

Arizona State University

College of Nursing
Tempe, Arizona 85287

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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Lucile A. Flores
Interviewee (signature)

April 17, 1987
Date

Lucile Alvaro Flores
Name of Interviewee

*Modified from: Charlton, T. L. (1981). Oral History for Texans. Austin: Texas Historical Commission. p. 64.

This is Joyce Finch, Ph.D. Today is April 17, 1987. I'm interviewing for the first time Mrs. Lucile A. Flores. This interview is taking place in the home of Mrs. Lucile A. Flores at 1030 Parkside Drive, Tempe, Arizona.

This interview is sponsored by the Arizona State University College of Nursing and the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities Council. It is part of the Contributions of Cadet Nurses Project.

JF Now, you graduated in 1945?

LF Yes. August, 1945.

JF And your school was Good Samaritan Hospital?

LF No, my school was Grace Hospital in Hutchinson, Kansas.

JF Oh. And about how large was your hospital?

LF It's about 125 beds. Small, Methodist church sponsored at that time. It isn't anymore.

JF And about how large was your class when you went into nursing?

LF My class, we had 24, and 23 of us finished.

JF And when you were in the nursing program there, did you have any affiliations?

LF Yes, we affiliated Pediatrics in St. Louis, Missouri at City Hospital, for three months.

JF Any college?

LF No, not at the time.

JF Okay. So, if you graduated in 1945 then you were not in the Cadet Corps for the full 3 years?

LF No, just 2-1/2 years. I'll retract a bit -- I had a year and a half of junior college in Hutchinson, Kansas. The junior college was affiliated with the University of Kansas, and when I transferred to ASU, all those credits were transferable.

JF Okay, that was nice. Now, one of the provisions of the Cadet Program was that the Seniors might spend the last six months of their program in another facility. Did you do that?

LF No, I did not. I believe, because of the shortage of nurses, maybe two of our classmates did go to a V.A. hospital, but

we were so short of nurses that probably that had something to do with it.

JF So, do you recall then what you did do in the last six months?

LF The last six months, I worked with the head [nurses]. Well they were called supervisors then. Now they would be either head nurse or coordinator, and I was more or less working under her. By May, before I graduated, the supervisor became very ill and I more or less stepped in. By the time I graduated, I filled her position. At the time that was supervision. I worked in that position for a year before I left.

JF After you graduated, you stepped right in, you stayed in that role?

LF Yes, a forty-bed ward, a medical unit.

JF Well, that certainly answers the question of what you did after you graduated. But in terms of that last Senior experience, I gather that you did report to the supervisor, but did you have any classes for any of the management or supervisory activities?

LF At that time, in '45 - '46, management was not a word we used. Really, you didn't hear that. But it was more or less clinical experience, on-the-job training.

JF Okay. Now, one of the questions I would like to ask you is how the Cadet Corp. made a difference in your nursing education.

LF I don't believe it made [a difference], as far as the education was concerned, because it was already set up. As far as finances were concerned, it certainly made a big difference. I think the stipend at the time was \$15 per month, which enabled us to take care of our own personal needs. We didn't have to go home and call on our parents for that. Most of our parents were not really too well off at the time.

JF Okay. And of course, you would have been a nurse anyway, because you had ...

LF I had planned to be a nurse from the time I can remember. In fact, I think I borrowed the money to go into the school. It was like \$87 or something like that, and I borrowed the money from a brother of mine. But, I would have made it through no matter what, but [the Cadet Corps] just made it a lot easier.

JF That seems to have been quite a pattern, particularly for people in your class who went in in the middle.

LF Yes.

JF Okay. So, you did say that you worked for a year, then, in your home hospital?

LF Yes, I worked almost a year, from September until the following April.

JF Okay, and you were supervisor after [graduation] -- then in April, then, what did you do?

LF In April I had a job in Tucson at Pima County Hospital, with room and board, so I moved to Tucson -- by train in those days.

JF Yes, well in those days we probably didn't have the accouterments of furniture and so much baggage.

LF Right, right.

JF Okay, so you've been in Arizona, then since ...

LF 1946. April, 1946.

JF Okay, then you worked at the Pima County Hospital.

