ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT*

The purpose of the contributions of Cadet Nurses Project is to gather and preserve historical information by means of the tape-recorded interview. Tape recordings and transcripts resulting from such interviews will become part of the University Archives, Arizona State University as The Joyce Finch Collection. This material will be available for historical and other academic research by scholars, students and members of the family of the interviewee, regulated according to the restrictions placed on its use by the interviewee. Arizona State University, College of Nursing is assigned rights, title, and interest to the interviews unless otherwise specified below.

I have read the above and voluntarily offer the information contained in these oral history research interviews. In view of the scholarly value of this research material, I hereby permit Arizona State University, College of Nursing to retain it, with any restrictions named below placed on its use.

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[Signature]
Interviewee (signature)

[Date]
4-7-87

Name of Interviewee

This is Joyce A. Finch, Ph.D. Today is April 7, 1987. I'm interviewing for the first time June Niccum at that Roosevelt Clinic Public Health Department at 1825 East Roosevelt in Phoenix, Arizona.

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JF Now, I suggested that we just follow this progression of topics [in the brochure] along as we go. One of the things; if you do need to discontinue, I do have a pause button here. So we can stop if you need to. Okay, what year did you graduate then, June?

JN I graduated from a diploma school of nursing in 1948.

JF Okay, and where was your school of nursing?

JN It was at Protestant Deaconess Hospital in Evansville, Indiana.

JF And about how large was the hospital as you recall? This can be approximate, so we can get a kind of idea.

JN I'd say 200 beds.

JF And do you remember what size your nursing class was when you entered the program?

JN I really don't remember, but there were 32 or 33 who graduated, and most everybody stayed in. It was under 40 I'm sure.

JF That was one of the things I was trying to get a sense of; if there was much attrition.

JN There were two classes a year when I was there. We had a Fall and a Spring class.

JF Which one were you in?

JN I was in the Fall. I entered in the Fall.

JF When you were in your diploma program then, did you have any affiliations, either on a college campus or in another hospital?

JN We had one class at Evansville College. It was in Microbiology. And a Chemistry class was taught by a College Chemistry professor. We affiliated in Pediatrics at Raleigh Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana.
JF: You were in the Cadet Corps for the full three years of the program.

JN: Right.

JF: Let me just ask you. Do you remember being sworn into Cadet Corps?

JN: I don't remember.

JF: There were some people who did have a very formal process. They had the uniforms and the hand raising, that whole kind of thing.

JN: No, that did not happen.

JF: One of the provisions of the Bolton Act was that the student have a senior experience in her last six months. This might be in another hospital or agency, or it might be within the hospital. So, what did you do in your last six months of nursing?

JN: I went to the Kennedy Veterans' Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

JF: How did you get there, to that particular institution?

JN: By train.

JF: Well, I don't mean it in that sense. How did you happen to arrive... Well, that's the same kind of question. Why that particular hospital, because that was not close to you.

JN: Because there were two offered at the time. There were only two of us out of all -- everybody was in the Cadet Program except two or three -- and only two of us elected to go away. I requested a hospital close, which was a Veterans' Hospital in Marion, Indiana, and I was sent to this one, to Kennedy Veterans'. That was fine. They needed somebody there I guess.

JF: Well, that was part of the provision — on the basis of need of the host hospital or agency. Okay, so you were there, and what kinds of senior experiences did you have there at that VA hospital?

JN: Do you mean were we in charge of the unit, or...

JF: Well, was it Medical, Surgical?

JN: I was on the Quadriplegic Unit, Orthopedics; Tuberculosis. Very little on Medical, but some. None in Mental Health.

JF: That's quite a mix, though.
And then what was your position. I mean, were you in charge?

A part of the time. Sometimes we were the only nurse there.

Did you have any classes for that? I would guess that you didn't have a lot of experience.

We didn't have very many classes at this point. No.

And how were you supervised at that VA?

Well, there were the Head Nurses on the floors. To be truthful, I don't remember just what process we went through.

