from grade eight and I think I also have the one, the certificate that comes along with finishing my grade 12, I think I have two certificates at home that if you wanted them for your archives, I could certainly give them to you, Mary [overlap].

MK: Sure, that would be wonderful [overlap].

MD: [overlap] Yes. But I can't think of anything else.

MK: What about your graduation? Where was it held? Your Catholic Central graduation, 'cause you were the first graduating [overlap] class.

MD: [overlap] Well, the only thing I remember was on...getting ...and I think I gave it to you the last time, was the write-ups in the paper... getting their certificates from, I thought it was the Bishop, but according to the write-up, I think it was a priest, it wasn't [laughs] a Bishop that gave us our certificates at St. Peter's Cathedral.

MK: At the Cathedral?

MD: Mhmm.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: But I don't, and I just remember a dance, I think it was beginning of the school, the next school year, like you say, in September of...I think, and I think I gave you the write-up... September of '51, the awards were given out to the students at that time.

MK: And you got an award didn't you?

MD: Yes, I think I did [laughs]. Now that was done at what we had in those days, was, as I said before, the "Three C's", but I don't know, I don't, what's it called today?

MK: Hmm.

MD: Or it's a bingo hall maybe [laughs]. It's on Colborne Street right across from Catholic Central, and that was where we had a dance, but I don't remember any big thing that goes on today for finishing high school.

MK: Did you have any dances in high school?

MD: Yes, but see, there were, but I couldn't go to them eh...and I can't remember what they were called or anything. Because what we...I think what they did... was they somehow or other mixed with the De La Salle boys, because that was the only other Catholic high school, and you wouldn't be going with anybody else but a Catholic boy [laughs].

MK: You couldn't go though, because you had such a long way back home?

MD: [overlap] Well yes, and I wouldn't have anyway, to be getting back and forth.

MK: [overlap] Right, from the orphanage.

MD: [overlap] Yes, mhmm.

MK: Which was still located at the former Hellmuth College.

MD: [overlap] Yes, correct, correct, yes.

MK: Right up by Mount [unclear] mmmm...oh...so, you said too that you worked at St. Joseph's hospital.

MD: Mmmm.

MK: You did that before you started high school? Or during high school?

MD: During high school, because that's what paid for my school books, my bus fare, and my school uniform.

MK: What was the uniform like?

MD: Oh well they were all right, Mary. They were gray skirts and we had two different styles, and burgundy blazers. I think they were trimmed, with sort of ... I think it was a white cording down the front, and we had gray beanies.

MK: And that was the Sacred Heart Commercial uniform?

MD: That was our uniform, yes.

MK: Did you have a uniform at St. Peter's school?

MD: [overlap] No.

MK: How about at the orphanage?

MD: No.

MK: No, huh.

MD: Just regular clothes...that were pretty, pretty...how do you say it, pretty standard. There wasn't the clothes that are out there today and it seemed just like two pieces of material sewed together with the arms cut out [chuckle] and [unclear] to decorate them with [laughs]. No, there wasn't anything special until I got into St. Peter's, and then somehow or other, clothes seemed to come in that I could wear, and that was when I got into a variety of clothes that I could wear and I would not stand out in a class. And that's why today, I can't understand why there is such uproar about wearing a uniform. Because I had the uniform and nobody knew that I was being raised in an orphanage. That's kind of a lie too [laughs]. 'Cause one of the girls in school with me, had an aunt that was in here, and she knew that I was being raised at Mount St. Joseph's orphanage.

MK: Her aunt was a Sister, was she?

MD: Her aunt...I don't know if it was Innocentia or is the name like that, the name was O'Meara. She's dead now though, Innocentia or something, but she, Mary Lou would know that I

was raised at the orphanage and I think she was the only one. But just because she had an aunt there... that and so...and I could tell her about it.

MK: Right, so all those years that you were at the orphanage, you were there from when you were in grade three until you graduated from Catholic Central, then did you move out, or...?