LF I worked there from April until September of that year. Politics were a big thing in Tucson at that time. Our Director of Nurses and her assistant were fired. I was so young at the time, I didn't really enter into the politics part of it, but it was such a shock to me. I decided I didn't want any part of that politics in nursing, so I got a job at the Medical Center and I worked there for two years after that -- Tucson Medical.

JF Yes, that's what they call TMC?

LF TMC. I worked there.

JF Okay, so when you went to TMC, what kind of a position did you have?

LF I did Post Partum, night duty. And the reason I wanted to do night duty is because, when I was in nursing school, I only had two months of night duty. For what reason, I don't know. But, I decided I needed the experience working nights. It was a very, very nice experience; however, working nights did not work too well because I think I averaged two hours of sleep a night, most of the time. I could function, because I could just sleep a little bit in the evenings, but the day sleeping is not my cup of tea.

But, I enjoyed Post Partum very much, and it was during the baby boom. We had babies galore. It was a very pleasant experience.

JF Now, let me go back just a little bit. You said that you went to Tucson because your salary included board and room.

LF Yes, I think that had a lot to do with it.

JF Could you say a little bit about what those accommodations were like, because that's a new kind of thing that no one has mentioned before.

LF Oh, the accommodations are very pleasant. I speak very highly of my dormitory life. I wouldn't trade it for the world, either in nursing school ... And those years at Pima County they had a very nice nursing residence. And at Medical Center, also.

JF Oh, so you continued to have room ...

LF Yes, I recommended it very highly, and I still do. I think the experiences that you get from working closely with these ..., well they're friends now, many of them lifetime friends, I wouldn't trade them for the world.

JF Now, were these like a single room?

LF It was a single room. Sometimes you had a roommate if you so desired. Or if you desired a private room, whatever.

JF Oh, okay, so there were some choices there.

LF That's right, and your board was, of course, in the hospital cafeteria. They also had small kitchens for little snacks, like at breakfast if you didn't want to get up [and go to the cafeteria], that sort of thing.

JF Did you ever get bored with hospital food?

LF Only in St. Louis. And that was [bad], the food there at City Hospital was very, very bad. On Fridays I think it was tongue, something like that, and we'd all get diarrhea.

JF Oh, that doesn't sound like too much fun.

LF So, we lost a lot of weight. But, outside of that I think the food was like any institutional food, you can take it or leave it. You can go out and eat if you got tired of it.

JF One of the things that I was just wondering. Since you did live in somewhat of a structured area, how did you handle laundry of your uniforms?

LF Well, they always had, at the nursing school, we had facilities, washers and I don't think we had dryers in those days. But, in the basement you could hang your clothes up down there. And I think they had an outside clothesline. Pima County, I think the same thing. At Medical Center, I believe we had facilities. It's been such a long time, but I think they had a washer. So it was never really a problem. One of the hospitals, maybe it was County, Pima County, did our laundry for us. And maybe Medical Center, I don't recall, it's been so long now. But it never created a problem.

JF Well, I know in those days, the uniforms were cotton and starched, and they were hard work [to maintain].

LF Well, in the nursing program, of course, they did our uniforms and they were starched. We had to look immaculate. There was no question about it.

JF Okay. So you were, when we kind of went off on that little detour, you were talking about working in Post Partum, nights, at TMC, and I lost track of how long you ...

LF I was there from September, 1946 to February, 1948, when I had applied to ASU, or ASC then, and I had been accepted. I transferred to ASC.

JF You are the first person I have known who went to ASU when it was still Arizona State College.

LF Oh, there were quite a few of us. ASC vowed to get that university name.

JF Oh yes, I can imagine. Were there other nurses like yourself at the college at that time?

LF Yes, another nurse, B.H., I don't know where she went. She was in my classes. There were a few others, but I don't recall. That's the only person I remember who was in my class.

JF What gave you the idea of coming to Arizona State College?

