

Interview with Marian Carlton

November 7 2018

START OF INTERVIEW

Interviewer (I): Alright, Peter Anderson here, with an interview for *Woman's Work is Never Done*, for the Marquette Historical Society, with Marian Carlton. Now Marian can you state your name and spelling?

Marian Carlton (MC): Sure, Marian: M-A-R-I-A-N. Carlton: C-A-R-L-T-O-N.

I: Alright, what is your birthday?

MC: 7-1-37.

I: And where were you born?

MC: Marquette.

I: Is Marquette where you spent most of your childhood?

MC: Yes.

I: Okay. What- What brought your family to the Upper Peninsula?

MC: My father was an Episcopal Priest, and he had recently graduated from seminary, Eastern Theological Seminary, which is a part of Harvard, out on the Eastern Seaboard, and he was called, as we referred to it in our Episcopal church, to be the dean of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, here in Marquette. Only in those days it was the cathedral of the diocese, so my dad was really the dean of the cathedral, okay, and that's what brought my parents here.

I: Okay. So, take me through your childhood and your teenage years. What kind of work did you do, or how did you have fun?

MC: Oh [Laughs], okay. We had lots of fun. This was during the polio epidemic we were young children, and Marquette was...besieged with kids who had polio, and we needed iron lungs, and one of the members of our church, Max Reynolds, and some friends, put together how to make iron lungs out of vacuum cleaner motors, and they supplied the old St. Luke's Hospital with iron lungs. Well the parents in this community were just paranoid about their kids picking up this polio, so we spent our summers on the beach, the person who had been the rector previously at St. Paul's gave my father the key to their camp out at Middle Island Point, and every summer we would go to Middle Island and spend the summer there. My dad would bring the bus from Presque Isle. He'd walk across First Beach get to Presque Isle, and then bring the bus in to work, so it worked out great for us kids. We had the run of the beach, and that was our joy, that was our fun, that was the thing we loved most, yeah.

I: What- I guess you already had said your father was a...the director at the-

MC: No, he was the dean of the cathedral.

I: The dean of the cathedral-

MC: Yeah.

I: What was your family life like?

MC: 'Course very church centered.

I: Yeah.

MC: We were all- did things to help. Nobody had a copy machine in those days, you had a mimeograph machine, [Laughs] and at a very young age, my sisters and I, knew how to toss the papers between the wet ink of the bulletins and what-not, we learned how to fold them. We learned how to count pennies into stacks of ten when we were doing our late box offerings, and the children during Lent would put a penny in every time they thought of something they were giving thanks for, you know, that kind of thing. We did a lot of those kinds of things at the church, okay. We sang in the choirs, the junior choirs, and if it was really bad weather, and my mother was really frustrated, my father would allow us to go in the church, and play church [Laughs] okay. So we did that a lot too, we had a lot of fun. My dad built us a play-yard in our backyard, and there was a park, Williams Street Park, nearby, which they always flooded in the winter for skating, but in the summer there were tennis courts, okay, and they always had a crafts program. The city in those days provided craft teachers at all the parks to be there with the kids, and teach us different things about handy-crafts, so yeah.

I: When you were- You already answered what your father was doing, I think you mentioned what your mother did, but what-

MC: Oh, she was a Latin-English teacher.

I: Okay.

MC: She was proficient in music, and piano, and in organ, and- though she didn't play for the church, we had an organist that did that, and did that job- but we often went to sleep at night listening to her doing the Chopin waltzes and the polonaises, and we had- we had an entire children's library of books about all the composers, and each composer had its own book, and we loved those stories, you know? Heiden had a very interesting childhood, things like that, I remember those things, yeah.

I: Now, comparing your life, and your younger years, and to being a young adult, and when I- we- we sort of received some information on who we would be interviewing, found out you, you know, got an education and got married, had kids, and- to you and today, through that time period, how have you seen a mother's work change over time?

