

**Growing Up in a Doctor's Family in Butte, MT during the 1940's and 50's**  
**Maria T. Canty**  
**Montana History**  
**Professor James Harrington**  
**November 27, 2001**

**ORAL HISTORY ASSIGNMENT**

**Interview of Sister Patricia Canty conducted by Maria T. Canty  
via phone: Sister Pat in Sheridan, WY & Maria in Butte, MT on 11/23/01 at 1:30 pm  
Growing Up In A Doctor's Family in Butte, MT during the 1940's and 50's.**

**RELEASE FORM**

We, Patricia Canty and Maria T. Canty,  
(Person Interviewed) (Interviewer)

surrender all rights to all or any part of the material contained in this oral history for future research, reference, or quotation.

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(Interviewer)

November 23, 2001 City, State, Zip Butte, MT 59701  
(Date)

Butte, MT  
(City & State)

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**PREPARED OUTLINE & QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW**

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**PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND OUTLINE**

**1 How did you feel growing up in Butte?**

How do you feel about your childhood in Butte?

Teen years? Young adult years? Adult years? Later years?

**1.1 Family**

Do you think your family had a lot of education?

Did you grow up different from most kids?

The Name, Canty, where does it come from? (Ethnic background, family history)

**2 Education**

Do you think women had the opportunity to become Doctors back then?

How has education changed?

Do you feel the attitude towards teaching has changed?

**3 Memories of Butte**

Do you have any one event that stands out?

Neighbors? Family? Friends? Holidays? Fun Times? Games? Places? Names?

Concerning Butte, Do you have any other stories that otherwise might be lost?

**4 How has Butte changed over the years?**

People? Jobs? Attitudes? Lifestyles?

**5 Could you describe that Specialness' Butte has?**

**6 (#5 = Last Question ) Remember to Thank her!**

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**SHORT OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW CONTENT**

**DETAILED OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW CONTENT**

**Growing Up In A Doctor's Family in Butte, MT during the 1940's and 50's.**  
**A Bigone Era of 'Neighborhood' and Security As Seen Through the Eyes of**  
**Sister Patricia Canty.**

**11/23/2001 SHORT OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW CONTENT**

- **Important People**
  - **Locations**
  - **Important actions of Sister Pat**
  - **Reoccurrence of the Emphasis on Neighborhood**
  - **Economics & Education in regards to Sisters then and now.**
  - **Tangent on Denver**
  - **Butte: Ethnic diversity – Black neighbors/ Iraqi friend**
  - **Women in medicine**
  - **Butte's Specialness**
- 
- Homes on Park street, Galena street.
  - Grandmother & Uncle Marcus
  - School/ outdoors playing
  - St. Patrick's grade school & old Central high school on Washington street.
  - Played trombone.
  - Gonzaga for college
  - Sisters of Charity enters and teaching
  - Grandfather, father's step-mother
  - Family furniture store on Park street Bronfield & Canty

*I don't think we ever felt like we were the rich kids on the block. We grew up like everybody else in our neighborhood.*

- Summertime Fun: picnics and fishing on the Big Hole River**
- Neighborhood, or family values described**
- ALL the teachers practically were sisters. knew the families, ya have to kind of have almost a regular salary or at least give a living wage.**
- Tangent about Denver:**
- Ethnic Diversity in Butte: having Black neighbors.**
- Canada Scottish. Both from County Cork.**
- Games 'We kind of, protected our neighborhood**
- They 'stole' and 'returned' a car without getting caught.**
- Women in medicine then vs. now: Her dad, Dr. Canty said, 'they treated the women shamefully.' in another age or another time, he would have encouraged me to be a doctor.**
- Graduated from high school in 54 to teach**
- Happy 50's attitude/way of life summary: the 50's were sort of an 'in-between' everything time.**
- Butte's Specialness- not a crude place and it's not real elegant. They have their values in family and honesty. People can tell ya if you're sort of fakin' it.**

Growing Up In A Doctor's Family in Butte, MT during the 1940's and 50's.

OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW

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- I. Growing Up in Butte
  - A. Homes SPC Grew Up In
    - 1. First home: 800 Block of Quartz St.
    - 2. Second home: Alabama and Silver St.
    - 3. Third home: 700 Block of Park St.
    - 4. Last home: Galena St.
  - B. Playgrounds
    - 1. Cinders
    - 2. Big Butte
    - 3. Brown's Gulch
    - 4. The Gardens
  - C. Schools
    - 1. St. Patrick's Grade School
    - 2. Old Central High School
    - 3. New Central High School

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- I. D. School Subjects and Activities
  - 5. Math
  - 6. Science
  - 7. School Pep and Marching Band
- II. WWII – memories resurfacing with recent terrorism
  - A. Air raids
  - B. Blackouts
  - C. Drafting Dogs
    - 1. Drafting Family
- III. Post High School Education and Career
  - A. Gonzaga
  - B. Teaching
  - C. Decision to enter Sisters of Charity
- IV. Grandparents and Family

**Growing Up In A Doctor's Family in Butte, MT during the 1940's and 50's.**

**OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW**

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- IV. Grandparents and Family
  - A. Mother's mother and brother
    - 1. Lived across the street
    - 2. Easy to visit
  - B. Father's father
    - 1. Lived on Crystal Street
    - 2. Sunday dinners
    - 3. Stroke: Lived with the family
- V. Education
  - A. Dad's father's furniture business
    - 1. Bronfield and Canty on Park St.
    - 2. Christie's
  - B. Dad's education
    - 1. Sister Xavier Davies' in high school
    - 2. Scholarships – Mt. St. Charles
    - 3. Creighton Med School Graduation
      - a) Residency at St. James in Butte
      - b) Resident Rules during Depression
  - C. Mom's College Teacher training
    - 1. Marriage Rules for teachers
  - D. Mom and Dad marry in 1935
    - 1. Mom lost job
    - 2. Dad done with residency
  - E. Advantage: They worked all during Depression

