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Interview no. 832

Sister Tharsilla Schwietzer

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Sister Tharsilla Schwietzer
INTERVIEWER: Barbara K. Dent
PROJECT: El Paso Medical Community
DATE OF INTERVIEW: April 26, 1989
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted
TAPE NO: 832
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TRANSCRIBER: Amy Bene

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Former nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital, El Paso, Texas; born in Lindon, North Dakota; joined Order of Sisters of St. Joseph, 1933; trained as nurse in Concordia, Kansas; worked at Diocesan orphanage in Abilene, Kansas; moved to El Paso after arthritis surgery, 1948.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Recalls experiences as nurse at St. Joseph's Sanitorium, tuberculosis health care facility in El Paso, Texas; demolition of St. Joseph's Hospital; sketches history of Order of Sisters of St. Joseph; arrival of Order to El Paso in 1927; discusses changes in Order; comments on segregation of patients in hospitals.

Length of Interview: 40 minutes Length of Transcript 25 pages

This is Thursday, April 26, 1989. I am Barbara Dent. I am at the residence of the Sisters of Saint Joseph on Grandview Street in El Paso, Texas, interviewing Sister Tharsilla Schweitzer.

Q Sister, will you please tell us where you were born?

A I was born in North Dakota.

Q Whereabouts?

A Near Bismarck. A small town outside of Bismarck. Lindon, I guess, the city used to be called.

Q Was it a rural area?

A It was more or less a rural area.

Q Did you go to Catholic school there?

A No. I left -- my parents moved to Montana when I was two years old.

Q And then where did you live in Montana?

A I lived north of Highway Number Two, which is about 33 miles north. No railroad except after the 33 miles.

Q And did you grow up there?

A Grew up there.

Q And where did you go to school?

A I went to school right there in town.

Q Which town was that?

A In our own vicinity, which was Goldstone.

Q Goldstone.

A A country school there.

Q And when did you leave that area?

A I left the area in 1930.

Q To go high school, or to college, or what?

A Went to high school for a while and dropped out. I finished at the Mother House.

Q When did you join The Order?

A In 1933.

Q Had you gone Catholic school before?

A No.

Q Never?

A It's all public school.

Q And what caused you to join The Order?

A The Lord has His own ways of doing things.

Q Then after you -- now The Mother House is in Kansas, you said?

A Kansas.

Q Did you go down to The Mother House for high school and college?

A Yeah. I went to high school there in -- right there in Kansas. And then from there I -- then I was there for my initiate year. And then I went to western Kansas for one year, and then came back to The Mother House, and then I went to Saint Joseph's Hospital, then I went and started nurse's training there.

Q At Saint Joseph's Hospital in --

A In Concordia.

Q -- and that's the area that --

A Where The Mother House is located, right there, sends you

back to Concordia. And then, after that, I went to Saint Joseph's in Abilene, the orphanage.

Q Texas? Abilene, Texas, or Abilene, Kansas?

A No. Abilene, Kansas. I had to take -- I took care of the orphans there. We had an orphanage that was a Diocesan orphanage.

Q Uh-huh.

A But the Sisters of Saint Joseph were running it. So I was there, and I was there for nine years. And then I had surgery done on my knee because I had arthritis real bad and they had to do surgery to clean out the joint. So then I came down here for my health and then I stayed down here. I've been down here for 40 years, now.

Q And, so that was in 1949?

A '48.

Q And you were a nurse at the Saint Joseph's Hospital. What was it like? Was it a T.B. hospital or --

A It was a T.B. hospital, uh-huh. When I came, it was strictly all T.B. --

Q Uh-huh.

A -- And then --

Q Where there a lot of patients?

A Oh, they had about 70 or 80 of them in that place, practically all T.B..

Q Uh-huh.

A Then in -- then we took over in 1927, and we came to El Paso.

Q That's when the Sisters of Saint Joseph's came to El Paso in 1927?