LF I had worked with a friend, a medical student at Pima County. He was from Tulane. He worked that summer, it happened I was working in Surgery at Pima County emergency room. He encouraged me to go ahead and finish my degree. Another person who was behind it was my father. It's a long story, but, in 1947, I was married a week before Christmas. My husband came down from Kansas, we were married and he went back after we were married a week. He went back to finish out that year at ATJUCO which is Atchison Junior College. I started at ASC all by myself and I lived at the dormitory there too. But these two people, my father and this young medical student, were really behind my continuing

my college. In fact, my father was not too keen on my marrying at that time because he thought that if I married then, I would never get my degree. But fortunately he didn't live long enough to see me finish. I think those two people, and then my husband was quite encouraging, too.

JF Okay. So he was going to college up in Kansas and you were going to college in Tempe?

LF Yes, yes.

JF What kind of courses did you take?

LF I took all the science courses that I could take that would continue that particular program. I had a year and a half at ATJUCO, Atchison, Kansas, and then at that time I got 45 hours credit for my nursing program. The hospital apparently was accredited so I did get 45 credits. When I came to ASU I was a Junior, a first semester Junior. I came to ASU in February of '48 and I finished the summer of '49. But I had to wait until 1950 to get my paperwork. We had to go through the ceremony because they only had the one ceremony at that time.

JF Well, you mean once a year graduation?

LF Yes, graduation.

JF The three graduations really are pretty recent at this school.

LF True.

JF Okay, now you said you lived in the dorm and you went through so fast you had to be a full-time student.

LF At ASU. Yes, I enrolled as a full-time student; however, you just had to battle for the classes, so I couldn't get all the classes I wanted. I ended up taking just 13 hours that first semester. Then in September, I got all my classes, 15 hours I guess it was.

JF So, I infer that there were more students than there were classes?

LF Right, even then.

JF I had not realized that.

LF Either that or I didn't know my way around a big [campus], well, it wasn't big then, 2,700 students I think. But I managed to get some of the classes. I took some classes I really didn't want, and they turned out to be real interesting like Botany. So, all the science courses that I could take I took. In fact, Botany and I think it was

called Bacteriology or Microbiology. The professor I had then I ran into last October. He's a member of the Methodist Church in the winter. So it was really quite nice to run into him, Dr. McC. He wasn't a Ph.D then, just Mr. McC. to me.

JF Well, that's very interesting to hear some of what was going on.

LF Then I took Chemistry, College Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry, Botany, Microbiology, and I took a class that I just took because I needed the credit — Poisonous Animals of Arizona -- which turned out to be one of the most interesting classes and one of the hardest classes I've ever had. Lot of work, a lot of research. Under Dr. S. who is known world-wide for his scorpions. I collected many scorpions for him. But it was a very interesting class and very rewarding.

JF Okay, now is it fair to assume you did not work during this period?

LF I worked from February to May of '48 when I was living at the dorm on the campus at ASU. I worked at Mesa Southside Hospital it was called then, now Desert Samaritan Hospital. I worked only Saturdays and Sundays and that was just mainly to keep busy.

JF Did you have a car?

LF No, I went by bus. The bus went right by the dormitory which was Alta Hall, right there at Normal. The street is closed off now. Right in front of us there was a President's house, I think it's an alumnus house [University Archives] now. But the bus went right by and in those days, we weren't afraid of just standing on the corner waiting for a bus in the dark.

JF So you did some part-time work and then you graduated, or you finished classes in ...

LF In July of '49.

JF Then after you finished your classwork, what did you do then?

LF I took it easy for a few months. Let's see, that was July. In October or first of November of '49 I went to work at Good Samaritan Hospital as a Pediatric Supervisor. I think I also taught that one year -- Pediatrics.

JF So you were involved with the nursing school, as well as patient care, you had a dual role.

LF Yes, very much.

JF Now when you say you were Supervisor of Pediatrics ...

LF I think now it would be Coordinator or Head Nurse.

JF Now, that was a little different from what you had done before, and with the added responsibility of teaching ...

LF It was hard work, I had to work very hard. And teaching is really not for me. I don't do well in front of a class. I do better one-to-one or one-to-two. I did much better as a Clinical Supervisor or Clinical Instructor. That's my cup of tea, on-the-job teaching.

JF So how long did you have the teaching role with the nursing students?