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- VI. Family lifestyle
  - A. Parents lived frugally: not the "rich" kids on the block
  - B. Mom ALWAYS helping others
    - 1. War Years – tough years
    - 2. Mines on Strike – conscience of others
  - C. The Canty kids were not separate from other kids
- VII. One Event Standing Out: Summertime
  - A. Fourth of July
    - 1. Family
    - 2. Friends
  - B. Chuck and Eileen Davis
  - C. Dr. Canty's 'dayoff': Fishing
    - Big Hole River – picnics, play, family time

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OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW

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- VII. E. Three younger brothers LOVED fishing too
  - 1. Special times end with cold weather/ closing season
  
- VIII. Butte: uneventful town
  - A. Except strikes
  - B. No big celebrations or stars (?life of a Doctor's family?)
  - C. Pretty place to grow up
  
- IX. Butte's Changes
  - A. Neighborhood
    - 1. Father grew up in same area of town
    - 2. Mother moved to area in youth also
    - 3. Families knew each other: the good and the bad.
  - B. Supportive neighborhoods – all religions included
    - 1. People now: don't know their neighbors
    - 2. Young parents can feel like there's nobody to help
  
- X. Sisters of Charity Changes
  - A. Most ALL teachers used to be sisters
  - B. Hardly any teachers today are sisters

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- X. Sisters of Charity as it used to be
  - C. Leadership of Church with the Lay people more now
    - 1. Then: OK for Sisters to do Extra on Saturdays
    - 2. Then: OK for extra afterschool
  - D. Sisters knew parents and kids then
  - E. No teacher salaries then – so Catholic school was affordable
  - F. No retirement or health insurance worries
  
- XI. Changed Attitudes Towards the Teaching Profession
  - A. Language and Behavior today
  - B. Attitude on doing something difficult
  - C. Kids will get back and disrespect teachers now
  - D. Kids don't want to be corrected now

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- XI. Parents and Teacher
  - E. Past: Teachers were respected more by parents
  - F. Now: "Don't dare correct my child" attitude
    - 1. Violence
    - 2. Language, TV, Imitation
  
- XII. Denver (Used as Ethnic transition to Butte Ethnic questions)
  
- XIII. Black Neighbors
  - A. Dr. and Alice Duncan
  - B. 'nigger' name calling

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**OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW**

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- XIV. SPC's parents
  - C. Both born in Anaconda, MT
  - D. Irish ancestry traced to County Cork for both families
- XV. Any Funny Stories or Memories
  - A. Terrorism now has brought back memories of war games
    - 1. 'Commandos', Hide and Go Seek, Rubber Guns
    - 2. Rubber Guns – clothespins & innertube bands
    - 3. Foxholes

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- XV. Funny Stories – continued
  - B. Other girls playin' dolls, SPC playing with her 3 brothers
    - 1. Shimming up garages
    - 2. "Protecting the neighborhood from the 'Enemy'"
    - 3. Bikes, Picnics, lots of FUN – good kids though
      - a) No TV or Nintendos babysitting then
      - b) SPC remembers "OUTSIDE playtime"
- XVI. Stolen Car Story

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- XVI. Stolen Car Story – during high school
  - A. Caledonia Street
  - B. Bluebird Gas Station
    - 1. PUSHED Car clear back up to Emmett Street
    - 2. Put Car back at Caledonia where found it
    - 3. Never told parents
- XVII. Women being 'Medical Doctors' in 40's and 50's
  - A. SPC Wanted to be an M.D. just like her father

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- XVII. Women and Medicine
  - B. SPC's Dad, Dr. Charles Canty tells SPC "I'd hate to see you get treated that way," regarding Medical school.
  - C. "10 years later & Dad would have encouraged med school"
    - 1. SPC – never wanted any other medical job
    - 2. Shameful suffrage of women. Catholic schools, too
  - D. SPC's Dad graduates med school 1923
  - E. SPC's Dad did residency at St. James in Butte, MT
- XVIII. SPC graduates high school in 1954
  - A. SPC goes to Gonzaga for college

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OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW

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- XIX. "Fortunate" time – 'growing up' – LUCKY
- A. Parents were really interested in their kids
  - B. 50's as an 'in-between' everything's else time
  - C. Almost a 'time of peace.'
  - D. SPC parents were respectful and good to each other
- XX. What is that 'specialness' that Butte has?
- A. Earthiness, down home.
    - 1. Not crude and Not elegant.
    - 2. People have a lot of common sense
  - B. People have:
    - 1. Self Respect
    - 2. A Dignity – you don't see in a lot of other places
  - C. Values:
    - 1. Family
    - 2. Honesty – you don't get by with much in Butte.
  - D. People:
    - 1. Can Tell if you're 'Fakin' It.'
    - 2. Know Hard Times aren't the end of the world
      - a) People have suffered a lot but 'Hang On'
      - b) 'Tough' people – had to take a lot of 'guff'
    - 3. Some MOVE AWAY or TRAVEL all over the world and many END UP ...

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- XX. Butte's 'Specialness' continued
- E. People Move and Come Back because they like that:
    - 1. Trust and
    - 2. Honesty of its people

End of Interview: Closing Salutations and Thank You's

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**TRANSCRIPTION OF ENTIRE INTERVIEW**

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MTC: This is an interview, with Maria Canty as the interviewer, and interviewee as Sister Patricia Canty. The date is November 23, 2001.

MTC: OK, Thank you very much for doing this interview with me, and I'll start with the first question.

SPC: K.

MTC: How do you feel about growing up in Butte, and when and where did you grow up in Butte?

SPC: Alright.