MC: [Laughs] My. When I first started raising my family most moms stayed at home, okay? When I got to the time where all my kids were in school, I had four boys, then I thought I'd look for work, and I was degreed in secondary education, home economics, with a fabrics and tailoring blend, and a social work and psychology blend, as minors in those days. You could have two or three minors if you wanted, and so that's what I did. I loved the junior high age kids, and I found out that this public school had one half-time opening for a teacher in the home economics venue and area at the school, and they had, I think it was something like 87 applicants for the job! [Laughs during last part] So being the old lady of the crowd, I, you know, I thought this is ridiculous, I can play this game all my life, so I went back to Northern, and I started a master's program. I never finished it, I ran out of money to get the complete master's, but I took enough classes to get a strong social work blend, and as it turned out I became a social worker in a nursing home up in Ishpeming, Mather Nursing Center, and I was there about a year, and I was offered the job as the social work director at Bell Memorial Hospital. So I took that job, and the hospital was having financial troubles, as all community based hospitals were in those years. It was a lively time because we were just coming in to what the state referred to as cons. C-O-Ns, and that meant a certificate of need. If you wanted to start, like an oncology unit, we already had one at Bell but we were the first one in the area, you had to submit to the state paperwork, and validate, and get a certificate of need before the state would approve you to have that particular practice in your hospital. It was very complicated and there was a great deal of competition between the Bell Memorial Hospital and the Marquette General Hospital at that time. Well, in those days maybe it was still St. Luke's, I'm not sure. But eventually it

became Marquette General. They blended with the old St. Marie's Hospital and became one hospital. Yeah, yeah. That's what I did, and I spent most of my working career as a hospital social worker. Okay?

I: So, to build on that, you were never- clearly you never shied away from working while you were a mother-

MC: Oh, no.

I: It was-

MC: Availability.

I: Yeah, yeah I guess so. Okay.

MC: And what was I trained for? You know, you have to- One thing I found, I know it was quite a jolt when I realized it. When I started taking all those classes with the sciences, and things like that, trying to blend into a master's, my original goal was to become a master's in nursing, okay, but that didn't pan out, but one thing I did do was learn the language of the hospital. Every job in life that you may take, whether it's parenting, whether it's, you know, running a business, no matter what it is, requires its own language, and it's like visiting a foreign country, [Laughs] and I was so glad I had that under my belt before I started hospital social work, yeah. Yeah, it helped me a lot, so...

I: So after your children grew up to the point where you didn't have to, you know, they had just moved out, and-

MC: Yeah.

I: You were starting to be on your own a little bit more. When you got to reflect, how did you see, like, the work that you did compared to maybe today, when you see mothers doing what they're doing, day to day? What's the- Do you see a major difference, or what are some, if any, differences that you see?

MC: I- I hear a lot of mothers nowadays, through church friends and whatnot, talk about that, you know, find what makes you happy in life and try and make a living at it. That may be true. I don't know, but for me, the social work provided me the opportunity to express a basic philosophy of life through my work, and that is a privilege. Yeah, and you carry that with you every day, you work with it every day, you know, trying to keep in mind always, what you need to do, is it really necessary? Is it kind? Okay, and does it meet the need, and is it compassionate? And if those criteria are there then fly, you know? You can fly with it. But, I think, a lot of times, I don't know it's happened to me a couple of times in different job situations, I was required to do things that I didn't feel were part of my philosophy of life, if you will. [Laughs while saying last part] Maybe I relied too much on that, I don't know. That's for history to tell, you know, some day. But, as far as I know I had a very successful career, I never made any money. When you work with people you don't make money, when you work with things you're more likely to make money in this life, and that was one of the things that really bothered me, you know? My parents raised me to think that it wasn't how much money you had, or you know, it wasn't the color of your skin, it wasn't, you know, any of those things, it was the joy you had in your soul and your heart with what you were doing, that determined the kind of human being you were, okay? So that was kind of an interesting transition in my life. When I came to realize all of those things. Mostly in my forties, all those things come around. You know, at least for me. I was a late learner I guess. [Laughs]

I: So, when- Talking about just being a mother, what- what- how- what was your perspective on being a mother, like, as you seen it, what was, what was a mother's job, you know? What was, what was, her to do?

MC: You gotta do what you gotta do.

I: Okay.