MD: Well, I left, I think, when I went through the records it was December of '51 and that was when the Motherhouse was being built... [overlap] the Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse and Academy was being built, and that Sister thought, Sister Agatha again thought that, and her expression was "cut the apron strings" [laughs]. But there also the concern that there was so much construction and digging going on, that maybe something had happened in the daytime after I had gone out to work, that I would injure myself coming back home. And so it was thought that I, it was time to go.

MK: Mhmm. You were the oldest child in the orphanage for a number of years.

MD: [overlap] Yes, I would say so because I don't know of anybody else that would...was there... because as I mentioned before the older girls that I can remember which is Eileen Stokes and Martha Miller and Helen Paquette, they were already gone. And they had been gone for quite some time. And as far as I know of, I was the only oldest child there in the care of the Sisters.

MK: Were there some staff then, that you remember, you said...

MD: [overlap] Oh yes, like I remember that the staff, like, Cecilia, and Mary Lou, and Annabelle, and I think her name was Katie, Katie Sullivan or something...she kind of like looked after the trays and the meals for the sick Sisters... and she would take them up. Annabelle as I remember, she looked after cleaning, doing heavy work like polishing the terrazzo hallways and that. Mary Lou Ritchie looked after the boys' dining room, or the dining room for both the boys and the girls. She would clean the floors and that. And there, Cecilia Ritchie and that was two sisters, these were really like older women, these were employees I would say of the Sisters. Cecilia looked after the little ones. I don't know if they would have started at the age of three or if they maybe, wouldn't have been one because I don't remember any one- or two- year olds. They could have been there, but I would have, maybe, put them all in the same classes as little ones that...and she looked after them and she slept in the same room as them, and in the daytime she kind of looked after them as well, and got them downstairs for their meals, and that. Sophie, I can remember her being there, she's one of Mary Lou's and Cecilia's sisters, but then

she went away so I don't know if she got married or if she just decided to leave and go out on her own, but these were older women that were working there. Then when the nursery came in, and I can't remember what year this was, but it was babies from unwed mothers, and they actually set up a nursery and here again, the older girls, now I can't say who we were, but I know I was one of them, we would go and help in that nursery. That was one of our chores that we drew, and we learned how to change the diapers and bathe the baby and feed them their bottles, and we would go up and doing that, that little bit of a job when we say, got out of school and things like that, we went and helped in the nursery.

MK: After, like when you were out going to St. Peter's and then to Sacred Heart Commercial and Catholic Central, did you have to come back and do chores still at the orphanage?

MD: No, I didn't do, 'cause, I wouldn't have the time. By the time I did my homework and that, I wouldn't have time to be doing any chores, and I would be gone, like early in the morning, because I would have to catch the bus down there, in order to be to my classes in time. So I was...I would leave the chapel for...even when Mass was on, I'd be leaving the chapel so that I could get my breakfast and get going. So the chore, the chore job would come after I had already left to go to school...

MK: [overlap] Right.

MD: ... and that, so no. No.

MK: You told me when you first got to the orphanage, that was 1941, with your brother and sister, it was not too long afterwards that you had communion and then confirmation?

MD: Mhmm.

MK: But your younger sister didn't have the communion, it was just you and your... sorry the confirmation...it was just you and your brother.

MD: [overlap] Yes.

MK: OK. And then after that, you told me that you lived there and there were...there was every morning when you got up it... was quite a scheduled, sort of structured day.

MD: [overlap] Oh yes, right, mhmm.

MK: Yes, can you just tell me one more time about that day? Just to remind me? Like, how a normal day would go.