SPC: Our very first home was up on Quartz street, and I was very little, about the 800 block of Quartz street. My Mom and Dad moved to an apartment on the corner of Alabama and Silver street, where the Butte Orthopedic Clinic is at the present time. Then, we moved up to Park street, about 700 Park street, and that's really where I really remember the child, where I remember being. I was about in the second or third grade, and actually it was very easy to grow up in Butte at that time, because everybody in the neighborhood took care of everybody else, and you always knew exactly who lived next to you or across the street. Uh, when we lived on Park street, my grandmother and my uncle, Uncle Marcus, lived directly across the street from us. And, um, we would go over there every single day, to visit them. And then, when I was about in the second grade or so, we moved on Galena street, and by that time, all three of my brothers were also, present.

MTC: laugh

SPC: and uh, we pretty much, uh, when we weren't in school, we were outdoors playing. We played on the Cinders, which is that present ballfield down there, and we used to go for long walks with our lunch tucked under our arms, or bike rides. We could ride our bikes ANY place in the city, without any fear of something happening. Uh, we went for lots of hikes in back of Big Butte, down to the Brown's Gulch area. And then, of course, all the neighborhood kids were involved, too. So, we had lots of friends that did all kinds of things with us. Mostly we would play outdoors. We went for hikes. We went for walks. We played baseball. Uh, we just had a good time without any, you know, fear of somebody running off with your things, like nowadays. Uh, in Butte, at that time, they had the custom of, um, a free bus ride up to the Gardens on Thursdays in the summer time. All the kids in the neighborhood, would grab their quarters and we'd go out to the Gardens, which was a lovely park built by the Anaconda Copper Company. And then, you had to be sure and watch your time, so you wouldn't miss the last bus home. But, that was a pretty regular thing we did on Thursdays, in the summer time. And, I don't know if you want to know anything about school?

MTC: I'd love to.

SPC: OK, um, most the time when I was at St. Patrick's grade school, we had at least sixty children in our class. And it didn't seem at all unusual, but as I look at the classrooms nowadays - sixty kids in one classroom was somethin' else. And we never visited or talked with each other that much, we got to know the kids we walked to school with, but there were a lot of children in the class that we never even kind of got to know cause' you didn't visit the same way kids do now in a classroom. And we always enjoyed the teachers, the school teachers. Usually, they were there for quite a few years. They'd teach two or three members of the family. Some of the Sisters, taught all four of us.

And ya know, once in awhile, I'll see them at the Motherhouse – even though they're retired, they can still tell me things about the different ones of us in the classroom.

(SPC: continued) Uh, when I was a little older, or when I started high school, and the high school was divided, girls and boys. The old high school was way up on, uh, I think, uh, Washington street. All right, I did my freshman year, at the old Central High School. And then when I was a sophomore, they had finished building the new high school at Park and, Park and, oomm!, I can't remember. But anyhow, that's where I finished high school. So, it was constructed, a brand new building, and they were still completing parts of it – the cafeteria, and things like that. But again, it was a real nice experience. We were pretty good to each other. We took a lot of classes – all kinds of math and science and things like that. And, I always played in the band. I played the trombone. And, we'd march up and down the streets of Butte at different occasions.

MTC: Oh?! Hmm

SPC: And, uh, play at the football games, and the pep band that played at the football games and the basketball games. So, most of my high school was either doing academic stuff or playing, playin' in the band, or doin' a few other things. And, let's see, what else? I think we were awfully lucky. It was back when I was in the second or third grade, the Second World War was in full swing. And, this is kind of back tracking, but I do remember a lot of air raids and black-outs, because, uh, Butte was kind of a strategic area because of all the copper mining. And so, we, this whole thing with, terrorists and all that, has kind of, resurrected a lot of memories, because I can even remember them, drafting....DOGS. They wanted war dogs, and, uh, we were always afraid our dog was going to get drafted. (laugh) You know, we, we just protected him. We didn't want anybody coming to get our dog. But, um, the man who lived next door to us, um, Dr. Walter Duncan, was one of the air-raid wardens. And maybe once or twice a month, we had these blackouts where you had to turn off all your lights. And, nobody could go outside, but then it didn't effect us in any other way, because my cousins were a little too young to be drafted or anything like that. And, of course, we were just little kids. And so when it was over, it was just kind of over. But, later on...(pause)...how am I doin'?

MTC: You're wonderful, thank you.

SPC: What I was going to say, you know, I kind of pro-stated that high school was kind of uneventful. I um, I had pretty much decided that I wanted to be a teacher. And, so I considered a few options – ended up going to Gonzaga University. And, one of my real good friends, Liz Olsen, also ended up out there. So, we were roommates for a couple of years, and there were about four or five of us from Butte that were out there at Gonzaga. We kind of hung' together those first few years.

MTC: Hmm

SPC: We did a lot of things together. And when I graduated from Gonzaga, I taught out in Riverside..., or Miland, Washington for a year. And then, I entered the Sisters of Charity, Leavenworth. And, um, at that time, um, (laugh) you probably never thought you'd see your family again.

MTC: (laugh)

SPC: So, it was a really big step! Um, but uh, you know, I did end up teaching a lot of places. Now, maybe, kind of back-tracking again, um, I don't know if you want to know a little bit about our grandparents?

MTC: Sure, that'd be great. Any stories, attitudes, or lifestyles – and you've already covered a lot of the values of people who you've lived with. That's great. Thank you.