In a way, it does sound as if they put you to work pretty much like a graduate nurse.

Yes.

I'm interested in how, if at all, the Cadet Corps made a difference in your nursing education.

I really don't see that it made any difference. The only difference was that I went away for my last six months. Now the girls that stayed at the home hospital were a little bit more in charge of units than we were. I don't know, I wasn't there so I wouldn't know. But, I don't think it made that much difference, because we did everything that everybody else did. There wasn't any difference. No distinction was made that we were Cadets.

Would you have been a nurse anyway?

Yes, because my mother... When I got to school, I was not going to be a Cadet Nurse. Everybody was in the program, and I thought I didn't want to be left out. But, no, they didn't want to take that chance. So, my parents both came down special and talked to the Administrator and everybody in the hospital to make sure of what it was for me to get in. So, no, I would have been a nurse anyway. It would have been harder because my parents didn't have all that much money. But, I would have gone, yes.

This sounds like almost a last minute decision.

Oh, it was. I went fully intending to not be in the program.

So you did finish up then...

PART OF INTERVIEW INAUDIBLE HERE.
JF What was your first job like?

JN I worked in a private hospital in Muncie, Indiana, on a Med-Surg floor. I got married before I did this. I can't remember how many months I worked there, not quite a year. Then I worked for a private doctor for a short time. Then my husband went into the Navy, and I didn't work during that time.

JF So, then after you graduated, would you say you worked about a year and a half or two years?

JN One year.

JF And then how long was it before you went back to work after your hiatus, although I suspect you were probably working at home without any money.

JN Right. In 1967 we lived in a small town in northern Indiana. There was a small hospital, community hospital, and they were very short of nurses. They asked me to come to work. My kids were getting older. I still had one at home. And I thought, "Well, it's been too long, I cannot go back to work without a refresher course." They said, "No, we'll teach you all you need to know." So, I did. I worked part-time for two years and I worked one weekend a month. That's when they started changing their program, and you had to work every other weekend. They wouldn't listen to any solutions I had for this problem, because I only worked two or three days a week. So I decided they didn't need me and I resigned.

JF When you went back, did they teach you what you needed to know?

JN Well, not really. I had to learn a lot on my own. But they were very nice. It was a nice experience. If I hadn't done that I probably would have never gone back.

JF What do you think was the biggest change in that intervening time in nursing, when you went back in?

JN Well, all the medications were different. Treatments were different. Types of surgery was different. There were a lot of things happening in those years. So, it was pretty scary, really.

JF How did you handle that?

JN Well, if I didn't know, I asked of course. If there was something I didn't know how to do, I'd just say, "Well, I'm sorry, but you'll have to have somebody else do it." I wouldn't try to do something I didn't know how to do and then get in trouble. Oh, maybe once or twice was I in
So, how long did you work at that job before you resigned?

Two years.

Two years. So that would be about 1970?

1969, probably.

So, what did you do then after you resigned? Did you stay off work?

I stayed home.

How long did you do that?

In 1972 I decided I wanted to go back to work. I was tired of staying home. So I went to Fort Wayne, Indiana to St. Joseph's Hospital and applied for a job. I chose that hospital because it was the closest to my home. It was on the edge of town, and I won't go into town. It was one of the smaller hospitals. I got the job. They needed nurses then, too.

Sure.

So, I got the job. At that job, I did have an orientation -- not extensive -- but, I did have an orientation. I worked nights for six months, and then I transferred to days on a Medical floor in Post-Coronary Care. During that time, before I went to work there, I also took a class at I.U., Purdue Extension, in Occupational Health Nursing. So, I was trying to decide what I wanted to do. I decided I really liked that, but there was too much I didn't know to do that type of nursing. Then I was at St. Joe's and I took a Coronary Care class. I used the tapes. I don't remember what other things we did. But, there were lots of different in-service things that we did.

So you were there then at St. Joseph's Hospital about how long?

A year.