MD: [overlap] Well we would...well it would start with whatever Sister was on duty that day, cause they took turns. They would come, and I would say it'd be between 5:30 and 6:00, because

they would be up earlier, they'd probably be up at 5:00 because they would get dressed and everything and down to chapel to say morning prayers, and Mass was at 7:00 sharp. So, us kids would be awakened by a Sister, and we would get up and get washed and dressed and put our bedclothes away and make our own beds, then we would help other children in our dorms to get up because they would probably be slower. They didn't want to get up [chuckle] at the time we were up, and we would have to get them up because they would have to be ready to go down for Mass and that. And then, once we had them up and ready to go, we then went in, oh, to Cecilia and the little, littler ones, and we would get them up and you would probably have to bathe them 'cause they would have wet the bed so we would've had to bathe them and dress them, then get their beds stripped and remade and still be out in the hallway to say our morning prayers before we went down to the chapel for Mass. And then we would have Mass, and the priest came from the seminary, and he would be there for 7:00 Mass, and it was generally just about a half an hour. So, we would then go down the stairs because we would have to put our hats away and then go in and have our breakfast. And then go to whatever little chore that we had drawn out of the bucket to do for that particular time, and then come down back to our, what we called, the playroom, and you might have five or ten minutes there, depending how fast you got your little chore done and what it was. And then we would have to line up and go down to the classrooms. MK: And then you'd have your classes all morning?

MD: All morning. We'd have a break just like any other school did, in the city of London, and then we would go back, finish our morning classes, and then we would come back to the classroom, I mean back to the playroom, and probably have to go back to the bathroom or something, and then line up and go down to the dining room. And then we'd have our dinner and we'd...soon as dinner was done...[?] by washing the dishes and putting them away, and then we would have to put the stools up on the tables and sweep the floors at our end, so that Mary Lou could wash the floors. They were washed every day, and then we would go back to the playroom after that was done, except the girls that were working in the nursery or in the kitchen. We would go there because there would be still work to be done. Babies would have to be changed likely, and fed, and kitchen... well, you'd be cleaning the dishes that were [used] for making the dinner, and then you would come back to the playroom, and then you'd go back down to the classroom [overlap].

MK: And you...[overlap].

MD: And you'd have classes in there. You'd have a break, and then you'd go back into your classroom again, and then you'd come out, and you'd have a short playtime then you'd be having

supper, then you'd have to wash the dishes, and set the tables, and go back to your playroom again. And then when the Sisters were finished their supper and that, your teacher and you would go back to the classroom for an hour or so...homework, so when the kids complain about today they don't know what it's like [laughs].

MK: So after you finished your homework, was it bedtime then?

MD: Well not quite, Mary the...we probably would have homework, probably until 7:00 or 7:30, I can't remember the exact times on that. But we would go back and we'd probably, you know, we might have an hour, hour and half or something, but I am pretty sure we were all in bed by 9:00. But we'd go in stages, because there would be the younger ones, like maybe six and seven, would go upstairs to bed earlier, then the older ones, and then we would go a little bit later on.

MK: Did you tell me when you came to the orphanage, there were elderly Sisters living there as well as the orphans... you had to be quiet when you played [overlap] 'cause of the elderly?

MD: [overlap] Yes, if we were outside playing particularly in the summer time, because the windows would be open, well, we couldn't be hollering, screaming and all that, because the windows being open and some of the older Sisters had already retired. You would be waking them up or disturbing their sleep and so we had to be quiet.

MK: And you said, you said that the floors had different ages of children on them, like the ground floor had the nursery, did you say?

MD: The nursery was on the first floor because that was a section that was most suitable for them. The nursery was on the first floor, the second floor was where the Sisters slept, and third floor was the girls and the female hired help, and I think maybe some of the Sisters were on our floor of the third floor as well, because they maybe didn't have room for them on the second floor. And I think most of them, it was two to a room back in those days, because I know the two Sisters that looked after the girls, they had one room by themselves on our floor. It was also the floor that had the little kids on it from three and four and five, whatever their ages were that we had to help in the mornings. And then the fourth floor was where the boys slept, and two Sisters that looked after them. Now whether there were other Sisters up there, I don't know, because I never got to the fourth floor in all the years that I was at the orphanage, and even when I left [laugh] I never got to the fourth floor – [laughs]. That was the boys, see... didn't go up there

MK: And what was the basement again? There was the...