LF Well, in that role, a year or two, because there was a young nurse who came in with a Master's degree, and of course much more qualified than I was. So I was supervising. I should say Head Nurse. I was transferred to a 40-bed medical ward which was also something that I was familiar with from my nursing school. Medical nursing is really what I enjoy.

JF So you were Head Nurse at the medical unit. How long did you do that?

LF 1950 to 1951, when I had my first child. In October of 1951, but I finished up in August to take time off before [the baby was born]. In fact, I had to get special permission to work pregnant, because in those days that wasn't heard of. I think maybe I was the first known pregnant nurse to work at Good Samaritan Hospital, with permission. In the last of October, my son was born and I didn't work until the following February of '52. Then I went to work on the evening shift as Evening Supervisor.

JF Now was that, let's see I'm not sure how to ask this. What did you supervise, like the whole hospital or a group of units, or what?

LF On the evening shift, you were responsible for the personnel, you were responsible for placing patients. You know, doctors would call you and you were more or less the Administrator.

JF For the hospital.

LF Yes.

JF How big was the hospital at that time?

LF Good Sam was about 500-bed hospital at that time.

JF Oh, it's always been a big hospital.

LF Well, maybe I'm rushing it. Maybe it was like 250 or 300 at that time. Then they started building like mad, so in no time it had increased.

JF So you were Evening Supervisor then in 1952 and you had responsibility for the whole place?

LF Right. For the evening shift.

JF Did you have to go to the drug room when things happened in the evening?

LF Oh, yes.

JF We look on that as kind of a no-no today in 1987.

LF We fought it.

JF You did.

LF Yes.

JF So you did not want to do that.

LF No. When I went on evenings, there were three supervisors. So I was not the head supervisor at the time until they moved on. But yes, that was one of the jobs we did not like. We knew that we had no business doing that. I'm very familiar with that.

JF Well, how long did you do this work then in the evening?

LF On the evening shift, about 12 years.

JF About 12 years. So that would be about '64?

LF Yes, '64.

JF So you must have seen quite a bit of change in Good Sam during those years. You did mention the expansion.

LF Yes. A lot of growth. Good Sam had a lot of in-service education. Eventually they paid for our extension courses. A lot of courses were taught right there at Good Sam. They were very, very good as far as education was concerned.

JF You mean extension, like say, ASU would come there and teach courses ...

LF Yes, teach the RN's.

JF And the hospital paid for that?

LF Yes. In fact, I have one credit from UCLA. Another supervisor and I were sent to Galeda which is near Santa Barbara. It's an extension of UCLA. I have one credit from UCLA which I'm very proud of. It's on human relationships. So, yes they were very, very good about in-service education and extension courses. All paid by Good Sam.

JF What kinds of changes were taking place in what nurses did in those days as you reflect back. I would guess that the extension had something to do with duties that you had that they wanted you to do.

LF It was so gradual that it's really hard to say when. I don't know if you remember Rosamund Gabrielson who was our Director of Nurses.

JF Yes I do.

LF Well, you know Loretta Hanner also. She was my Director of Nurses, as was Gabe we called her, who was very instrumental in the education of the nurses at Good Samaritan. As far as I can see. Really, I can say nice things about both those ladies, Loretta Hanner and Gabrielson. But as I look back now, progression was taking place all along and it was a gradual thing. We were geared, what do they call it? Functional and not managerial. Just the other day I said to somebody, Gabe taught us how to let go of the bedpan. Turn the bedpan over to someone else, in other words. Your duties are management. And that was not easy, some of those duties that we did not want to let go. This is going a little bit ahead of time. I worked a year at Stockton [California] Danron Hospital in '72 and '73. The Evening Supervisor whose place I took had been there 17 years. She loved to start IV's. Consequently, the nurses on the evening shift could not or would not start IV's because the Supervisor liked to start them. So by the time I left I really felt very accomplished -- most of those girls were starting their own IV's. But, this is what I mean by letting go and doing your management work instead of other things. That's the best way I can describe how Gabe affected my life as far as management and doing and that sort of thing.

JF Okay, that's a really fascinating insight. But let's go back. You said that you worked at Good Sam until about 1964.

LF Until 1970.

JF 1970. Okay. Well, so you worked 3 to 11 until '64.

LF Right.

JF So then your role changed. How did it change?