A In 1927. And then that was, at that time, there was no sanatorium any more there, because they had closed it --

Q Uh-huh?

A -- and it was closed for a couple of years because I'm thinking it was -- and I'm not sure -- but I think was a Diocesan building, and the bishop said he had no use for it, and he didn't know. I guess when the Homens closed and moved over to Southwestern, well, then, there was nobody there. So, then, when our Sisters came to Silver City --

Q Uh-huh.

A -- and had academy over there. That was our academy, Saint Mary's Academy. We took it over from another Sister's Saint Joseph's, another community.

Q Uh-huh.

A And then the Bishop came over there and then he asked the Sisters, when the Mother Superior came down, if they would be willing to take over the sanatorium. I don't know what the name of the sanatorium was before --

Q Let's see. I think Albert Balwin Resort?

A Could have been.

Q Yeah. It was Balwin and he sold it to Homan.

A Yeah.

Q And then Homan went to Southwestern.

A Southwestern. And I guess was left with the Bishop anyway.

Q Uh-huh.

A Because Bishop apparently had it. So, then after that, we took it over and we've been here since 1927. Some of our Sisters came down here and cleaned it out, and they stayed with the Sisters of Loretto for about three weeks until they were able to move in. And then that was in July when they came down. And then in August, four more Sisters came down here. And then they started getting beds and stuff in, getting ready for -- I guess some of the beds were possibly in there, I don't know.

Q Uh-huh.

A But anyway, then they were starting to get -- admit patients and they had about three or four nurses down here, and they had a -- they got a dietitian. In the meantime, well, then the Homans had taken over, you know. R.B. Homen and the three other -- Ralph -- did the cardiograms, and Bob did the -- helped with the pneumo patients. And then, I guess in 1945, they finally paid the final payment on the sanatorium. And in 1952, we celebrated our 25th anniversary here, of Sisters of Saint Joseph's.

Q Uh-huh. Now, you said when the Sisters first came down in 1927, they lived with the Sisters of Loretto.

A For about three weeks.

Q And then they moved into the sanatorium?

A Yes.

Q When did you all acquire this building?

A This building here? In 1970. In 1970. And then they worked on it until 1971. Then we moved in December of 1971.

Q Whose house was it?

A This was -- first of all, originally, this house was the

Homans' house.

Q Uh-huh.

A And then the Ayubs had it, and then we bought it from the Ayubs. And that was in 1970, and then we moved in here. They renovated it and changed it all around and everything, and then we moved in December of 1971, at the same time that we moved into the --

Q The new hospital.

A -- the new hospital. We moved into the new hospital in 1971, in August, and we moved in here in December.

Q Uh-huh.

A We stayed at the new hospital for a month or so until they were completely finished with this.

Q Now, what kind of feelings did you have when you moved into the new hospital?

A It was a good feeling to think that we have some place that we can move around a lot.

Q Yeah.

A Even though the other place was big, but then it was not -- it was not adequate to what the new building was. And then we didn't have all the -- we didn't have to carry oxygen around like we did over there.

Q Well, my next-door neighbor was in Saint Joe's just before she died, and she was out on the porch.

A Oh, yes. They had a lot of those porches. That was supposed to be the thing for T.B. patients, to have a lot of sunshine and fresh air. Not direct sunshine, but sunshine and

fresh air.

Q Were there elevators in the old Saint Joe's?

A Yes. We had one elevator. It was a small one, but it was enough to take people up and down.

Q How many floors did it have?

A We had one, two, three -- about three floors with the first floor, first floor where the offices were and kitchen and the dining room. And then we had a second floor and a third floor.

Q Now, did the patients eat in --

A No.

Q -- in the dining room?

A No.

Q Just the --

A Not when I came. There were no patients down there. They all ate --

Q In their rooms?

A -- off of trays, in their room. We'd send the food up. They had a sort of, like a, dumb waiter and we'd send the food up to a diet kitchen up there, and then we'd set up the trays upstairs in the floors, on the floors. Each floor had its own.