MD: Oh, the basement was the schools, the kitchen, the Sister's dining room and the children's dining room. It was uh the children's playroom. It was also the cellar where we stored out canned fruit and that from the summer time. And it was also access to the laundry room. Through the girls' playroom

was access to the laundry room. That was where Harry, the engineer, spent his time was in there. What else was in there? Oh, and it was also the dining room for the hired help like Cecilia and Mary Lou and them. They had their dining room as well. What else was down there? I think that was about it. Oh no, there was apparently, what was that room called? It was sort of a storage room where say maybe the boxes of toilet paper were kept, soap supplies for the Sisters, well for everybody that was in the orphanage, because we all used the same soap – red carbolic soap [laughs]. Had a nice smell to it, but was it ever hard on you [laughs].

MK: I remember that soap.

MD: Yes, [laughs] and that's what your basement was.

MK: And how about the grounds outside where you played?

MD: Where played... well, the boys and girls each had their own separate playgrounds. The girls was at the back of the place we were, more on Windemere Road. Our playgrounds were out there, but we had swings and teeter-totters, not much of anything else. There was lots of room to play baseball, of course. The boys, they were at, I don't know what you'd call the east end of the building or what, but they had grounds as well. Now I don't know if they... I would think that they would have swings and teeter-totters as well, but I don't know. I know they had baseball because Frank got hit in the head. I don't if it was by a ball or somebody threw the bat [laughs], and he had... he still had the scar till this day on, on his forehead where the bat or the ball had hit him. And in the very front of the building, was a green acre like it was just all green and [pine?] trees and that's where we would have summer picnics sometimes. The Sisters would make up a picnic for us like. We would play games, and they would give us little prizes. They would make them up somehow, and I don't know where they ever got them from, but they gave us little prizes. And maybe for a treat for that day, we might have had ice cream and a soft drink, but you wouldn't have a full bottle of soft drink. That was probably a cup of some kind, and that would have been shared between two or three of you [laughs], and then, those days too, they had dixie cups or they had what was it? A roll something... it was ice cream that was only in a small cylinder maybe as about as big as your index finger and it would be put into an ice cream cone, and that was what was out there in those days. Now I don't know what's there today.

MK: what kinds of games and outdoor activities did you do there? Was there a big hill to sled on?

MD: There was anything for us to sit on.

MK: No to sled, sled on...

MD: Oh, no, you talking summer time or winter time?

MK: Winter time I guess because... [overlap].

MD: [overlap] Well, winter...

MK: There's that big hill now, so I'm wondering [overlap] did you sled?

MD: [overlap] No that wasn't there, that big at the corner of Richmond and Windemere did not exist.

MK: Oh.

MD: It did not exist. That was where the barn was, and an orchard and that was where our garden was. That hill was created afterwards, after the Motherhouse, but we did have, well, it's so hard to say, it was kind of like a sunken ground, and it had a big water fountain in it, and this was... is where the girls... we would play down there, slide down there, because it had quite a gap. But for sleighing, we did have one end we used to call it the belt line, because you came in off of Richmond Street bridge, that was the only, well the one entrance to it, but it had a belt line that went all the way around for the cars to drive, but there was an off shoot and it went down, just down the hill, and we would just go down it that way. I think it was also a field of some kind and it had trees beside it, because one year, when we were out sledding, Sister [Lidwina?] was her name, she changed it and I can't remember what her secular name was, she was going down on the sleigh with a load of little kids and Sister saw the sled was sort of coming a little too close to a tree, and she stuck her leg out and [it] got broken.

MK: Oh.