SPC: Oh, OK. Well, I was going to say I uh, my, uh, as I told you, my mother's mother and brother lived straight across the street from us. So, we got to know them pretty well. It wasn't just, um, it wasn't a real difficult thing to just go over there and just kind of, talk and visit. But they, but they were, they were pretty quiet, pretty much to themselves. They didn't, ya know, they weren't, ya know, active in a lot of things, but. And my father's father, lived down on Crystal street. Uh, close to where the, uh, Community Hospital is, the Community St. James Hospital is at. And uh, he, uh, my grandfather used to come to dinner EVERY single, solitary Sunday afternoon, after his, uh, his wife, who was my father's step-mother, after she died. He came over to dinner every single, solitary Sunday afternoon. And we (throat clear) uh, kind of, walked around the neighborhood and we used to kind of enjoy playin' around with him. And he was, real, real jovial, and a lot of fun. But, then he had a stroke, and um, shortly after that, he got so he could take care of himself. So, he moved uptown to an apartment and um, uh, he gradually got so he didn't remember a whole lot. And, he needed more care, so he came to live with us. So, I was about in the fourth or fifth grade. He probably lived with us for, (pause) oh maybe, two or three years. And um, uh, we had a bedroom upstairs for him and he, he, he required quite a bit of care, that I know that because we got to know what an older person was like. You know, like sometimes he didn't remember us, forgot who we were, but Dad always encouraged us to be really, really good to him, and, uh, to take care of him. And, (pause, deep breath) let's see. We had very, actually when you stop to think about it, we had a pretty small family. It was just the grandparent or two, and uh, two cousins, that were a little bit older than I was. And they, uh, they were off to college, and then into the service. And after that, we didn't see them around Butte too much. They'd come back once in awhile. (pause) Hmm, let's see. Other questions, or ?

MTC: Do you feel that your family had a lot of education compared to other people at that time?

SPC: Uh, I kind of think so.

MTC: (clears throat)

SPC continued: Uh, and it's kind of interesting, you know, how it happened. Uh, Dad's family were in the furniture business, and um, at one point and time, my grandfather had a furniture store on Park street, in the middle of Park street, named Bronfield & Canty. He and his partner, Mr. Bronfield, had a furniture store there, and a lot of things happened, I guess, just before the Depression. And, they pretty much lost the store. They, uh, I think there were a couple strange circumstances, that, anyhow, after that, my grandfather went to work for his competitor, who was the Christie furniture people, over on Broadway. But, um, he was a floor salesman, for a long time. And, um, (pause) I guess, uh, my, when my Dad was in high school, um, a sister Mary Xavier, her last name was Davies, Sister Xavier Davies, took a real interest in him and several others, uh, students in the class. (Emphasizing with laugh) Really, worked them on math, and science, and things like that. And because of that, they were able to go over to Mount St. Charles and get, get into pre-med. Uh, they were, I don't think they were that rich or anything like that, but uh, that they were just really, really, good students, and she had drilled that physics, science and math into them, so that, you know, that they got some really good scholarships. And a couple of his classmates, uh, went over to Mount St. Charles, and Creighton University, and um, came back to Butte, uh, to practice medicine. One of them was Doctor Jim Munlock. And then, um, (breath out) you know, at that time, uh, while they were residents there at the hospital, during the Depression, the worst part of the Depression. And uh, residents weren't supposed to get married. And my mom was kind of in the same boat. She had taken the two year training course down at Dillon and become a teacher, (pause) and you couldn't get married if you were a , uh, a teacher. You, if You got married, you just lost your job! So Mom and Dad, kind of, courted each other for quite some time. Then, finally, I guess they decided it was enough. Enough was enough, and uh, they were married in about 1935. And, uh, (pause) of course, she had to stop teaching, but by that time, he was finished with his residency so. Anyhow, they really did have, you know, a pretty good advantage cause' they were working all during that time in the Depression, when other people, ya know, really couldn't get any jobs at all. So..., (said with a question-like tone.) (some inaudible soft words)

**MTC:** How bout' that lifestyle, um, did that afford your family a different lifestyle than most people at that time then?

**SPC:** Ya, know, (pause) I can't say that it did. Cause' I think both Mom and Dad, or my Mom and Dad, lived so, (pause) you know, frugally you might say, when they were growing up. And as, you know, children, you know, they were, you know, they didn't have that much themselves. And, I, I don't feel like we ever felt like we were any different than the other kids in the neighborhood, cause' uh, they were, just, they were never stingy or anything like like. But they just, we never had a lot stuff that you might expect kids to have if, ya know, if both parents were professional people. And I think they were very conscience of, uh, ya know, other people who needed things. I can remember my mom ALWAYS had somebody that she was helping out.

**MTC:** hmmm

**SPC continued:** with ... either a young married woman in the neighborhood, or somebody like that. It seemed like there was always somebody at our back door asking for a meal.

**MTC:** hmmm

**SPC:** Ya know, so we, I don't think we ever felt like we were the rich kids on the block. Nothin' like that, but, they were very, very careful not to, oh, get a whole lot of stuff we didn't need or things like that. We, we grew up, um, pretty much, ya know, like everybody else (pause) in our neighborhood. But, and at that time, it was just amazing, because at that time, things, you know were pretty tough. It was like the early times, it was the War Years, and then as we were going through high school, you know, it was, there were a lot of times when the mines would be on strike and things like that, that were really hard for other people. But, I, uh, it was like, we were very conscience of that, and we knew that they were, ya know, having a hard time too. And, I, uh, just, ya know, didn't, kind of, exactly separate us from kids (laugh) from the block, or anything like that.

**MTC:** So, how bout' your, your individual, personal involvement in these past events, is there any one event that stands out as a great memory to tell?