MC: Okay. And I was very, very, fussy. About my children's health, okay, about their nutrition, about all those kinds of things. I taught them all to cook at a young age. Healthy stuff, you know? We always had a bowl of fresh fruit on a table for 'em. Where did I store the dental floss? Okay, my kids still tease me about this, I always had three or four packages of dental floss on different tables in the living room, and while they were watching TV they'd grab that floss, and, you know, do their thing. Yeah, yeah, I was very attentive to that, and I felt that as a real responsibility. I wanted my floors clean, you know? Sometimes I think, oh gosh did I spend so much times scrubbing floors, or may be playing games with the kids? But I wanted to have a creative home, so we always had a big round oak puzzle table, where we did jigsaw puzzles together, and I was amazed, my kids friends would come in, even if one of my boys wasn't home, they'd kinda "Can we work on the puzzle?", you know? And so that kind of creativity I tried to do in the halls, but there was a lot to do, and you don't say no, you know, because you want at least to put forth the effort that you're doing good by them, you know? And that was, by far, the most important job I ever had, and the hardest, okay? I don't know if that answers your question.

I: No, it does, it does, just the context, how you spoke, I can see what your perspective of what a mother is-

MC: Yeah.

I: Just by what you were saying, it was that important of a job, I get totally what you were saying.

MC: Yeah.

I: From being a wife, to then a mother, and then a single mother, what- how did you see- What kind of parenting had to change? Like, how did your parenting have to change?

MC: It changed a lot. It took me a while to realize that my sons, somewhere or another, got the idea in their head that just because their father and I weren't together, we weren't a family anymore, and I had to rebuild that. And that's a key, I think, for parents who get divorced. My- Unfortunately my ex-husband did not have very much of an interest in visitation or- though I offered it, you know, to him, you know, any time you want to see the children, or- just give me a day notice, I'll have 'em all ready, and you can pick 'em up. You know, but his version of a [Laughs] visitation was, pick 'em up at 5 o'clock, take 'em to Burger King, and buy 'em a burger, and have 'em home by 5:30. [Laughs] You know? So, that kinda, you know, and I'm not talking bad about him, it's just who he was. He was not interested, and it took me a long time to get that through my head, you know? But, yeah, the kids had a hard time with the divorce, especially my seventh grader, my third son was in seventh grade when we got divorced, and he had a hard time with it. He kept trying to maneuver things so that his father and I would have to talk to each other. [Laughs] You know, I think his goal was to, you know, recreate the family, you know? Save his father, and recreate the family. At one point he wanted to move to where his dad lived, and I said okay, and I went down to the court, got the right papers, and all that, and when it came down to it, it never happened because my ex didn't want it, okay. And, so- But we owned our own business in the community, and they- it was called the Geulff Laundry and Dry Cleaners, down on Genesee and Champion's Street, on the corner there. Used to be a really nice laundromat, but it got let go, and it wasn't kept up, like we kept it up when I was working there all the time, you know? So, yeah, yeah, it was tough on the kids, it was really tough.

I: Was their anything that you tried to do just with the work and other things to make sure it wasn't so hard, because clearly you were the one who was carrying- taking care of them-

MC: Oh yeah.

I: -primarily, you know?

MC: That seventh grade year was the year that that son that was having such a hard time with it all, he was going to confirmation classes, and I went and talked to our priest at the church at the time, Bill Greer, and I said Bill, I said, I could use some help, you know. In pointing out for certain things for kids, you know? At some point they have to accept the inevitability of certain things, you know, I can't change it, [Laughs] and were it in my power to make that child happy I would have, but he had to work it out for himself, there's some things you have to trust your kids to work out on their own, and- not things that aren't safe, you know, like going in the street, or something dumb like that, but, you know, just understandings, and Bill did help a lot, he had a talk with the boys. Oh my goodness. It's thick rain [I and MC laugh]. How are you going to translate that?

I: November 7th in Marquette-

MC: November 7th in Marquette. [Laughs] I'm sorry.

I: No, that's all right, I, I knew we were gonna get snow eventually. Anyway, so, now, now, transitioning over to the laundromat, a little bit more, just generally speaking, what was work like at the laundromat?

