Church: An interview with Mrs. Olive Hastings Buelow, class of 1924. And what I'm going to do, Mrs. Buelow is just start with the questions we have and then we can go from there. We don't have to stick to the form at all. It's not as if we have to answer every single question. Okay, first of all, you did tell me earlier, before we put the tape on that you're from Wisconsin originally. Are you from Reedsburg originally?

Buelow: I was born 12 miles from Reedsburg.

Church: Oh, so it's really home.

Buelow: This is home. We've lived here since, so, since I was eight years old, I went to high school here…

Church: Where were you born?

Buelow: Lime Ridge which is about 12 miles

Church: At Lime Ridge, which so it's not too far. And, um, so you lived here, you went to school in this area and you have a large family. Did you come from a family of—

Buelow: I came from a family of, there were six girls.

Church: Six girls?

Buelow: Six girls.

Church: And, and where were you? Were you the oldest youngest?

Buelow: Fourth

Church: Fourth girl. And you went to school here. Did, and you decided you wanted to go into nursing. How did that happen? How did you decide you wanted to go to nursing school?

Buelow: Well I suppose it was because my father was a doctor and I was, I was interested in uh in medicine and in a nursing. And he had a small hospital here. He had a building here at a small hospital and ran that and I was around um, nurses and doctors and the sick people-- From the time I was eight years old until I graduated from high school.

Church: Were there nurses in your family? Was your mother a nurse?

Buelow: No, I had an, aunt nurse. I have an aunt and a sister who lived in Chicago Heights and married a doctor. She went in, she went to Chicago to spend a

year in the medical school, but she was eight years older than I, so I never saw too much of her. I mean, you know, we were our age difference, right. So I, I just was interested in, and I don't know, in high school, the kids in my class, they, they all kind of looked up to me. If anything happened to them, they'd sort of come to me. I remember one time somebody got cut, there was blood on the floor and I, I got… no one else would do it.

Church: You were seen as the brave one probably.

Buelow: Right. So, uh, I don't know. I just was always interested in it. And, um,.

Church: Were you encouraged by your family? Did your parents think it was okay to be a nurse?

Buelow: Yeah, oh yes. Being by my sister in Chicago and her brother--and her husband who was a doctor.

Church: So it was okay!

Buelow: I was in--, I was encouraged. And at that time I wanted to go to university, but my father didn't feel that he could afford to send me to university. I didn't have to pay too much, you know, to go to county. It was nothing to it.

Church: Right.

Buelow: There was, there was hardly any money involved when going to the Illinois training school, they'd furnish, the uniforms and everything. You even got paid, you know, for awhile there.

Church: Yes, that's right. Did, uh, did any of your sisters go onto college or you have one sister that was there at ITS what year did she graduate?

Buelow: Twenty Six. And then the youngest sister, the third one went also at the same time, but she got sick and was discouraged from finishing her training. And in later years she was, uh, she was. Um, not, uh, I can't think of the name, um, social worker. No, she worked as an aid and went to California and worked in the hospital, I think for 27 years. And she knew more about medicine and nursing than I did. She had a better—

Church: She had a grasp of it.

Buelow: She saw that there were three of us that were involved in nursing.

Church: So now, were there any people from your area here in Wisconsin, classmates, perhaps that went with you or did you just happen to go by yourself?

Buelow: No no no.

Church: And why the Illinois Training School? Certainly, there were other schools out there.

Buelow: Yes but see my brother in law lived in Chicago Heights and, uh, he, he, uh, pointed out, uh, cook county hospital and Presbyterian hospital. And I, I sent a resume to both places and it was accepted at both places. And that was in, in, um, March of 1922. And, um, so I went down to Chicago a month. When the schools would open. And when I got down there, he said, I'm not going to let you in and see these two different hospitals. He said, I want you to go up to cook county because I think the training will be better. And, uh, so that's so that's, how I—

Church: So, you stayed there with them until, I mean, it started in April.

Buelow: I stayed there for that month. Then on the 12th of April, he took me in and I was going with my husband at that time. He was here in Reedsburg, and we were going together. He was older than I, he was a world war, one veteran, he was older. He followed me everywhere I went and, um, he came down to see me before I went in and they took me into the nursing home and they said, well, you don't have to stay here today. You can come back this evening. If you have anything else you want to do. So the men took me to the Sox, ballpark.

Church: Oh, how nice!

Buelow: I think that game of the sox I saw babe Ruth play.

Church: Did you really??Oh, that's wonderful!

Buelow: I'll have to go back a little bit farther when you asked if there was anybody else. Sure. There was a girl. …Kela Sherwood. That was another reason why I, um, she went, she went to Brisbane and graduated, but that she was older than me, about four years older, but that wasn't, she was the one that went to—

Church: You knew she was there.

Buelow: I think that's what motivated me to make an application to the experience.

Church: Oh, that helps. Sure. Well, that's great. So you started in April now, how many others? You know, they had groups starting in April and July, June and October.