**SPC:** Well, let's see. Ya know, I, I think and I'm not sure if there's any one great event, um. I know that the summer, ya know, was always very special. And um, ya know, we always liked (hearty laugh) the, this is kind of silly, but, the Fourth of, Fourth of July Parade always went straight by our house when I was really little, ya know, when we lived up on Park street. And we always had TONS of friends and relatives and people who'd come and plant their chairs in our front yard, so that we could, ya know, watch the parade. And um, then they'd bring a lot of food and fried chicken and stuff, like that, and we'd always have a great big party. But, uh, it seemed like we were always, (pause) ya know, Mom and Dad weren't (word drawn out) real social, but we always had lots of friends. And, ya know, a lot of people who were really, really nice to us when we were kids. We always had lots of people who, even though we didn't have a lot of relatives, ya know, we had a whole bunch of (pause) nice friends, like Chuck and Eileen Davis, and ya know a lot of other friends of Mom and Dad, that, that were really good to us who were just like family. But, um, and then it came that we were, another thing that was (laugh) REALLY special, I think, was that Dad LOVED to go fishing. So on Wednesday, that was kind of his day off, he really did go back to the hospital seven days a week. He would disappear on Wednesday afternoon. Mom would fry chicken and we would go down to the Big Hole River every Wednesday afternoon.

**MTC:** hmmm

**SPC continued:** in the summer time. And sometimes, we'd just sit around and play, or sometimes he'd thread up, thread up a hook for us, and, ya know, we'd sit there and fish there with him or

we'd walk around, and, and it was really neat. And especially the boys, with three younger brothers, they loved to go fishin'.

MTC: hmmm.

SPC: Then, then when it got too cold, or the season was over, why, ya know, that was about the end of that. (laugh) But we did a lot of that, and those were really, kind of like special times.

MTC: hmmm.

SPC continued: and go outdoors and picnic and be together, but, (pause) I don't know, Butte was kind of an uneventful town in a lot of ways cause' we never had any, ya know, huge, except for the strikes and things, we never had any huge (pause) events or tragedies or great big celebrations. None of the great huge stars,

MTC: hmm

SPC continued: came to Butte. But, um, ya know, it was a pretty place to grow up.

MTC: hmm. (pause) So, how bout', um, you've seen Butte change over the years, um. What do you see that the past had, that we don't have now.

SPC: I do think that sense of neighborhood, or family. Ya know, you knew people for BLOCKS, not just next door on one side and next door on the other side. And you really knew people, that, uh, ya, ya know like your, they knew each other for a couple of generations. My Dad grew up in the neighborhood where we almost, almost the neighborhood where we lived. And Mom had moved there when she was just a young, (pause) ya know, maybe in high school. And the families had known each other for a couple of generations. And ya know, they, they really knew all the good things and (laugh) they knew all the bad things,

MTC: (light laugh)

SPC continued: but they were very supportive of each other. Ya know, if somebody had something happen, or if somebody needed somebody to take care of the kids, or if (pause) something was needed, you could, you could just call on ANYBODY to come and help. Or you could, ya know, you were often going out to do something for somebody else. And there was just a real understanding, (pause) and support AND it wasn't just Catholics and Catholics, ya know. It's kind of like, we knew all our neighbors, whether they were Jewish or Protestant or anybody. It wasn't just the ones we went to school or church with. But, I don't think, ya know, just in the last couple of years that I was there, I (pause) ya know, people moved around a lot, and there's still some that are there, but ya know, it's kind of like, people don't really know each other that well anymore. They don't know the people that live a few houses down, or they don't know the people on the other side of the street, or things like that. There's a lot of people that have moved away, but, um, (pause) ya know, I think that makes a big difference, especially if you're younger, and have a young family, cause' ya know, ya just feel kind of isolated sometimes. You don't feel like you have any, anybody to kind of help you, if you need help. (breath)

MTC: So, I was kind of curious, um, since you know a lot about the Sisters of Charity, um, how might you say their history has changed, and what can you remember about um, sisters growing up? Do you have any stories?

SPC: Uh, well, of course in those, when we were going to school, grade school and high school, ALL the teachers practically were sisters. Ya know, it's like every grade was taught by a sister. And in high school, when I first started, as a freshman we only had one lay teacher (pause) who taught English. And, uh, of course, that's changed drastically cause, uh, either they're letting more, of their, uh, lots of lay teachers. And there are, ya know, hardly any sisters in the schools, right

now, uh. In some respects, that's good because the leadership of the church has to uh (laugh) go to the lay people, (pause) and they're doing a great job. But I, I do think there's a spirit there that is a little bit different. The sisters could always stay a little longer, and they were always there to kind of help out and they came back on Saturdays. Nobody'd argue with anybody that'd spend a little extra time in the classroom.

MTC: hmm

SPC continued: Nowadays, you, your union might not let you do that, or your physical (?word) might not let you do that. Uh, (pause) I think the sisters, really, um, ya know, again, knew the families. They knew the parents. Ya know, they really made a lot of connections with, with uh, the families even though they (laugh) had sixty kids in the classroom.

MTC: hmm

SPC continued: They still, knew everybody and all the families. And uh, ya know, I just felt like they provided a really good, solid education, and they really cared about us, (pause) and ya know, wanted us to do our very best. And, let's see, I, ya know, it was an economic thing too because ya know, they weren't getting a huge salary, so they didn't have to charge big bucks for tuition. You know, I think our tuition in high school was only like ten dollars a month, or somethin' like that. It was the, and they'd give piano lessons for ya know, uh. I can remember one bill at the end of the month with two- fifty, for a whole month (laugh) of piano lessons.

MTC: hm! (light laugh)

SPC continued: ya know because, but they were totally qualified. It was just that they, (pause) ya know, in those days, they, they had the convent provided and they didn't have a car or anything like that. And they didn't have to pay health insurance, or retirement, or stuff like that. (laugh) But, ya know, they could do that. But, nowadays, sisters have to, ya know, we have to uh, we have a little back-up, but, ya know, we have a lot of, (pause) we can't (laugh) live like that anymore. Ya know, people just don't live like that these days. Ya, so ya know, ya have to kind of have almost a regular salary or at least give a living wage. And of course that makes, and of course the lay teachers who teach in the schools, they need a living, honest, just, just wage, also. So that makes the Catholic schools more expensive.

MTC: So, do you feel the attitude towards teaching as a profession has changed?