MD: And we had to get her back up. I don't know how we did it, probably on the sleigh, and we would have been all tugging and pulling because there would be several... we'd be young kids and we're pulling this adult and this big heavy sleigh... and so [there] would be several of us probably pushing and pulling to get her back up, so that she could get medical attention. Well, Sister, she was in charge of the girls I think, and we'd nicknamed her Sister Peg Leg [laughs].

MK: [laughs].

MD: Oh, dear.

MK: Did you go skating when you were...

MD: Not really, Mary, because the skates weren't there. I know there was probably maybe three or four pairs of skates and you would be on it for half an hour, then somebody else would take a turn, but there was nothing that was strictly yours. Even for myself, I think a couple of the kids had big feet like me, well you don't only have it for maybe a half an hour or so, and there really wouldn't be a skating area unless it was around this here fountain that the water would have settled in.

We might have skated around in there, or if you had some place where the ice looked like it had frozen, you'd [laughs] skate your way down there or stand still and just coast down 'cause there wasn't really skating grounds.

MK: And how about in the summer? What did you do for fun outside?

MD: It would probably...maybe just sitting around or on the teeter-totters or the swings that we would have had in the backyard. Maybe a bat and ball as we... you know, you'd bat the ball and somebody would run after it...and somebody else to take a turn up at. There wasn't much for summer time and winter time we had our games inside like pickup, oh dear, pickup sticks is it?

MK: Mhmm.

MD: Or ball and jacks. Then you'd have your jigsaw puzzles to put together, or you'd have your dolls to play with. The girls did, I don't know what the boys did. I really have no idea.

MK: 'Cause they had a separate playroom.

MD: Separate playroom and you did not associate. Yes. so I don't know what they actually did.

MK: And what about your meals? What kinds of food did you eat there at the orphanage?

MD: See, that's a hard thing that I...food meals is something I can't remember exactly what we had. I know there was always meat and potatoes and veggies and a dessert, but, and a lot. And well, in the winter time, your fruits... what we had canned in the summertime but I don't...

MK: Oh, sorry.

MD: I was going to say and the veggies would have been what we picked out of the garden that we had planted during the summer time, but to say that we had pork this day and beef that day and chicken another day or bacon, no I just know that we did have meat and potatoes and you ate what was put before you and that was the main thing. I know that during the week for breakfast we always had hot cereal, what could have meant oatmeal, or cream of wheat, or Red River, those things that I can remember. Sundays, we had dry cereal like cornflakes and that, and we had brown sugar and milk cocoa. Every day was cocoa and toast and jam. We had big tin cans of jam. It wouldn't be the same one all the time. It might be marmalade today, and strawberry tomorrow. It was always varied, but to say that we had bacon and eggs... I can't remember that, but maybe we did, but I don't remember it.

MK: Do you remember working in the garden or canning?

MD: Oh yes, always, 'cause the older girls helped to do that – prepared the fruit that would come in. You know, we'd have to peel it, and take the pits out of it, and then Sister was always there, you know, for the hot syrup and that, because you wouldn't want anybody to get burnt by that. And it was always put down in the root cellar. We always had the raspberry bushes, black currants, gooseberries,