Q How many patients did Saint Joe's hold, in the old one?

A In the old Saint Joseph's?

Q Uh-huh.

A About 80, I think; that was the full capacity.

Q And how many could the new one hold?

A Let's see. 120.

Q Now, the new one, the new Saint Joe's, was a full service

hospital?

A Oh, yes.

Q In surgery --

A Not at first.

Q Not at first?

A No. But after that, then we had -- we built and we had the chapel upstairs, in the new one. Then they took the chapel away from there, and so they made it into a surgical floor, and then that's where we had surgery, was on third.

Q Now, when did y'all sell the new hospital?

A The new hospital was sold in 1980 and the Health Care of America was HCA. And then we worked there with HCA until 1983, and they closed then, on February, and then Sun Valley Regional took it over, and then I stayed on. I was the only one that stayed on because I was working with the cardiac then, already. So then we moved to the -- to this Murchison Building. And I've been over there ever since.

Q How many Sisters are here now?

A We're seven of us here.

Q And are they all nurses?

A No. Two of them are teaching at Saint Patrick's and one is nursing down at Texas Tech in the clinic and one of them was teaching at the -- in the Spanish school down there where they're teaching these people were -- either been -- may or were first citizens or are going to be citizens. I don't know which is which.

Q Amnesty.

A I don't know which way -- which one is which. But anyway, they're trying to teach them English. So, she teaches down there and the other one was a student, a candidate for the community, and she just lived down here for experience. But she played in the symphony orchestra. She was down where she played in the symphony.

Q Has The Order changed an awful lot since you've been in it, Sister?

A Oh my, yes. There's a lot of changes in many ways. In the way we dress and the rules have been changed. There's not all as strict there as it used to be for different things -- like we use to not be able to go home within five years, and now you can go home anytime that you can --

Q Afford to?

A Afford to, yes.

Q Time-wise and money-wise, too?

A Yeah. So, that's about the way it has been.

Q Do you miss wearing your habit?

A At first, yeah. You felt like you weren't dressed or something.

Q How many years have you been The Order, Sister?

A I've been in 55 years. In August, I'll be in 56 this coming August.

Q Uh-huh. How do you like working at the Life Care Center?

A I like the work at the Life Care Center. It's one of my easiest jobs I've ever had.

Q It's a pleasant job, too.

A And it's one of the easiest jobs I've ever had. You know, sometimes you have your ups and downs there, especially when you have problems with patients but outside of that, I think, as a whole, I think it's a very pleasant place to work. Everybody's congenial and everybody's nice to one another.

Q And they're also happy to be here, and the patients are nice.

A You see the patients and you see -- it's very gratifying to see these patients coming out of it. Like, when they first come down and out and they can hardly move. I know some of them we've had that were not able to walk. They came in a walker or a wheelchair, and after they finished there, they walk on the treadmill for twenty minutes, and it's unbelievable.

Q It really is. That's been quite a change for you to see the difference in the way medicine was practiced --

A Oh, yes.

Q -- in these past fifty years.

A That's for sure. When I took care of some heart patients, well, I -- oftentimes I think back now -- I wonder how they made it. Really. They weren't allowed to get out of bed, they weren't allowed to sit on the side of the bed, they weren't allowed to walk to the bathroom. Now, they get up right away and sit on the side of the bed, and the first thing you know, they have to walk to their own bathroom. You just about -- I know they used to count steps, not have more than five steps at a time.

Q When you were at Saint Joe's, the old Saint Joe's, exactly

where was it located in relation to this house?

A Right across the street.

Q And the steps out in front --

A -- front are the steps leading into the old hospital.

Q I have some pictures here, Sister, that you might be interested in. One is, this is the Baldwin Sanitarium and that was in 1909. And then it was sold to Homan.

A This is the -- this is the Saint Joseph's --

Q Yeah, uh-huh. They're all Saint Joseph's. And then this is -- I took this picture the other day of the old steps.