SPC: Well, ya know, I'd have to say yes. And I, I totally attribute it to um, ya know, some of the stuff that's actually, (pause) ya know, some of the language and the things that the kids (pause) say to the teachers. The way that some of the kids behave. Ya know, a lot of the attitude toward doing something that's difficult.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: Um, anybody who is out of line, and you try to, ya know, tell them they can't do something. They're liable to just (pause) (laugh) if they don't say something dreadful to you, they'll, ya know, find a way to get back at you.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: And uh, they jus', they just don't want to be corrected for anything.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: Ya know, and, I've even had parents, ya know, come and tell me, 'well, everyone else is doing it.' It's kind of like, NO, NO PARENT would ever say that to you, (pause) ya know, when we were growing up, but boy, if you got in trouble (laugh)

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: then, you got in trouble again at home. But, nowadays, it's like DON'T YOU DARE CORRECT MY CHILD.

MTC: Hmm

SPC continued: DON'T YOU DARE CORRECT MY CHILD IN CLASS. And um, ya know it really makes it hard because then they think they can act any way they please, and they can push, and shove and do things to other kids, and I think there is a lot more violence. And sometimes, it's not violence that makes the newspapers, but it's little things. It's real hurtful things that put kids down and makes them feel bad. Ya know, it's really hard to handle a whole class of em'. And um, ya know, if ya have, some really nice kids in your classroom, you're really grateful for them because, uh, they just see a lot of stuff on TV that they think is really funny, and they hear language and stuff on television that it's just really crude, and insulting. And they think that's really funny, so they try to imitate it, and that's hard, it really is. It takes, takes the joy out of teaching.

MTC: So I have a question, thank you, um, I know that you are fluent in Spanish, and did, was there any particular time of the influenced you to choose the Spanish language to major in?

SPC: Well, actually, when I was, uh, assigned to teach in Denver, (pause) which was, let me see, about 1980, um, the neighborhood, or the scope of the mission there is about two-thirds Spanish. Now, some of them are second generation, but some of them were just coming, ya know, they were green card or permitted to work. Lots of em' work as laborers, lots of em' work as cleaning. You know, those huge big buildings down town, they. And that particular school or neighborhood, a lot, a lot of those were the janitors in the limpiadoras or limpiadoros, and um, ya know, they would come without knowing any English, so I HAD TO LEARN FAST. Ya know, I would have maybe eight children in of a class of (pause) twenty-eight or thirty children, (pause) that didn't know any English. And so, ya know, I had to learn enough Spanish, real quick, that I could help them with their, uh, learning English, and help them with learning their assignments. And the Denver school system provided LOTS of good classes. They had a whole series of, uh, kind of late afternoon classes for teachers. Either the teachers that spoke Spanish and didn't know how to read it or write it, or the ones like 'greengos' like me (laugh) that didn't know any at all. So, I took a lot of those classes, and in the summertime, I took classes at our college, but, uh, I just kept studyin' it till' I, uh, could really understand quite a bit of it. And speak it well enough, to talk to kids, but, uh, I never did learn in an area, now, in the Denver system, there's about seventeen different languages. But, I just happened to be in a neighborhood that was mostly Spanish.

MTC: And, Do you remember any people that were

(turn over tape to side B)

MTC continued: OK, so I, uh, I asked you if you remembered any ethnic uh, groups that, around where you grew up, or ?

SPC: Yah, I was just going to say, Dr. and Alice Duncan, uh, lived next door to us, so those were the grandparents of, um, Joan Walter, who were the same age, like. Joan was a year behind me in school and Walter, I think, (pause) was in Ed's class. But, their grandparents lived next door to us, and uh (pause). I can remember one, one incident which some of my friends came over to visit me one time, and when they saw Mrs. Duncan, (pause) come out of the house, they started hollering, (describing this, SPC sang the next words in a nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah....way) 'nigger, nigger, nigger.'

MTC: Oh that's terrible.

SPC continued: and I went into the house. I remember just being in tears. And, later on, Mrs. Duncan was talking to my mother, and she said, 'you know, I just need to tell you that,' that she said, 'I just want you to know, that your children were not involved in this,' she said, 'they, they SPC continued:

were not, they did not take part in this, the name-calling, at all. And uh, it was (sigh)oh, maybe about, (pause) oh, I can't remember how long ago now, because Mrs. Duncan was in one of the nursing homes and I went to see her, and she had to at least been, ninety-five.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: and SHE (a lingering conclusive tone) STILL REMEMBERED THAT. She said, 'you were not part of that group that were calling names.' (can detect a smile now in SPC, and a small laugh) And she said, 'You know, you brought God into our lives.'

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: and I was just so touched by that. Here she is, ninety-five years old, lived next door to us, YEAR AGO, (laugh) and she still remembered some things about having lived next door to us.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: But, uh, there weren't very many, so, (pause) people of color. But my goodness! There were Italians, and Slovaks, and ya know there were all kinds of different Irish.

MTC: (light chuckle)

SPC continued: and there were, um, uh, (pause) One of my best friends growing up was Linda Aikia. She was um, Syrian, (pause) which nowadays which I suppose you'd say is part of Iraq. Her parents, her dad was straight from Baghdad! And her mom, um, had grown up in Butte. But, her family was from that same area.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: I'm not, (pause) and the map has changed so much now, but in those days, they called it Syria.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: and uh, let's see, (pause) let's see, there were just a lot of different Europeans and nationalities. (pause)

MTC: And, what were the Canty's?