MC: Oh, it was hard. It was hard, I mean it was lots of hard physical work, and I'd prided myself on being able to keep it clean, so that women came in with their baby's clothing would feel safe putting it into a clean machine, okay. We had two employees who helped us do that. Both of them were very good, very nice people. We were lucky to have them, and I appreciated them, and we tried to show that at Christmas time, with bonuses, and, you know, stuff like that, for them. It's probably the easiest way to show someone you appreciate something they've been doing all year, is to give 'em a, you know, a healthy bonus at a holiday time, or something like that, and I thought that was important. I don't know. It was a lot of physical labor, a lot of cleaning, scrubbing floors, mopping floors, filling soap machines, because we had a machine that dispensed soap for a quarter, you know, filling the coin changer machine, we had like a \$500 revolving fund of coin, that had to be transferred every day, bills taken out, taken to the bank, blah, blah, blah, blah, so we had all of that kind of thing to work out. I worked on running the dry-cleaning machines, we did dry cleaning by the pound, and people liked that service a great deal. Their nicer sweaters, and things like that. We were so careful with them, we brushed, and brushed, and brushed, till your arms would ache, you know? But, it was very hard work, physical work, okay.

I: Was it a 24/7 one?

MC: No.

I: Okay.

MC: We closed at 11:00 at night. That was it. Yeah. But we opened- When I would go down to plow in the winters, I would go down around five in the morning, and by 6:00 the door was open, but then I'd go home and get the kids up, and get them ready for school, you know. I was kinda like, you know with my husband at that time, If you're not gonna do it somebodies got to do it, and make it right, okay. You can't just let it go to hell, and so I didn't let it go to hell. I tried to keep it up, yeah.

I: Now, of course, technology has changed a lot-

MC: Oh my goodness, yes.

I:-but, in context of the interview, what was the technology like in the laundromat?

[MC and I laugh]

MC: Well, the coin machine had an eye on it which identified the dollar bill, because it would only take one dollar bills, now they take fives, tens, twenties, whatever, but back in those days, just the ones. Well some smart aleck figured out how to Xerox, because that was the big thing back then, a dollar bill, and they wiped out our change machine one night.

I: Okay.

MC: They had 500 paper one dollar bills, put 'em in, and the electric eye was set too light, and we didn't know it, of course how would you, unless somebody ripped you off 500 bucks, you know? So, and I didn't know that was a federal felony, to do something like that, [Laughing] so we had the FBI down there, we had all kinds of stuff going on. They were fingerprinting the machine, and all that stuff. So, yeah that was very interesting, but that was probably the extent of our technology outside of timers on the washing machines and dryers. We had to keep close track of the dryers, you don't want any of them getting too hot, but you want it, if a customer sets it at medium, to be medium, you don't want it flashing hot, and, you know, maybe melting something they didn't want melted, okay. That kind of technology, more mechanical- What did they use to call that? I can't think of the name- Physics! Physics kinds of things, okay, and timers, buttons, you know, that kind of thing, and then the dry cleaning machines. I didn't know how to backwash them, but my husband did, and he would do that every morning for us, he would come down, and get the- and what that meant was that it cleaned the lint and the solvent, okay? So, it's kind of interesting, yeah.

I: Did- In some studies that we've done in my class, or our teachers told us at least, because he's of course older than me [MC laughs], he said that, and he has more experience studying history, he said that miners weren't allowed in laundromats, because of the dirt, and the soot, and all that-

MC: Ahh...

I: It was just- It would ruin washing and drying machines-

MC: That's right.

I: What- what-

MC: How did we handle that?

I: Yeah, yeah.

MC: Okay, what we did was we built a bank, what's called a bank, which is a raised cement area with the proper drain, and we had three medium sized machines specifically set up for mining clothes. You may use these three machines, and we dropped the price way back on those machines, so it wasn't real expensive for the miner's wives to use those, okay? And, nowadays I know miners make three figures, and plus, okay, but back in those days they didn't, and the USW- the United Steel Workers came in, and started representing them, that's when their wages got better, you know? But, yeah, that's how we handled that situation, we provided a place for it.