which you don't even find anymore...it's so hard to find, but we had like all that... red currants, black currants. Sister, I'm sure Sister made jam, but I can't remember. The only Sister I remember in the kitchen was Sister Bertha, 'cause she's the only one that I can remember now. In all the years I was there, there had to be more than one [laughs] Sister in the kitchen, but she's the one that stands out.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: Along with Loretta McCarthy. Mrs. McCarthy, she worked in the kitchen with the Sisters too. That was another one that I'd forgotten. Her daughter was Angela and she was with girls quite a bit. Christmas dinners were Christmas and New Years and Little Christmas, January the 6<sup>th</sup>, and Thanksgiving seems, to me, that was always turkey with all the dressing, you know, and we had mince meat pie. I know that there was plum pudding, and I know that there was a Christmas cake, because I think one of the Sisters decorated it, and I think the one in the kitchen would have baked it too. It was tiered and it sat on a barrel or a side bureau of some kind. That would have been something used in a dining room, and it sat on there, and it was for the boys and girls, you know, could all admire it and look at it because it was so decorated for Christmas. But I can't remember when it got cut, if it got cut Christmas day, or if it was New Years day but it would [be] used up, it wouldn't be left around and that. The tables were always decorated, Christmas and New Years. They always had, I think I mentioned before, the logs with the red candles in it and white table cloths. Christmas Easter always had the little bag of goodies for each child at each place and the goodies would be appropriate to the time of whatever day that we were celebrating. And odd, but it was a good time. Christmas, of course, you had time for your Christmas presents, and I think I mentioned that before you went up to the first floor...10:00 and Santa Claus was there to give out your Christmas presents. And I always thought Santa Claus was the priest from the seminary. but I don't know, because you never saw him after the presents were given out [laughs]. But no, I cannot say I had a bad time at the orphanage, Mary, and I can't say I was mistreated. Nothing like that you know, 'cause my circumstances were not the same as the little kids, and I think this is what's hard to try to impart, that my life with the Sisters of St. Joseph is far different from what thousands of kids that they had, that went through their hands, because of my length of time with them. Nobody was with them ten years.

MK: Yes, that's true isn't it?

MD: [overlap] Eleven years, they...you know it might've been a year or two or maybe just a few weeks or a few months... but literally, I was raised by the Sisters of St. Joseph [laugh].

MK: Yes, because the other ones would've been adopted or the parents would've come and got them back or something like that after a period.

MD: [overlap] Well, there would've been some yes, I can't say I know of anybody being adopted, Mary, but they would've gone into foster homes or as you say gone back to their parents or somebody in the family got them.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: Not necessarily adopted and that.

MK: Right.

MD: Yes.

MK: Were there, when you were there, that ten years you were there, were there babies there as well? 'Cause I remember you mentioned a nursery.

MD: [overlap] Yes, there was, there was a nursery yes.

MK: But was that right from the start or later?

MD: I think the nursery came in later, but I don't know what year, it wasn't there that I recall in '41.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: It may have been.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: But I might not have been old enough to be looking after them. I don't know, did Eileen Stokes mention anything about it maybe?

MK: [overlap] Well we, we haven't really talked about the orphanage a lot yet though.

MD: Oh, with her?

MK: Yes, no.

MD: Yes, 'cause see, I don't know how long she was there.

MK: Yes.

MD: And same way with Helen Paquette and Martha Miller, I don't know. And I don't know...

MK: Now, I had a notion that Annabelle Leed was an orphan who then stayed on and worked for the Sisters.

MD: [overlap] Well, see Annabelle was a full adult when I went there because...

MK: Mhmm.

MD: She could have been, I'm not sure. See, I know nothing about Annabelle, Cecilia, Sophie, Mary Lou, any of them, because they were like full-grown women, they might've been thirty or something at that time.

MK: [overlap] Oh, yes [unclear].

MD: Mhmm, 'cause yes, they were older, older and I don't know the circumstances under which they were there, but as far as I was concerned, they were secular employees but they lived right at the orphanage.

MK: Right, yes.

MD: Yes, I have no idea.

MK: So, you said that your time was good, like you have good memories?

MD: Mhmm, mhmm, yes. The only thing I think is my own personal life, like, my mother you know walking out in the summer of '41 and I find her 31 years later. My dad had us for a very short while, dropped us at the orphanage. We saw him, we made first communion, didn't see him again in all the years that we were at the orphanage. We did see him when his parents would come and I don't know what year they started to come and get the three of us in the summertime, and it would be in July just before Grandma would go to work in the, well, they called it the canning factories like Libby's and these places. They had factories and Grandma would go and work, but before she went to those factories, she and Grandpa would come get the three of us for a week or two, and at that time they were living in Chatham, right in Chatham. When we went into the orphanage, they were on a farm. So I don't know when they started taking us, and I don't know when they stopped coming to get us. Now, I'm thinking it probably was maybe in '48 when Frank went into a foster home, and Dorothy went in '49, and I left in '51. I know when, and '51 and all the time, I was going to high school, they never came.