A This was -- the Baldwins must have been the first ones.

Q They're the first ones (who) build it, yeah.

A Yeah, yeah. This is very familiar to me. And they used to have some more buildings in the back of it. They had torn those down when I had came, all but one, and they tore that one down.

Q I noticed some old steps right here at the end of your driveway. Where those steps going over to the hospital?

A Apparently, they were. Dr. Homan apparently had that because that was sort of, kind of, like a little valley down there. It was a little slope down there and that was all grass and trees.

Q He built his house right by the hospital?

A He had a little bridge built across there and that's where they used to go. Yeah, you feel it bright and early in the morning.

Q What doctors were there at the end, before you all moved to the new hospital?

A Well, let's see. Dr. Ralph Homer used to come once in a while, but not too long. Dr. Bob used to come, give an pneumo. But by the time -- see we changed the hospital. We changed the sanatorium to a hospital in 1956, I think it was. I think it was in 1956 where we changed it into Saint Joseph's Hospital, from Saint Joseph's Sanatorium, and, yeah, that's when I had the -- and in 1977, at the new hospital, we celebrated our 50th anniversary. We've been -- in 1983 they closed it again and fixed it over in to the psychoward. So now, Sun Valley has it.

Q And none of the Sisters go into Sun Valley?

A Nobody works over there. Sister works down at the clinic, Texas Tech Clinic. She has about four clinics down there. She has a breast clinic. She has an eye clinic and I think it's Bowman Clinic. I don't know what else. I haven't been down there lately. They've moved into their new building. So I don't know what they have.

Q Can you tell me a little bit about your Order? How did it start?

A Started in France and some of the Sisters came over from France, from the pre-France and they landed in Boston (or) New York, and they were over there for a while, and then they came out to the western part of the country, and in the center they split. Some went down to what the they called Carondalet, Saint Louis, and the others came as far as Newton, Kansas; and then from Newton, Kansas, they moved to Concordia, Kansas, and that's where the community started.

Q And what year was that?

was instrumental in seeing that her wheat in and everything. And then my brother had to back over there again and hire these harvestmen to come and harvest for her. And then she died August the ninth. And then I went back again. And then that was the last time I came back.

Q I bet that Montana winter was pretty harsh after being down here.

A That year it blossomed. There was very little, hardly any snow and not very cold. But what cold they did have was on the wires, you know; the frost would be so thick on those wires that they broke. And so they had no electricity. They'd be out of electricity sometimes almost a whole day before it was fixed. But I haven't been back since. In the fall then, my sister in Montana died August the ninth. My sister in Seattle, Washington, died November the 30th.

Q So your whole family left you.

A And now there's nobody over there. I have cousins in there, but --

Q That's not a reason to go back in the wintertime.

A No. No way.

Q So you were -- you said that you were getting ready to go somewhere next week?

A Yeah. I'm going to Florida next week.

Q And then you said the Sisters were coming down from The Mother House for a retreat or something?

A No. They have been already, but there are some more coming again this week -- this coming week, I think it is. No. It's

A I think it was in 1903. I'm not sure. They celebrated their 100th anniversary already.

Q So the 100th, not in the States, but total?

A Yeah, with all being in.

Q Uh-huh.

A I think it's a -- you know last year, a couple of years ago we celebrated our 100th anniversary. I think it was in 1983, because I think it was the same year I celebrated my 50th anniversary, that we celebrated the community's anniversary.

Q Do you ever go back to Montana, now?

A I haven't since my parents and my sister died.

Q After you were living down here, did you go back to Montana in the wintertime?

A Oh, yes. I went back in January when my sister had cancer, and she was very sick, and her husband had to go to the hospital and get his eyes taken care of. So there was nobody there to take care of her, so I went over there and stayed her and I came home, here. I wasn't home; well, I went to make the retreat and then I came home and then I made the retreat in Kansas and then I came home over here. And I was no more here but few days when they called and said that he passed away, her husband.