LF I went on days. Well, first of all my husband got Valley Fever and was very ill, so I felt that I needed to be home a little more. I went on the night shift as kind of a float person, which I'm not too good at -- floating -- and not too many nurses are. But it enabled me to be home a little more. October of '70 I went on the night shift, and 4 days a week instead of 5. So I did that until the following May. Then in May I took a leave of absence from Good Sam, well in fact, I resigned but Gabe wouldn't take my resignation so I took a leave of absence. I went to work at the Beatitudes and I worked there from May of '72 to October of '72.

JF How did you happen to do that?

LF Well, Geriatrics was always fascinating, and then, they were in need of a supervisor, I learned through one of our former Good Sam [nurses] who was then working as a clinical instructor there. And it sounded very interesting.

JF So you went in as a supervisor.

LF Yes.

JF Days?

LF Yes, Day Supervisor. By that time my husband was somewhat improved and had gone back to work part-time.

JF Okay. So you did that for a couple of years?

LF Yes. 1970 to '72, October of '72.

JF Did you have any special preparation to work specifically with the geriatric clients?

LF No, not at the time. I did take the gerontological course under Bea Steffel. I don't know if you know her or not.

JF Yes, her office is just down the hall from mine, so we visit frequently.

LF She's on the Board, also, at Friendship Village.

JF That [role] does sound familiar to me. So, you did supervisory work there. Whom did you supervise?

LF Well, mostly the staff.

JF Well, was it like the whole place or ...

LF Yes, the whole place.

JF Okay. So, did that cover skilled care or the apartments or the whole ...

LF All three levels.

JF Oh, all levels of care. That was really quite a change for you, wasn't it?

LF Well yes, it was. But it was very interesting. In fact, every phase of my nursing, I've enjoyed every bit of it. I forgot to tell you from '64 to '70 at Good Sam I worked outside of that six months on nights, they were revamping into the management. They had unit managers and we became Coordinators instead Head Nurses. I had five units. You managed five units, you ran your own little hospital within a hospital. I had Medical, mostly Medical, and the Gyne Ward, so that there were five altogether.

JF Did you have any informal or formal education for that change in, say, running your own little hospital?

LF It was so gradual that you didn't realize ... You were always in class, you were always in meetings, so it was always progressive. Nursing, as far as I can see, as far as the management part, you just kind of grew into it. But we did have a lot of management classes, with professors from ASU and, in fact, one time we were involved in a time-in-motion study thing. You look back now you see how very educational that was. It prepared you for your management ability later on. In other words, you could help your employees. This lasted about six months I think, and they had a big company from California, Hudson and Buck. So we were involved in that and many other management ... Maybe if I went through my paperwork I could find out what classes we had.

JF That's okay. It sounds like there was a kind of continual movement from one learning situation to another.

LF Yes. And Gabe was one who would tackle movement like that. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. But, you could always say you tried.

JF She seems to have, and I'm observing from the outside here, but she seemed to have a skill related to what you said about letting go. That, if it didn't work she would say, well let it go, we'll try something else, without trying to say, "Oh, it must work".

LF True. And you had a lot of leeway trying out your own methods, if you so desired. Her door was always open so if you had any ideas -- I don't care what time it was -- you always felt free to go in and discuss [them] or ask for advice, that sort of thing.

JF Alright. Let me just ask one question. Somewhat back there about 1951, I believe it was, you said you had your first

child. I infer from that there were other children, or at least one other children.

LF One other child, ten years later.

JF Okay, but you did not stay off work for long.

LF No, I stayed off with my first child, I stayed off from the last of August, he was born the 30th of October, I went back to work around the first of February of '52. He was born in '51.

JF And so it must have been similar with your second child?

LF My second child was much easier. He was born in '61 and I worked almost up [to] the time he was born, August, I think I worked up until the middle of July, or the first of July.

JF That in itself was kind of a new thing, too.