I: Yeah, that's smart. What- Did you have any regular customers at the laundromat? Any- What kind of customers did you serve? Was it mostly mothers, or...?

MC: Yes. Neighbors. Neighborhood. Lots of neighborhood women would come in, and a lot of times they would say "We're gonna get a washing machine". I said "Good for you! You'll find it so convenient." You know to have it at home. I had four kids I was doing laundry for, and all the bedding, and towels, and all that kind of thing that is attendant to that, and I was hauling all my wash down to the laundromat to do it, because we didn't have a washing machine or a dryer in our own house [Laughs], you know? Which frustrated me. [Laughs] It's like the cobbler's kids without any shoes. [Laughs]

I: So... You were working around the clock at the laundromat, working around the clock as a mother. What were the biggest hardships you faced while trying to pull that off? And I guess maybe progressing into being a single mother what were those bigger hardships that you faced, trying to balance that?

MC: A lot of times not knowing where I should be, okay...and if I was working, say, and the phone would ring down at the laundromat, and one of the kids was upset about something, because their Dad

wasn't there, okay, and so I would have to drop everything and go home. Those interruptions to the schedule and whatnot- and that was the thing that bothered me most about social work in the hospitals. I went to a workshop once, and they said "What- If you had to describe your job at the hospital what is it?" I said "To manage interruptions" Simple, one word: interruptions. Interruptions to the patient getting well. Interruptions to whether or not they had the durable medical equipment at home, and maybe we needed to arrange for it. Interruptions to the nursing service, maybe we had to get a home healthcare agency in there. All those interruptions to their well-being, okay, was what I was supposed to do, and if I did it right then the patient, we could cut down on the length of stay the patient was in the hospital, but when I first started doing hospital social work it was a payed for service. Blue Cross, Medicare, all that, they payed the hospital what it costs the hospital to provide a service; a blood test, an X-ray, whatever, okay, and it would be billed out as such. Then they went into what's called the diagnosis related groups, the DRGs, Which means that the hospital gets so much money for an appendectomy, okay. Doesn't matter if they stay a day or fifteen days, this is all you get folks, okay, and that was a huge adjustment for all the hospitals, and many community hospitals went under during that time. So...yeah, yeah, I would say that's...I don't know how else to put it I guess.

I: No, no, I got you, I get...You already said when talking about your perspective on a mother, "you gotta do what you gotta do"

MC: Yeah, absolutely.

I: So, my next question was gonna be what sort of solutions or changes did you make to accommodate these hardships? "You gotta do what you gotta do"

MC: Yep, you gotta do what you gotta do.

I: Yeah, I guess I can assume what you... Yeah that makes sense. I guess there- Would you say there was a lot, just, like, there was no planning to it, there was just a lot of "you gotta..." as-

MC: Be present.

I: Yeah, yeah.

MC: Be present, you know? And when your child is talking to you, please look 'em in the eye. Teach him how to do that. He will have a lot more respect in the world, if you do. One of my boys has three sons (He lives down in Florida), and I know those boys would go up to him in their teen years and say "Dad can we do this, or can we have that" or whatever it is, you know? And he'd say "Quick, give me three reasons why." And if they didn't have their three reasons, bing, bing, bing, go think about it, okay, and I think that- Think on your feet, you know. Try and get creative with your solutions, and try to turn a solution into a learning experience, if you can. Sometimes you can't, it's too disastrous. Okay.

I: So, you went back to school. You went to get your master's.

MC: Yeah I did. [Laughs]

I: What did that- I mean- What did that do to your life, you know? It must have...

MC: That was fun. It was! You know, here I was forty years old, and I was in these classrooms with all these young kids, you know? And I was amazed! I had such a good time, and like I said I learned the language of the hospital, and that was so important to me, but I also learned the language of these young people coming up, and it renewed my faith in them, okay? Because I was getting a lot of, kinda old people feedback about, you know, this younger generation stuff, you know? It's not true! Open your eyes, look and see, you know. Be objective. But anyway, yeah it changed my life a lot. I used to memorize the muscles of the body as I was walking from my home over on the east side to Northern Michigan University, because I didn't have enough money to put gas in my old Toyota car, to get out to the campus,

okay. So I walked it. But it gave me- It gave me a blessing. The blessing was I learned all those muscles in the body real quick, [Laughing] you know? It was funny, yeah. I wanted to get good grades. That was really important to me, that, you know, get really good grades.