MK: So, there were periods when you did see some of your relatives, though, during your time in the orphanage?

MD: Yes, yes. And see, and I don't know how this was arranged, I don't know if it was arranged through the Children's Aid, or if it was arranged through the Sisters.

MK: Right.

MD: I don't, and that I don't know, and my dad never talked about it either, so I have no idea.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: But we would just see him at the time that we did see him at his parents' place in Chatham. He was living and working for a cousin of his in Tillsonburg in tobacco. And he would come up like, on a Saturday afternoon, to see us and he'd be gone early Sunday morning. That was the only short time that we saw him. He was at my wedding, but it was... couldn't even find the church...couldn't walk me down the aisle... like it was chaotic. And that's... and I did see him afterwards, like 'cause I would rent a car and I would drive down to Chatham, 'cause I always knew where he was, but there was no real contact between us, you know? But then when I could rent a car and could drive, I would pick up Dorothy because she was living in London, and we would go down to see him, but there was no real, I don't know, I'd say, to this day, I say he was a father in name only.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: There was no, no thing. So, I think I missed that, and then I found my mother in '71, and she didn't really say anything to me about it, but she had mentioned to the one sister, Jeanette, whom she had taken with her when she left, that she was sorry that I had found her.

MK: Oh.

MD: Yes, so, it was just a whole different thing like when Sister Jean Moylan, that was talking to us, how she said she was talking to some girl and she just felt abandoned. I kind of... like nobody gives a hoot what happened to me.

MK: Is that how you felt?

MD: Yes, I think like, later on in life you know, I just felt like, nobody cares.

MK: How did you feel when you were at the orphanage, is that how you felt then?

MD: I...probably, but I knew that nothing could be done about it.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: So why worry about it?

MK: Did you have any Sisters who took a special interest, knowing that you were alone there?

MD: Well, you mean religious nuns? The nuns?

MK: Mhmm.

MD: Well, Sister Agatha was the only one really, because... and you know you're very leery of getting too close because you don't know how long you're going to have that Sister.

MK: Oh, yes?

MD: 'Cause they were, they might be in charge of you for one year or two years.

MK: Oh.

MD: But I was very fortunate that I had Sister Agatha all my time.

MK: All through? Through the whole ten years?

MD: Well, yes, except for say, December of '41 until say, June of '42, 'cause at '42 was when Sister Agatha came to be in charge of us, eh.

MK: Oh.

MD: So, there was... she was the only one, I don't...I'd say you didn't know it, but you always hoped that she would never leave, you know? 'Cause she was like, she was your roots.

MK: Yes.

MD: Your roots.

MK: And she sewed your graduation dress.

MD: Oh yes, you don't want to say it but I...to me, she was my mother.

MK: Mhmm.

MD: You know, no, she was good.

MK: [overlap] But I wanted to just check the places of a couple buildings too...if you...before we have to stop, have to stop in a minute. You said that the orphanage like, the former Helmuth College, you said it was on flat ground then. It wasn't up on a hill when you came later, is that right?

MD: Well it was, it was the hill but not the hill that's down there at Richmond and Windermere. That was not there.

MK: OK.

MD: But it was always, well I guess it... that, the back, well, where the smokestack is today...

MK: Uh huh.

MD: That was where the orphanage was, up at...up there.

MK: OK.

MD: [overlap] Or well, you could say, right even where the Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse is, that's where the orphanage was.