LF One other thing that I have to comment about Good Samaritan Hospital. My first child went to their nursing school, they had a nursery for the employees. This was back when no one had heard about institutions setting up nurseries for their employees. This is, I feel, how far advanced Good Samaritan was. I believe it was started by the Auxiliary. They have a terrific Auxiliary. So our first son would go to school, I'd pick him up and then drop him off at the nursery on my way to work on the evening shift. He was there, I think they fed them their evening meal. Then my husband would pick him up, he was working for Sears at the time. He would pick him up about 5:00 or 6:00, around 5:30, thereabouts. So this was one real good plus for Good Sam because they kept a lot of the nurses who otherwise wouldn't have a babysitter. And the nursery was fully accredited by the State. If the child got sick, mine fortunately never did, if they got sick while the mother was working, they would call her and, no problem. She would immediately be released to go see the child or take it home, whatever. This was really something in those days, in the 1950's.

JF Yes, that does sound very, very advanced to me.

LF Yes.

JF Okay, going back then. I think we had gotten up to about 1970, but you had said you were in Stockton, California. How did you get from Good Sam to Stockton?

LF Well, I didn't go from Good Sam. I went from Good Sam to the Beatitudes. I worked there two years. I think there comes a time in your nursing career when it's time for change, and I think I felt at Good Sam it was time I made some kind of a change in my life. You're just ready and, of course, then they didn't have a retirement program and no

benefits to leave behind. So there was nothing to keep me there as far as benefits [were] concerned, except the seniority. So it was just time for me to leave.

JF Okay. So you went to the Beatitudes and then did you go from there to Stockton?

LF I think it was a couple of months. I left in December and I had transferred my license. I had applied for licensure in California which is something -- that I had always had a thing for having a license from California because at one time, it was so hard to get. I think, from New York and California. So those were my two goals. But, I did get it, no problems. And I went to Sacramento. By this time I was pretty well geared into Geriatrics. I was really interested in it. I went to work in, they call them convalescent hospitals there in Sacramento. I only stayed there I think for five or six weeks. It was so bad, it was just so bad. And I was Director of Nurses there. Name it -- cockroaches, mice, terrible care. In five weeks, I knew I just couldn't begin to change things. The owner was strictly for money. But before it was all over, he was not granted a license the following year until he complied with some of the cleanup things. The directors [of nursing] had not stayed there over maybe a month, two months.

JF It sounds pretty awful.

LF It was bad. For me to leave a job at the end of five weeks, it had to be very bad. I saw that I just couldn't ... it was just like banging your head against a brick wall. It just wasn't going anywhere. So I got the job in Stockton as the Evening Supervisor. The Evening Supervisor was retiring after 17 years there, just a marvelous person. She relieved my two days off. But it was a very, very nice hospital. It was a community hospital. I'm trying to think how many patients they had, probably 250, a small hospital.

JF So you had the familiar kind of role in that you were in charge of the whole hospital during the evening.

LF Right.

JF Okay. And you worked at getting the nurses to take responsibility for their own care of patients. Well that must have been kind of a good feeling that you were able to help them grow that way.

LF It was. When I first went there somebody said, "Oh, Lucy, you're going to have a time getting in with these nurses", because California nurses are very aggressive and very assertive. They're go-getters and they work hard and they're bright gals. So I kept [that] in the back of my head. Well I was there 11 months. When they heard I was

leaving, I think that there were about five different little gatherings, going away parties. That really told me something. That I had really gotten in there.

JF You must have been quite touched by that.

LF I was. And in fact, I have some cards and letters from some of the girls I worked with. It was really quite an experience.

JF How did you happen to leave that job? It sounds like a very nice job.

LF Well, I had left my husband and my youngest son was twelve then. And I just felt I needed to get back. My husband had been up there twice, my son spent the summer with me. We had a marvelous time. I didn't want to leave, but I felt I needed to come back.

JF So you came back here?

LF Yes.

JF Okay, we were talking then about how you were in California by yourself, and you wanted to get back. And I was commenting that that was kind of unusual at that time.

LF At age 50, yes, it was. But it was a time in my life when I needed to get away and my husband had been very ill, and I just felt that I needed time away, time to myself. It did us all a world of good.

JF So you came back to Arizona.

LF Came back in November of '73.

JF So, did you go back to work?

LF Not until, let's see, not until March of '76 -- I was home. By that time I needed to get home and do a little cleaning because the boys had been here.

JF Okay, then in '76 you returned to nursing?