I: So, I mean, it's tough in the moment to really appreciate what you're doing, but, I mean, you were- you ran a business, you had four boys to take care of, and being from a family where I am only- I am one of four boys, I know it wasn't easy on my mom (plus three girls), but four boys are four boys.

MC: That's a full handful.

I: Yeah, four boys is tough, and then your very proactive just worker, and mother. What kind of example, do you think now looking back, did you set for other women, and or even they didn't see it then, if they heard what you had to do, what kind of example do you think you provided?

MC: I'm not sure. I- I think sometimes... Here's an example: when my son's graduating class from high school was celebrating their 25th year, or something like that, they sent out this form, like, something like that I guess, and asked them to fill it out and turn it in, because they were putting together a notebook with a current picture, and blah, blah, blah. Well, I never got to see the notebook. I never knew what was in it, okay? But one of the questions was "What was the major influence on your life as you were going through high school? Was it a teacher? Was it a parent? You know, what was it?" And my son, I found out a few years ago when I saw that notebook quite by accident, that paper, he had written "without a doubt my mother" And I thought holy smokes I never knew he was getting it that much, you know? So, just the fact that one of them felt that way about it was very encouraging to me, and made me feel good. I hope, I mean I used to go to the nursing classes at Northern, and do a guest lecture on hospital social work several times a year, because the kids weren't getting any instruction in hospital social work. They were getting instruction in state department social work, but not the hospital end of it, and so I used to go and do that, so maybe that provides insight, okay. But for me to judge that, I don't know how to do that I guess, and...if it did help someone, yay. If it didn't, oh well. You know, I didn't know, I couldn't help it. [Laughs] Oh my goodness.

I: So you- There's a little [Unintelligible] there wasn't a big difference, a lot of people go back to school later in life, but-

MC: Oh yeah.

I: How did school change? How did just the school environment change from when you first went to college to when you went back to college? What were the differences? I'm sure there were a few.

MC: Oh, many. Many. The biggest one was the informality, you know, of the classrooms, or the lecture hall, whatever it was. And students were absolutely free to kinda speak up and ask a question, and whatever, and I thought that was really cool, and they would get together in little pods, you know, and discuss what we had been learning that day, or go to the cafeteria in groups, and I just found that very exciting. That part of it. I made some nice friends. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I think that was the important part of it, the people. Yeah.

I: And I like how you talked about the younger age, and listening to them. I-I-I-I enjoy that you said that, just because that I think that says a lot about it, you know? You got to experience at- Forty you said it was?

MC: Yeah, around forty.

I: Yeah, so you got to experience that, what a lot of people only, and if only, they go to school at like twenty, and they don't get to go at a certain period of time then go back-

MC: Do a redo [Laughs]

I: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so I think that's really neat. You said social work, what you appreciate about it was living that philosophy of life-

MC: Through your work.

I: Yeah. Is- What did- Is that what you saw in social work before you went to school? Back before- Before you went to school for it?

MC: Mhm, yeah, and actually, you know, through my church affiliation I was doing social work [Laughs] all that time, and I didn't know it, you know? So, when you serve on a committee or whatever, or you agreed to do something, your word has to mean something, and if you say you're gonna do something, by golly do it! Don't let people down, and I felt that very keenly. I didn't want to be known as the one who didn't follow through on a commitment, okay? If I was gonna make the commitment then I had to mean it, I had to stand up for it, okay?

I: What did you feel was the perception of you going back to school? You know, in my eyes it's very admirable of all- Like I said a million times, you had a business, you had kids. What did you feel- When people saw a forty something year old woman walking into a nursing class, you know?