SPC: Basically, Irish. It's, it's uh, (pause) it's a name that is Irish, but I think a lot of the, um the, my Dad's family moved over to um, ya know, way over to uh, (pause) Canada, when they first came to the United States, and my Mom's family, (pause) is Irish also. And they uh, (light laugh) came by way of Wisconsin, and maybe, St. Louis, Missouri. (pause) Now, um, Mom thinks, used to think that there was um, some relatives on her side that might (pause) have been Scottish.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: The name is Byrne, and then in Dad's family, there was a great-grandmother to him, that would have been French-Canadian. I saw her birth certificate at one point and time, and you couldn't read the, the name, actually, but, (pause) it was from France.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: And, um, but other than that, they were all Irish. And, Mom and Dad didn't know each other before they, um, met as adults. They were both born in Anaconda, (pause)

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: And, were from, uh, mainland, County Cork. I think, both families were from County Cork. Both Irish, MAINLY Irish. (pause)

MTC: Hmm. (pause) Well, you're doing great! Thank You.

SPC: (laughs in response) I'm so ...

MTC interrupting: Do you have any, um, uh, perhaps, funny stories about growin' up in Butte that you might remember with your friends, playing, or?

SPC: (a soft, 'uh huh' response) Well, (breath) you know, as I say, this thing with the, the terrorists, and the war, has kind of kicked a lot of memories back up again. Um, (pause) we PLAYED an awful lot of really wild games when we were kids.

MTC: Hmmph

SPC continued: We used to go runnin' through the neighborhood playing chase, and 'Commandos,' and ya know, hide-and-go-seek, and stuff like that, but, uh, (pause). We did, we had what they call rubber guns?. (pause) You could put a clothes-pin on top of a gun shaped thing and (laugh) snap them. You'd make these, uh,

MTC: (a surprised light laugh)

SPC continued: long rubber bands out of inner-tubes that

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: could shoot about twenty feet.

MTC: (chuckle)

SPC continued: But, uh, we also dug a lot of foxholes, (pause) in our backyard, and I can remember (laugh) one time at dinner, my Dad saying, 'I'm going to make a rule: You can't dig foxholes, (SPC clears throat and restates) you can't dig foxholes any closer than five feet (SPC laughs)

MTC: (light laugh with SPC's recounted story)

SPC continued: to the foundation of the house. (SPC laughing) Otherwise, OUR HOUSE was going to fall down.' (End of remembered quote of SPC's Dad, Dr. Charles R. Canty.)

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: Ya know, so, (pause) I mean, we actually dug, (pause) long, skinny foxholes,

MTC: Hmmph! (laugh)

SPC continued: and played war with each other.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: But, um, yah, I don't know how, how old we were, but, I know Charlie, and that was kind of maybe, you might say, the fun of growing up with brothers who get...

MTC: Hmmph.

SPC continued: So, other girls might have been out playing, (pause) dolls or something like that, (laugh) I was always playing war and 'Commando' (laugh) with my brothers. (laugh)

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: So, all around, (pause) the neighborhood. And, we could shimmy' up between the garage, the two garages, next (pause) next to the family next door to us,

MTC: Oh.

SPC continued: and get up on the roof! And we used to walk around that roof, all (breath and laugh) the time, (laugh) survey the neighborhood.

MTC: Hmm. Oh, my gosh.

SPC continued: A few stories up, but, uh, (pause and laugh) my Dad would have killed us (hearty laugh) if he ever found out. (pause) But, that was our lookout, and you'd look over the neighborhood: Make sure none, none of the Enemy was coming. (laugh) We played stuff like that, all the time.

MTC: Um huh.

SPC continued: So, (pause) I don't think it hurt us.

MTC: Um.

SPC continued: We kind of, protected our neighborhood. (laugh)

MTC: Neat. (pause) So, do you have any other, uh, stories, or that you'd like to add?

SPC: Well, I've, as I said, I think we just did all kinds of really, crazy things, ya know, we, uh, drove around on our bikes and we went on lots of picnics, (pause) things like that. And, basically, we awfully good kids when I look at them and think that kids do nowadays. (pause) We, just, uh, had a lot of fun, did a lot of things with each other, and. We were either (breath) in school or outdoors.

MTC: Hmmph.

SPC continued: Ya know, we didn't spend a whole lot. We didn't have television that, ya know, occupied our time or computer games or nintendos or anything like that. (laugh) We were always outdoors doing somethin.'

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: But, uh, we did a lot of (breath) walkin' around and, like, like when we were in high school, we oh! I can remember one thing we did - we did steal a car one time.

MTC: (Gasp) Uh!

SPC continued: We saw this old clunker, kind of a square, ol' thing, that was parked in front a house, (pause) probably up about Caledonia street, that can, no wonder, one of my friends lived up there. But, um, (pause) when we kind of gave it a little nudge or push,

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: and it, it, uh, moved! It was either in neutral or else it didn't have any breaks, (pause) and so we started, kind of, pushing on it and uh. It was sort of going down Emmett street or something like that, one of those steep streets with a real hill. So, we turned it around and got it going down the hill. (pause) We all jumped in, and it kept going, and goin' and goin,' clear down to the, what, the Bluebird Gas Station, which is about half-way (laugh) down to Anaconda, well, not quite.

MTC: Hmmph!

SPC continued: But anyhow, then we got feeling really, REALLY guilty. So we thought, 'well, now we're going to be in jail: They'll think we stole this car.' So we PUSHED that THING, CLEAR back (laugh) up, uh, Emmett street

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: or whatever was out there.

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: CLEAR back up to Emmett and Caledonia and put it back (laugh) where it started.

MTC: (laugh, laugh)

SPC continued: And at about that time, it was about midnight. We were all, gosh, our parents were lookin' all over the place for us. They had no idea where we were and we NEVER DID (laugh) tell em' what we did.

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: Ya know, We just knew, better not to steal the car or we'd get in big trouble.

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: We put it back, but we got it home.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: That, was one of those, a lot of fun!! Rollin' down that hill in that car.

MTC: So do you think that um, (pause) I'm always curious about how women have evolved. With your dad as a doctor, and was it, um, possible that women could be doctors back then?