LF Right. In '70 I had applied at the V.A. I had a friend who had been at the V.A. when she left Good Samaritan Hospital in 1950 or 1951, and all these years she'd been trying to get me to get transferred. And I just wasn't quite ready. But in '70, I told you there came a time in your life when it's time to make a change. I had applied at the V.A. and I had an interview. However, at that time the jobs were frozen. I don't know if you know about government work or not, but the jobs are frozen. So every six months I would get a letter from the V.A. asking if I still wanted my name on the list. So every six months I'd send it back and

report any in-service education or anything that I'd had to them. So I kept my name on the list and in March of '76 I got a call. This was on a Friday. They wanted me to come in on Monday for physicals and what have you. I didn't have to go for an interview anymore. I'd had the interview in '70. So, they hired me. I wanted to get back into staff nursing and this is what I asked for. Couple months after I was there the Chief came to me and asked me if I would be interested in the evening supervision job that was opening up. I turned her down because I wanted to get into staff nursing and get into the doing, what we call bedside care, that sort of thing. I did, and it was hard work. The IV's -- no problem, I'm very good at that. But the bedside, the physical work was tremendous.

JF And then you had to rotate?

LF Yes, we had to rotate shifts, once in a while [we] were pulled to other wards. Once in a while to Intensive Care which was really difficult. And to areas that you really weren't qualified [for]. You read about that all the time. That was us.

JF How did you handle that when you got pulled into these areas?

LF Well you get angry and you get rebellious. At the V.A. you can do that. But you do it anyway.

JF Alright. So how long did you work at the V.A. then as a staff nurse?

LF I worked from March 22, 1976 to October 3rd, which is my birthday, of '84. And [then] I was entitled to retirement at the V.A.

JF So were you still working as a staff nurse when you left? You had been rotating and floating and being pulled the whole [time]?

LF Right, just like everybody else was doing.

JF Did you like [that any better by the time you retired]?

LF No. I don't know if you've worked in hospitals. But you get that churning in your stomach when you know you're going to be pulled to another area that you're not familiar with. Towards the end there I think we just had two other areas where you could be transferred to. They had some units that were primary care. When they first started those primary care units, I think the girls were in in-service training for about six months. When they first went in, you couldn't even look in to see what was there if you hadn't had the training. By the time I left you were being pulled to the primary care areas. Of course, when you've been in nursing

for so long you can do it. But it's not the safest thing. It's not safe nursing.

JF Okay. But you stuck it out?

LF I stuck it out, and I retired from the V.A. with some benefits. Eight years and ten months is not too bad, because you put in quite a bit for retirement.

JF Okay, so you did retire. But I understand that you continued to do some volunteer work that certainly pulled [from] your nursing background.

LF Well, I do volunteer work at the adult daycare center, yes. And friends who are in need. But I don't call that nursing, it's just friendship.

JF When you do the volunteer work at the daycare center, what kinds of things do you do with the clients there?

LF With the clients, you more or less work with them on a one-to-one basis, visiting. I help with the noon meal which I enjoy doing. I should have been in food service, I think, because I think I'm pretty good at it and I enjoy it. So they have a hot meal. It's catered but you have to set the tables and set the food and dish out the food, that sort of thing. You supervise that. Once a month we [have a clinic]. I don't know if she always had it before I arrived, but I think she did, I mean the director of the program. There is a nurse, an RN, who's there every day and once a month we have a clinic. Blood pressures, weights. I do that and the RN staff nurse does the interviewing of the clients. A lot of those clients have been there almost two years now. They started the program in July of 1985.

JF So my perception is that it would be people in wheelchairs.

LF They have quite a few people in wheelchairs, a lot of Alzheimer's. Pretty well advanced geriatric people.

JF One does get the picture that one-to-one working with these people would be very important.

LF That's right. Alzheimer's patients, or clients they call them, I don't think you could do any more than one-to-one. So S. does rely on volunteers and she has a lot of good volunteers. There's another nurse who came from Minnesota. I think she's there about three times a week.

JF Well, you've had a very long and productive career, I can tell.