MC: That was interesting, and by that time I wasn't involved in the laundry anymore, my husband was supposed to be taking care of that, so I was preparing for employment was really what I was doing. The...I'm just thinking here now. The kids, how they perceived me I think, I think it was very guarded at first, and for good reason. "Oh is she going to say something to the prof?" or, you know, "What's going on, why is this lady here?" you know. But then gradually through the semester as I would get to know a few of 'em, or we would go and have coffee, or something like that, or I'd bring 'em baked goods for coffee, or something like that, and then they let their guard down a little bit and became more real, and I was very impressed, very impressed. I imagine they have all changed a lot too, over the years, you know, and maybe some of them now are going back to school at age forty to pursue a further degree, or to, you know, enhance their own employment, you know, because you have to have these continuing education units, CEUs, and all these kinds of things nowadays, and number one they're not cheap, okay, and a master's degree is not cheap. Oh god, what was I paying, it was over \$100 a semester hour for, you know, just to sign up for the class. So if you had a three hour anatomy/physiology class- though they taught them separately in the nursing department, one semester you got anatomy, then the next semester you got the physiology, things like that, yeah.

I: Before- Before you had went back to school, I don't know, was it in your mind that you were going to go back to school eventually?

MC: No, no.

I: Okay, it was kind of just-

MC: Just employment related. I was looking for work, and I knew that if I wanted to get a halfway decent job [Laughing], okay, that was some kind of benefits for me- My kids were covered by their dad's insurance, but course I wasn't at that point, so I needed to make sure that, you know, I had some kind of insurance to fall- health insurance I meant- to fall back on, okay, yeah.

I: What did you think of people that went back to- before you thought you were gonna go back, so what'd you think of people who went back to school? Did you think well that's a great idea, or...?

MC: Yeah, I'm trying to think. There was another lady in our neighborhood that did that, before I did.

I: Was it very common?

MC: Not very common, but it was common enough where you'd see grey hair on the campus, and you'd know that probably that that was someone who was coming back to do better things, or whatever, you

know? My kids always laughed, my boys did, they said “Jeez mom, we’ll be graduating from college together, you for the second time us for the first time”. [MC and I laugh] That’s okay.

I: I kind of have a later laundromat question, but before it’s too late, what did it mean to run a laundromat when- around the time when you were running the laundromat? Was it- Was it a higher end business venture? What type of...?

MC: Middle, middle.

I: Okay.

MC: Middle, yeah. If you’re thinking of income and things like that. It provided a fairly, fairly good income for us, but, you know, it seemed like somebody always needed a pair of shoes or a winter jacket, you know, things like that, and my parents helped out as they could. One day Tommy was, that’s one of my boys, was out shoveling snow for his grandfather, and he and my mother realized that his jacket was much too small for him, and nothing would do but they through him in the car, and took him over to the sports shop, and bought him a brand new winter jacket, you know? So I had help with specific things like that from time to time, and I was so grateful, yeah, so grateful for that, yeah, yeah. Because my dad never made a pile of money either, being a priest, you know? So...yeah.

I: So, as I read about the little blurb of information I had about you I learned that you started learning about quilting and embroidering [MC laughs], so I thought that was pretty cool as someone who comes from a craftier family I know that that’s a- I think it’s a very timeless pastime, you know?

MC: It is.

I: Like, it has always been around. What kind of solace did that kind of bring you?

MC: Oh, all kinds of it. You know, it’s a- I don’t know, I wanted to learn it and I couldn’t afford the classes, so I learned by the seat of my pants, okay? I thought okay this quilt looks like this let’s see what I can do with that. My son in Florida is an orthodontist, he has- all of his offices are decorated with my quilts. That’s how he decorates his offices. The first quilt I ever did I entered in a county fair, down at Florida, and I took second place, so I was very pleased with that, and I thought okay. Well then they started offering this class in what was called Brazilian embroidery, and it’s a kind of embroidery that uses all rayon yarns, all of a different twist, and each twist has a different name to it, and they teach you how to use the twist to make the flowers look 3D. It’s fascinating, it’s fascinating. One of the ladies in our class, her husband got so frustrated he said he was gonna sue the Brazilian embroidery company for alienation of affection [Laughing], because his wife would stay up late at night working on her embroidery. Finally one day he picked it all up and he locked it in the trunk of the cupboard. [MC and I laugh] And he said “You can’t have your embroidery tonight, we’re having a date tonight!” I just thought that was so funny, she was a hoot, yeah.