MK: Oh, OK. 'Cause I thought that they built the new Motherhouse next to the old Hellmuth College, and then they tore the old Hellmuth College down later.

MD: Mhmm.

MK: So, where was it exactly located, like in relation to where the Mount St. Joseph is now, where would it have been?

MD: You have a picture of where it was.

MK: Mhmm, yes.

MD: Yes, well the orphanage is in behind. The Motherhouse was built in front of the orphanage. The orphanage was here.

MK: OK, so it's been..

MD: [overlap] And the Motherhouse was built this way.

MK: OK, so all of it was up on a hill. They just made more of a hill?

MD: Yes.

MK: I'm confused about the hill part.

MD: Well, yes, but see the...there ...well, maybe you don't call that, what's that Richmond and Windermere, you may not call that a hill you may call that a slope or something, that was not there.

MK: Oh.

MD: That was not there. And I guess you'd have to say the hill is exactly where the Motherhouse is. If you want to call that...

MK: So it was more gradual, the incline up?

MD: [overlap] Yes, like you came in off of Richmond Street, that was the only...you only had two entrances. One was off of Windermere Road which in those days was called Concession Five, I think. And you came in off of the bridge on Richmond Street, and it's closed now, I think. It's just a gate or a walkway that's there now, but it was a road that you could go up and around. We called it the "belt line." You made a circle all around and you came right to the front door of the orphanage.

MK: Oh.

MD: Mhmm.

MK: And so that was all country around there too, so...

MD: [overlap] Yes, that was all country.

MK: That was...Windermere was the fifth concession.

MD: Yes, mhmm.

MK: OK.

MD: Yes.

MK: What was behind, like where the orphanage was, like behind there, was there farm or anything?

MD: There was houses back there, but I kind of thought that that's where Mrs. Nelles lived.

MK: Yes, I think so.

MD: But you were telling me she lived down Windermere Road which the Sisters had as sort of a retreat house. But you thought that that's where this place is now.

MK: That's what I thought.

MD: But see, I don't know, I know Spencer Hall, I think it was always down there, which was associated with the university and it was something to do with the girls or the ladies. I don't know if the Boy Scouts was down there or not.

MK: Oh. So, where we are now, you don't think this was where Mrs. Nelles lived?

MD: No, I thought she lived on the...like, right [outside], you could say outside the back door of the orphanage.

MK: [overlap] Oh.

MD: Back over there, which is, I think like a subdivision or something now.

MK: OK.

MD: And I don't know how you would find that out.

MK: No, you know I think that makes sense, Mary, because there...see what I'm still trying to figure out... there was a house that Bishop Hellmuth built called Norwood House, and then the Nelles family bought that area and they built a house and they called it Norwood Place. So maybe the house you're talking about is that house that was Norwood House, I wonder?

MD: Well, no, Norwood House, the one that they had down around St. Joseph's Hospital, that was for the boys.

MK: No, it was up here, in this area, on this land here, but oh well, we'll try to figure that out later.

MD: [overlap] Yes, I've never heard of the Norwood House.

MK: OK, so, and the other one was the Sacred Heart Convent, where was it actually located in relation to where Sacred Heart School is right now?

MD: There is, well, there is no Sacred Heart School.

MK: I know.

MD: [overlap] OK.

MK: No sorry, Catholic Central High School.

MD: Well that was the Sacred Heart Convent.

MK: So, was it exactly in that location, where Catholic Central is?

MD: [overlap] Yes, Dundas and Colborne.

MK: [overlap] OK.

MD: And Queens.

MK: So, it was right there on the corner.

MD: [overlap] Yes, yes, they had that whole corner.

MK: So, where was your Sacred Heart Commercial building?

MD: It was on Queens Avenue, in behind the Sacred Heart Convent.

MK: OK. And no, those are the two places I wanted to get the locations clear.

MD: I might have to...let's see, I don't have...

57:00/57:01 **Mary\_DeLoof[6].wav**