And you were thinking about what you wanted to do in nursing all this time?

Well, I guess you could say that. Then we moved to Arizona. That's the reason I resigned there, just because we decided to move out here. I worked for my husband for awhile. Then I signed up with Nurses' Central Registry and I worked two nights a week. I chose nights because it was quieter on the floors, and with busy hospitals, and so forth. I took their
IV Therapy class, and another Coronary Care class, and Drug, Medications. That was part-time, and I did that for probably two years. Then I decided I wanted to go to work full-time. Of course, all the jobs were for nights to start, or PM's, and I didn't want that. So, I looked in the paper and there was this nursing home, in charge of the unit. So I applied and I got that job. I worked for a year. But during that time, I thought, "There must be something better than this." And I knew there were a lot of things I still didn't know. You don't absorb much because you work part-time. And I took a class, it was an extension class, Penny Ewen taught it. It was a Decision Making in Nursing class. That was the first class I took. And I got an A, so I talked to her and decided maybe I could go back to school. So I enrolled in Scottsdale Community College. I worked a year for this nursing home and I resigned, and enrolled at Scottsdale Community College. I guess I did that in the summer, the first class, while I was still working. I took English 101. Of course, I had nothing to count, so I had to start over. I took English 101 and I got an A. But, then, I worked hard. So, then I resigned and enrolled at Scottsdale Community full-time. Well, full-time was like 12 hours for me. I don't think I ever took 15 hours. I was there three semesters and then I transferred to ASU. I had one semester of undergraduate, you know, pre-nursing. Then I enrolled in the nursing program.

JF Now, were you working at all during this time, or were you a full-time student all the way?

JN Full-time. I was full-time, like 12 hours. But, I took Phys. Ed., and I took all the things you have to do. Then I was full-time when I was in the nursing program, until the last semester. I took two semesters. My youngest daughter had some illness, and things like that. So I did it half-time.

JF So when did you graduate?

JN In 1981.

JF So you had quite a long haul then, didn't you?

JN Well, instead of four years it was five, or four and a half. But, it took awhile.

JF Alright. So, you graduated then in 1981. Before we go on from there, let me go back and ask one question. When you first came out to Arizona you said you worked for your husband for a brief while. Is it fair to infer that that was in nursing?

JN Yes.

JF What was the nature of that work?
Oh, my husband's a Pediatrician, and I worked in his office.

About how long was "for awhile"?

Well, let's see. Probably six months, off and on. I still had a daughter at home and she was in eighth grade and then in high school.

Okay, so then after you graduated from the program at ASU with your new degree, what did you decide to do then?

Well, I didn't want to do hospital work. I knew I had to go to school if I didn't want to do that. That's one reason I went back to school. So, I applied for occupational health nursing, but when I got there I could see that job...

... position in public health nursing, what is your role? What kinds of activities do you have now?

Well, when we started out, I was at El Mirage, Arizona. I was in the clinic and in the field, because that was a small clinic, so we did both. And that was real good. I learned how a clinic operates and the field, although that field was not that extensive. So, I was there for about two years and then there was an opening down here. I asked for a transfer because I thought there would be more public health, I wouldn't be in the field. So, then I transferred down to the Roosevelt office. Then, there was more home health care. I'd had some, but not a lot. So then we had mostly home health care. Not as much public health as I thought it was going to be, because home health care took all of our time. In the past summer, it would be 1986, home health care and community health nurses -- there was a split. I requested the community health nurse and was chosen. So now I'm not doing home health care. We are mainly, supposedly, working with the community and with schools, daycare's, families, just what you think public health nursing is supposed to do. So we're gradually getting our program underway.

Now, in this period when you'd been public health, had you had any further formal or informal education activities?

Not at school. I had all the information, and if I hadn't found a job, I probably would have gone on to graduate school. But, I have a home and things, and I couldn't see doing both at the same time. I took the job and enjoyed it, so I never pursued the graduate school route. I still think about it, but I think at my age, whether I would get that much out of it. Just for my own satisfaction, that's what it would be.
But I did meet you at a Sigma Theta Tau research conference.