Q The husband passed away?

A Of a heart attack.

Q My heavens!

A So then I went back again and I stayed there again. My brother came from Spokane, Washington. We stayed there and they started getting all her stuff together and then she -- my brother

next week, but I'm leaving. The same time I'm leaving, they're coming.

Q How many -- do they all stay here at the house, at the residence? How many bedrooms do they have here in the house?

A We had, but we have used some of them for different things now, since we haven't been that many. But we used to be 11 Sisters here and there was a bedroom for every one, private beds.

Q And how about a bath? Do they share a bath?

A There's three bathrooms upstairs, one in each corner and one in the middle. So there's no waiting for one another or anything else.

Q How was the house arranged when it was Dr. Homan's?

A It was just like this, only that was open. There were little French doors like these there. And they led into the other room which we divided up and made two bedrooms out of.

Q That was probably the dining room?

A That was another part of the dining room and this, what the we used for the dining room, was the breakfast nook. When they had all their family here, they had a huge family. As I said, that whole wall was full of pictures -- of the wedding pictures of their children. And so then they used to open up these doors, and then they had this whole room for a dining room.

Q Now, when you all were nurses at Saint Joe's and the Homans were living here, did they entertain you all at all and have you come over to the house?

A I don't think they did, because there were not that many Sisters here at that time. And then after I came, then the

Homan's already were not here. See, I came in '48, and Dr. Homan had died in '45 or '46 somewhere. And I came in '48, so they were already gone from here. The Ayubs then were living here because the old R.B. Homan had died before I came. And then his mother was still living, and he had an aunt living. But they moved out, apparently, because I don't remember them -- ever seeing any of them here -- with the exception of the Ayubs.

Q Now, when you came down and -- where did you live when you came down?

A Right in the hospital.

Q In the hospital?

A We all lived in the hospital.

Q So you all lived in the hospital until you all bought this place in 1973 and lived downstairs in the basement?

A '71.

Q '71. And did you live down in the basement where the dining hall was?

A Upstairs and downstairs. Second floor and first, very first floor. We had one, two, three -- we had four bedrooms down there, and then we had the porches that we used for bedrooms and upstairs, then in the back, they had porches and the front rooms and there must have been about one, two, three -- about four upstairs. So, all total, there were about eight rooms.

Q Did -- you all ran the hospital and you were supervisors and you, yourself, was a nurse. Did you have lay nurses, also?

A Uh-huh.

Q And did the patients have private rooms, or were they mostly

open wards?

A They had private rooms, but was mostly -- then the ones on the porch, of course, they'd have to come through the room. But they were still in a private area by themselves. You know, this used to be an open ward. Even when we had psych patients, they were open. It was an open ward.

Q And you had psychiatric patients there after you made it a general hospital?

A Uh-huh.

Q And whereabouts did you keep them? On a certain floor?

A On the second floor, uh-huh. I was in charge of the big -- of the women's side and then one of the other Sisters was here. She was in charge of the men's side. We had them divided at the time. Oh, once in a while, we would have a male on the women's side, but it was very seldom. Most of the time we tried to keep them over there, because it was so much better for the patients themselves. But I didn't used to like psych very much. But today I wouldn't think of wanting to go in to the psych department any more.

Q It's kind of scary. They were segregated according to sex. Was there segregation here from black and white?

A No.

Q There was none whatsoever?

A No. No. We overcame -- race and color and creed didn't make any difference.

Q Was there any segregation of black and white in Kansas, at your other hospital?

A At one time. Not at the hospital, but at one time in Kansas, period, they were not aloud in the public places. Now, Marymount, which used be our college, we used to keep them there. But they couldn't go downtown. No. Kansas was very --

Q So you had segregated schools, too?

A Apparently, we didn't have blacks around there. They weren't allowed around.

Q Yeah. I didn't realize it's --

A Now when we -- when I was out west in school, they had a black family there and went to our school, out there.