LF Well, I've enjoyed every minute of it. Some parts of it very hard and physical and emotional. I was going to tell you one thing that Gabe did to people. You just felt a part of her. We had an LPN who had been fired I think, and she worked on the evening shift. She was very depressed and, in the meantime, she had taken an overdose. Well, she died and Gabe knew that I had been working with this girl quite a bit. Instead of waiting for me to come into work to tell me about it, she called me at home early in the morning to let me know. This is the kind of thing that Gabe did. Another time, one of the head nurses, the Pediatric Head Nurse on evenings, later we found out [she] was an alcoholic. You worked so closely with these girls, you get very close to them with their problems. This girl had been found in her car in the desert. She was dead. What the cause was, I don't know. But again, Gabe called me to let me know. These things you don't forget and I think this is why those of us who worked with Gabe all those years feel so close to her and we have such respect for her because she just, that's just the way she was.

JF Well, when I came to ASU in 1965 she was the Director down there at the time. I was always impressed with her abilities and her leadership.

LF Oh, one grand person. She didn't deserve what she got from S.M. but then he got it in the end, too.

JF Well, we hope that those things do work out in the end.

LF That's right. She went to better things.

JF I did want to ask you, although I have felt very positive feelings. But, have you always wanted to stay in nursing during your career?

LF Yes, in some phase of it, yes.

JF Alright. Now, you were married and you had your two children. How did you juggle the work in your family?

LF I had a very supportive husband. He was very good with the children. He was very good to help me with the housework. Otherwise, I don't know how these young mothers do it who are single parents. I could not have done it without him.

JF Why did you work?

LF Why did I work? Well, I think maybe we thought we needed the money. It was self-satisfaction, that primarily is it. It was something I had always wanted to do and I did it.

JF Okay. One of the things I've wanted to ask you, have you seen yourself as an innovator or leader in nursing?

LF In some small way, maybe, yes.

JF Could you talk about that a little bit?

LF Well, let's see. Maybe I wasn't at the top. And again, I credit Gabe for this, she could teach you to sit in a corner, maybe it's something you were responsible for. Maybe you encouraged someone to go on to school. I can think of one person. That very first class that this person took (she now has her Master's). You can sit in a corner and get fulfillment from watching somebody else get the credit or go ahead, where you're still down here. But you're still guiding people here and there, and this is where I think that I feel I was a leader.

JF Now I did put down in my little booklet here if you had seen yourself as a leader in the women's movement? I found out in my first interviews that that was not a good term to have used, because a lot of nurses, well a lot of women, when we say the women's movement they think of the political activism and the rowdiness and bra-burning, that kind of thing. And that's not exactly what I meant. That may be a part of the women's movement, but this whole business of women moving out of the home into the work force is more what I had in mind. So have you seen yourself as a leader in that respect?

LF Well I think [so] when I left Arizona to go work in California. This was during, I think, that period. And maybe within you, you feel you've got to do it on your own, at least try it.

JF That did seem to be somewhat different when you went to California on your own.

LF Yes, very different. You're strictly on your own. Well, I knew that I could call on my husband, but I didn't want to. I wanted to do it on my own.

JF So that was a really conscious thing that you were doing, it didn't just happen?

LF Yes, that was a goal that I had always felt. I needed to work in California just to prove that you could get your licensure and you could work.

JF Well, those pretty much conclude the topics that I had on my list, but before we do conclude the interview, have we not covered something about how you think nursing education and the nursing profession has been for you that you want to mention?

LF Well, maybe. At the V.A. we had students from ASU. And I still feel, and maybe I'm old-fashioned, that the clinical experience that we got was so valuable, rather than letting

you go ahead and do it on your own. Well, they do have guidance but to me it was so frustrating the way some of the students were having to grope for their nursing abilities, their clinical abilities. To me it was real hard the way they have to do it.

JF They had to ferret it out for themselves, you mean?

LF Right. Maybe we were lucky in the fact that we had tremendous supervisors, or head nurses, whichever you want to call them, who were more like friends, than you do [now]. As I say, that sort of thing -- which you could have, too, in nursing. But ours were not that kind. So we learned.

JF Well, I want to thank you very much for participating in my study. You have given me all kinds of insights.

LF It's different. I think my nursing is a little different than just hospital work.