Oh, I've gone to a lot of conferences. I went to the Sigma Theta Tau conference in Anaheim, California where they talked about nursing theories. I thought it was so exciting. That's one time I envied all these young girls doing things like that. I think nursing could be exciting for the girls that are coming along. It could be fun to use one of those [theories] to study and use it, see how it works.

Well, I think that day may be soon upon us. Okay, then I think that brings us up to date in terms of the actual progression of your career. One of the things I ask people is, have you always wanted to stay in nursing? I realize that some of the time you were not actually working in nursing for money, but when you were working for money?

When I went back to school, I seriously thought about nutrition. I think that's an interesting field, too. But, chemistry wasn't the easiest thing for me, and I was going to have to take a lot more chemistry. I knew nursing, and I guess I didn't want to take that big a risk, I guess. So, I didn't pursue it, but I did think about it.

Well, in some ways, sometimes it's better the devil you know, than the devil you don't know.

Well, I think that's what I thought at the time.

So in some ways, it has not always been comfortable being in nursing. You thought seriously about leaving.

Yes, I guess that's true.

What's the greatest source of discomfort?

I guess I don't like crises. That's why I don't want to be in a hospital. When I was young I did, all that was exciting. Then, we did all the work. We were in Surgery and we were on call, and called during the night, all those things. That was real exciting when young, but when I got older I didn't want anything to do with Intensive Care, all those kinds of things. And I still don't really enjoy that part of it.

In the community health nursing that you're doing now, do you have anything like that? Or, is it more at a pace you would prefer?

Yes. Well, we had sick patients in home health care. We don't do as many home visits now, but we do teach new mom's how to take care of their babies, and we go out when they're fairly new, home from the hospital. We have to assess the patients. And if there's an emergency we get them into the
hospital or get care. But it's not quite the same thing. Three or four patients at the same time needing care, that kind of thing. Oh, I did work over at St. Joe's Hospital during the summer while I was in school during that last summer...

INTERVIEW INAUDIBLE HERE

JF Well, then you married, and I'm not sure how many children you had altogether.

JN Four. Four daughters.

JF And they are all out of the home now?

JN They are all out of the home.

JF Okay, to some extent I understand the juggling ...

INTERVIEW INAUDIBLE AGAIN.

JN ...I forgot about the things I had to do at home. Two days a week doesn't require any juggling.

JF But now, is there any conflict?

JN Now, I've been doing all my own work. I spend all weekend trying to do what everybody else does during the week at home. So I now have a lady who comes in every other week to do my cleaning. Otherwise, I do what I think everybody else does.

JF Well, then I come to the question, why did you work?

JN I guess because I got tired playing bridge and being on church committees, all those kinds of things which I did all through the years. I decided I'd do something else. I could do volunteer work, but volunteer people have to be committed. If you're going to do something you have to do it. So if I'm going to do that I decided I might as well have a job and get paid for it. So I don't know. I guess just for my own satisfaction. So I don't have to stay home, I guess.

JF What did you find most supportive as you were handling working and family?

JN Most supportive? I can't think of anything. Until I went back to school, my husband in the beginning didn't think I should go to work. And I didn't when the kids were little. But after I went to school and he found out that everything went smoother, and I was happier, then there was no problem. But, I still do all the those I do at home. I just can't forget that I have a home to take care of and things to do.
So this is kind of on the side?

I guess, although it's full-time. And I do some things at home.

One of the things that I did want to ask of people is if you've ever seen yourself as an innovator?

Well, I don't see myself that way, although others seem to think I am. I'm for nursing and I can see nursing being exciting and ...

... so maybe there were other things going on before in the classes before that I wasn't aware of. As I say, we were just in with all of them. The classes behind us were not, and cadet nurses... (inaudible)

Well, I want to thank you again for participating in my study, and this will conclude the interview.