Q In Montana?

A No. In Marymount, Kansas. And they were allowed on our playgrounds, just like anyone else, and the other kids all played together. You never could tell the difference. But, take it to a city? No way.

Q I didn't realize there was that much segregation in Kansas. I'm from Louisiana, so there was quite a bit of segregation.

A Well, you know, even here, we had a black chauffeur. We had a black man in the kitchen. But when we'd go to Las Cruces, they could not come into the restaurant where we were to eat. We had to buy their food and take it out to them. Now, that was, I think that was very ridiculous, but that's the way it was.

Q Now do you all have a housekeeper and a cook or do you all do your own thing, now?

A We have our own housekeepers and our own cooks.

Q How do you share your duties?

A Each one has a certain amount to do.

Q Everybody takes care of their own room and then everybody takes care of the community part?

A Certain part of the building.

Q How do you do with your food?

A Well, whoever cooks, everybody eats.

Q So you have a community eating time?

A Well, we have one meal together most of the time.

Q And that's supper?

A Because everybody goes in at different times and they come home.

(Break in tape.)

Q You didn't have any emergency treatment?

A Huh-uh.

Q When they brought people in an ambulance, did you all have a loading ramp or something?

A Yeah. They had to carry them upstairs.

Q All those big steps?

A Uh-huh. Unless the patient could sit in the wheelchair, that they could take it in the wheelchair, that they could take it up.

Q Now, the wheelchairs: those are those old caneback wooden wheelchairs, weren't they?

A They were wooden, most of them. Towards the last, a few people had some good ones there. Most of them were wooden wheelchairs.

Q Do you have any idea where we could find any of those old wooden wheelchairs now?

A I have no idea. As I said, I wouldn't even know where to go to find all of our old dresses and things we had.

Q So, when they closed it, what the did they do? They don't know what they did with it?

A Well, when we closed Saint Joseph's, we didn't take any of that stuff with us. But we had the alcoholics over there at the hospital, and so they used those things. I think in time they sold most of it.

Q Well, after you built the new hospital and moved in the new hospital, how long did the old hospital remain intact?

A Just two years.

Q Just two years. And the Alcoholics Anonymous were there?

A Were there one year.

Q One year. And then you sold it to the Cancer Treatment Center, so the property --

A Some property, yes. Uh-huh. I think that's part of it. Because I think we were building the Murchison Building. And so we sold that to them and we had the other. So they exchanged, because that didn't do us any good, and it didn't do them any good. So then, that's how they did it; they exchanged. So, it's what I understood, anyway.

Q But you don't know what the happened to the furniture from the old hospital at all?

A Huh-uh.

Q How about the old records from the old hospital?

A I have a lot of them here, yet, a few old records that we have. But we took what the we wanted from over there before the

alcoholics moved in, and we left some dishes and stuff over there for them, and when they had the old stoves over there, I don't even know what the happened to them.

Q Do you think maybe they sold -- The Order sold it or let McKenney do the wrecking or someplace or somebody like that, and they took the --

A They didn't really do -- I don't know who wrecked it. They took it down stone by stone, because that stone pile over is still part of the stone that was made from that.

Q Now, the fence out in front, or the rock wall in front -- that's still the old original rock wall of the old hospital, isn't it?

A Yes, uh-huh. Before the steps there?

Q Yeah. The other day I took a picture of the steps, as I showed you, and there's a contractor's name on there. I wonder if that is the original contractor for the steps. It was (inaudible). I have to look it up at the library.

A I really don't know.

Q It's O.F. Hayward Cement Contractor.

A And that was from out in the front?

Q Yeah. That's the steps out in front.

A Well, the steps might have been made by some other company that I really don't know, because they were already existing when I came. The only thing that wasn't done was the pavement. There was no pavement in front of the hospital.

Q At all?

A No. It was just plain dirt and rocks and not even graveled,

really. So, I really don't know about. That was already built, so it could have been that was the original.