I: So have you spent an extended period of time in Florida at all, or...?

MC: I was there ten years.

I: Okay.

MC: My son’s wife had died, and so he called me and he says, and he had a little boy at that time, and he was only like three or four, and he just finished orthodontic school, and- ‘cause you have to go four more years after your general dentistry degree, so then he finished that and he was offered a practice to purchase in Sebring, Florida, and he said “I don’t know how to handle little Steven” he said “I don’t know who I can trust, but I want somebody to come to our home, you know, my home, and take care of him there, and then maybe get him in a little daycare at the local church, you know part of the day for two or three hours. Just so he gets some socialization” you know? So he says “Mom would you come down here

and be my resident granny nanny?" [Laughs] I said "Yeah, I'll do that" I said "But there's only one caveat" and he said "What's that?" and I said "I get to run the thermostat" You know because it can get so hot down there, oh my god. It's terrible, but I didn't like Florida, but eventually he, he married again and he- she brought two steps into the family so they had three boys, and so, yeah. And I stayed and helped as much as I could, and then I figured I think my son is gonna stay married a lot longer if I get out of here [Laughs]. I wanted to go back to Marquette, so he helped me do that, yeah.

I: Did you bring any sort of parenting methods, or anything? Did you just- Were you- Did you treat your grandson as you treated your sons, or did you-

MC: No, it was very different.

I: Okay.

MC: Yeah, it was very interesting. I wasn't so uptight about it all. You know I was more relaxed, and I was so grateful that I had a chance to kind of do it again, you know, a do-over, and I was more patient with him...yeah, yeah, and when the other two came into the situation it was...I didn't have quite as much patience. It's easy with one, as your mother will attest to I'm sure, [I Laughs] but- but when you have three or four pulling at ya all at the same time, that's a different story, yeah, yeah.

I: So did you think- do you think it helps you to be a little bit more that you're a grandmother?

MC: Oh yeah. Yeah. I was into the granny mode then.

I: The cool grandmother? [Laughs]

MC: Yeah they all called me granny. That's okay I didn't mind that at all. So, yeah. Good kids, all of them.

I: So, for the end here just a question that dates back quite a while, in 1963 there was an author by the name of Betty Friedan.

MC: Friedan...oh yeah! Yeah.

I: She wrote *The Feminine Mystique*.

MC: Yes.

I: It was- It was, I don't know how long it was, I just know it was more or less like a...about a suburban wife's lifestyle, and freeing them up from- She- She- I think she more or less put it as they're almost like a prisoner in that lifestyle, and they're living this robotic lifestyle. Did- I just wanted to know, did you hear about this, when you were younger?

MC: No.

I: You didn't hear about this?

MC: No.

I: Okay.

MC: I've heard of her as an author, but I can't recall ever reading anything that she wrote. I was more interested in...the psychology authors that were coming out then, and there were many, and *The Seat of the Soul*, by Gary Zukav. That was a wonderful book, and it opened all kinds of vistas in my heart and soul, okay. There's quite a few of those kinds of authors that I kind of followed religiously, yeah. But Betty Friedman, no I don't recall that.

I: Okay. Well I- I've asked you a ton of questions-

MC: Yeah, you have. That's interesting.

I: I don't- I don't have really anything more. Is there anything you'd like to add?

MC: I don't think so. I think that, you know, my perspective was, you know, really in a lot of ways very church based, because, you know, that was our, our neighborhood. [Laughs] So, that was fun.

I: Well that's about it.

MC: Okay.

I: For the record it is November 7th 2018. I think I forgot to say, see I hit the start. That helps for dating these. November 7th, 2018, and that's all.

MC: I think it's the people you meet, and how you interact with them, that determines your life in a lot of ways, okay? And...I think young people have aced that, because there seems to be a growing, growing, group of young people in this world today that have empathy, and understanding, and things like that. Way above what we see in some of the older adults, okay. And I'm gratified. I think that's good. So, good luck with your chosen fields!

I: Thank you.

MC: It's going to be interesting for you.

I: No, yeah. I kind of have a- more of a- more of a concentration on-

END OF RECORDING