SPC: Well, (pause) that's a very, very good question! Because, I think, if I had been another ten years younger, I might have ended up being a doctor. And uh, at one point and time, he, he asked me if I wanted to be a doctor. And I said ya know, 'I'd really, I, I would like to be a doctor.' He said, 'I just want to tell you something. When, when I was in medical school,' he said, 'they (pause) treated (pause) the women (pause) shamefully.'

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: He said, 'they never gave them a minute's peace, (pause) and they always gave them the hard, hard things to do and they always gave them the awful stuff to do.' (pause) And he said, 'They were just, (pause) disgraceful to them.' And he said, "I never want you to have to go through that.' He said, 'If you're really interested in medicine, have you ever thought about being in medical records? (pause) Want to be in medical records?' And I said, 'Oh, Dad, I don't think I'd like to do that.' I said, 'If I can't be in medicine, then I'd rather be a teacher.' This is when I was kind of going through that,

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: - what do I want to be when I grow up? – thing.

MTC: (laugh)

SPC continued: But, uh, I think (pause) in another age or another time, he would have encouraged me, (pause) to be a doctor.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: And I never felt like I wanted to be a nurse for some reason or other. I guess, I kind of knew quite a bit about, you know, medical stuff, and nurses and doctors. And I never felt like I wanted to be a nurse, although, a lot of my friends did.

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: But, uh, I really thought I would have liked to have been a doctor. But, uh, (pause) I can, I can still remember him telling me, how awful it was and how SHAMEFULLY they treated women in medical school. And he went to CREIGHTON, which was a Catholic,

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: institution. But,

MTC interrupts: About what year would that be?

SPC: He graduated, well now, when he graduated from medical school in about 1923,

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: and then, he came directly back to Butte to do his residency, and everything.

MTC: And, what year about, were you graduating from high school?

SPC: I graduated from high school in 54.'

MTC: Hmm.

SPC continued: 1954. Then I decided that I really wanted to teach, ya know, teach in,

MTC: Oh.

SPC continued: teach in the, ended up going out to Gonzaga. At that time, they had a really nice music department. They did quite a bit of, ya know, choral work and travelin,' and they had a good orchestra and band, and that's why you ended up going to Phillips. (Last words hard to hear in this sentence.) (SPC laughs)

**MTC:** So, do you have anything else that um, might otherwise be lost, (pause) if you didn't tell me now?

**SPC:** Mmmm, gosh, (pause) might otherwise be lost. Well, (pause) gee, ya know I, I kind of think (pause) it might be somethin' to do with, ya know, parents being real interested in their kids and you know it was, was just, just, we were just REALLY lucky. I think we lived in a very fortunate (pause) time. Ya know, it wasn't perfect, (pause) and I think when I look at other families, I know that we had some problems and everything that were kind of tough, but we basically were very good to each other, and we, we had a lot of fun. (pause) Ya know, it was just kind of, it was a time (pause), ya know, that was, sort of, ahht of, that often, they often, I often read this, that the 50's, (pause) ya know that's primarily when I was in school and growing up, making big decisions, the 50's were sort of an 'in-between' (pause) everything time. In point, in-between all the revolutions, and in-between all of the 'new-breed' and everything else. And ya know, it was kind of almost a time of peace, and

**MTC:** Hmm.

**SPC continued:** there was a certain confidence that we had. Ya know, we didn't have to worry about a lot of stuff happening to us, and ya know, it was, even though, just on the brink of a lot of other stuff, we, we really were very fortunate to grow up in that time. Ya know, and I say, I think, I think our parents had some problems. But, um, they were very, VERY respectful and very good to each other. And ya know, we were, we were MIGHTY lucky. Mighty lucky group, (laugh) at that time. I think.

**MTC:** So, um, maybe ending on this note, um, you've been wonderful, thank you. If you had to describe Butte, ya know, in a stage of, 'What is that 'specialness' that Butte has?' to someone that's never been here. What would you say?

**SPC:** Well, I (pause) I think it might be kind of an earthy, earthyness, or kind of a down home. It's sort of a, (pause) ya know, it's not a crude place and it's not (pause) real elegant.

**MTC:** (laugh)

**SPC continued:** But I think the people there have a lot of common sense.

**MTC:** Hmm.

**SPC continued:** I think they have a, (pause) kind of self respect and a dignity, (pause) that I don't see in a lot of other places.

**MTC:** Oh.

**SPC continued:** I think they have, uh, (pause) I think they kind of have their values. (pause) Ya know, um, in there are values in family and values in, um, honesty. Ya know, (laugh) you don't get by with too much in Butte.

**MTC:** (laugh)

**SPC continued:** People can tell ya if you're sort of fakin' it. They're very honest about a lot of things. You know, they've had hard times, but they know it's not the end of the world. And they've suffered a lot, but they know that, um, ya just hang on. You keep going. You know, I think there's a lot of um, very tough (laugh) people, (pause) you know, that had to take a lot of guff' from other people. And ya know, there are a lot of people who have gone away from Butte, and who have come back there to live. You know, that's why they have, you know they have traveled a lot and gone all over the world, and (laugh) end up

**MTC: (laugh)**

**SPC continued: back in Butte again. And I think it's cause' they like that sort of um, oh, (pause and deep breath) trust that people have in each other, and the honesty.**

**MTC: Well, you have been wonderful. Thank You.**

**SPC: Oh, you're very welcome.**

**MTC: And, um, I'm going to say uh, that it's November 23<sup>rd</sup>, and this was my Aunt Patty Canty and myself, Maria Canty, signing off with our interview. And Patty, I might talk to you after I shut this off, Thanks. (pause) Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

**SPC: I can't think of anything.**

**MTC: OK, you were wonderful. Thank You.**

**SPC: Oh, well, I'm glad to have done it.**

**MTC: (laugh)**

***The End***