Q I'll have to look up that.

A It wouldn't surprise me if that was the original.

Q Well, Sister, I certainly thank you for your time and --

A I don't know if I gave the right things --

Q -- letting me pick your brain.

A -- or anything. But any way, I tried to bottle different things that were out there at the time.

Q When, in the old Saint Joseph's, you had a chapel downstairs or --

A Yes.

Q Upstairs.

A Downstairs.

Q In the basement?

A In the front entrance. Front entrance used to be going up the steps from outside and then our Sisters changed some of that stuff and had the front entrance there and closed it all up there.

Q Okay. So that's how that changed it from Saint --

A Yeah.

Q -- because they had the steps going all the way up here.

A Yeah. All the way up here, yes. And see, we changed that so that the steps come up here and they're on the level and then you just walk in. Then they had to go up the stairs inside. See, so that was already changed when I came here. So our Sisters did that a long time ago because it was just too hard.

Some of those people could not walk all those steps.

Q Yeah.

A They were out of wind before they got halfway up.

Q And for T.B. patients --

A Even for all those front steps alone.

Q Yeah. For T.B. patients, that was pretty rough, there.

A But, you see, we also had a back place where you could come in on the level on the second floor.

Q Uh-huh.

A Did it with two levels, there.

Q And where was -- you had a Mother Superior or a Sister Superior in charge of the hospital?

A Yes. We always used to have somebody there that was the head of the congregation, there. But the head of the congregation was -- when they bought the hospital -- was Mother Mary Rose Walker. She was the General Superior of all the community.

Q And did she ever come down here?

A She's the one -- she's the one that bought the hospital.

Q Oh. She was the Mother Mary General of the whole hospital?

A Of the whole community.

Q Of the whole community here in town?

A Everywhere.

Q Oh. Everywhere?

A Uh-huh. She was the General Superior of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

Q And she lived her in El Paso for a while?

A No. She lived in Kansas, but she'd come down here occasionally to see how things were going.

Q And who was the first Mother Superior here?

A I think it was Sister Ursula; I'm not sure.

Q And who was the last one?

A The last one was Sister Giles, I think.

Q And did she go back to the Mother House after they sold the hospital?

A Yes. After the hospital over there was closed, then she left; uh-huh, and I stayed here. I was -- we're only two stayed here, that was working at the hospital. The rest all went back.

Q How many Sisters are in your Order now?

A Now we don't have as many as we used to have. We'd be, we must be about four hundred now. We used to be seven hundred, or so.

Q Oh well, that's not much of a decline though, over the years.

A It's quite a bit. There's quite a few left at the time when the changes came, during Vatican II. But, I guess that's the way things go.

Q Yeah.

A So far, I guess we're is(inaudible)

This concludes our interview for today.

(Tape is interrupted.)

A -- Because I think it was a Diocesan affair and they were running it, I think, the Homans were.

Q Bishop Schuller?

A And Egbert.

Q Dr. Egbert.

A And so I think it was because he's the one that asked if we would come here. He invited us down here from Silver City. See, at one time even Silver City was in Diocese of El Paso.

Q It's not any more?

A No. It has its own Diocese with the seas in Las Cruces.

Q So the New Mexico line is the dividing line for it.

Sister also stated that during Dr. Homan's ownership of the house that there was a lady living in the very large, large room upstairs, above the living room. They all called her Aunt Alexander. She apparently had t.b., and she was a music teacher.

Mrs. Ayub, the next people to own the house, also had tuberculosis.

Both families had large dormitories. There were only two baths in the house.

After the Sisters bought it, they remodelled the house to make 11 bedrooms and three baths, closed off the fireplace, and made a chapel out of one of the porches.

The only original part of the house now, are the large French doors in the living room and the dining room and the beautiful bookcase/ cabinets on either side of the fireplace.

This concludes the interview with Sister of Saint Joseph.
Thank you very much.