Buelow: April, July.

Church: Now, how many of you started together in April? Do you remember?

Buelow: How many?

Church: Yeah, the whole class.

Buelow: I suppose, I would think, I don't remember.

Church: You don't remember?

Buelow: I couldn't tell you whether there was—

Church: What were you first impressions that first day, aside from seeing babe Ruth play at the sox park?

Buelow: I suppose it was meeting different and being taken to my room and I just don't. I just don't. I remember that, I was in the nursing home. I remember the elevator. It was just an elevator, just one or two. We'd get on the elevator when the person was running it. And that, to me, that was, that was something we didn't have.

Church: Elevator! How many floors was the building?

Buelow: I think it was three, three floors. We were at 501 S. Honore.

Church Yeah, I've seen pictures of it. I've seen the pictures So as far as you're concerned, the reputation of the Illinois training school was pretty much established And, and here you were, it was the year, 1922. That was it. Now was it a two-year program at that point?

Buelow: 30 months, 30 months, it goes through that … why they established that. And the only thing that we missed out on, and you know, at that time was this four months we'd be out at Chicago lying-in [hospital]. again, we didn't, we weren't sent out. It was the months ahead of me and they had just finished that according to the book they had just left that program. And, but we had 12 weeks of OB. We had six weeks at normal him then six weeks at county.

Church: At county….

Buelow: So we had plenty, we had adequate OB be training.

Church: What about, um, what about psychiatric nursing?

Buelow: Uh, I didn't, uh, I didn't go into that program at all then.

Church: And it was by choice wasn't it?

Buelow: It was by choice and it was, it was in a building off to the back and to the left.

Church: Yeah. That's been torn down.

Buelow: It was a five-story building. Well, they call it old ward four, I don't know. I may have been there. I mean, I think we had to to have a certain length of time that I think I probably did. I, yeah kind of foggy.

Church: I know it wasn't required until the fifties.

Buelow: No, it wasn't. But one for I, that was more, it wasn't, it didn't involve all the alcoholics and that, you know, that they, you know, there was a lot of, uh, alcoholics, but we had the-- but I did have my, uh, training in contagious.

Church: Oh, you did?

Buelow: Yes. And they had this separate, a flat over, I think it's Lincoln street that they had a flat and we had to move over there for the six weeks we were there. And I had that and see, we couldn't go back and forth.

Church: No, you stayed there.

Buelow: You had to stay there, and we couldn't associate, we couldn't associate with the—

Church: A fear of contagion, I guess, sure Yeah. And in those days, what were the kinds of things there was the influenza epidemic was in 1918. What was the big, yeah. What was the big thing going on during the twenties when you were there?

Buelow: Well, I don't remember.

Church: Because later it was TB, it was, uh,

Buelow: I just don't remember and I didn't have TB and that was a choice. Yeah. Then the TB was the hub of the contagious—

Church: Before they invented all the medicines that were going to take care of these things, there was a lot of that going on.

Buelow: I didn't have, I didn't have that all.

Church: See, in my day, I was in the fifties, we had polio, we had a real problem with polio. So each, each generation has its sort of own kind of thing to contend with with that. So, so. It would just getting back to your classmates when you started, then you didn't know anybody as well, but you got to meet some people. And, um, do you remember how many of them left and why they left?

Buelow: Um, no, there's no.

Church: Because some of the people I've talked to said that some people left because they left, they weren't supposed to get married and they get secretly married and then they had to leave.

Buelow: I guess, well, I can't recall anyone personally.

Church: No, no, you don't need to name names. I just want to know

Buelow: I know the class of 25 And the next class, one of the girls was sent home because she had her haircut. We weren't supposed to have a haircut. We had to wear long hair,

Church: But they didn't want long hair on the collar. So, you had to pull it up.

Buelow: Well, we had like, they, they didn't allow us to have bobbed hair.

Church: Is that right?

Buelow: And this girl, and she lived in Wisconsin, she was from Chippewa falls and she was sent home, but she later I think she, re-entered and--

Church: Once her hair grew, maybe. Isn't that amazing.

Buelow: You know, our class, the one that went in in April was the last, one of 24. Then when the 25th, when was those that came in in July where the class of 25,

Church: I see.

Buelow: And the class of 25, uh, I became acquainted with, um, a girl by the name of Louise Alt and she lived in Eau Claire and the reason she was from so close to home. But on top of that, she had a boyfriend whose first name was Henry, and that was my husband's first name. And that's how we, and we were pals all throughout school

Church: Is that right?

Buelow: And in fact, they stood up for us when we were married, and we stood up for them when they were married and she had two daughters and I'm still in touch with the two daughters. I still correspond with them

Church: And what happened to her? Did she die?

Buelow: She died. And she died in 1940. She was very young. Both of them died 1939 and 1940 tragic. So, it was very tragic. I think, as I recall, I didn't realize it at the time, but I think she became, she became addicted, and I don't know where she got started there and what, but I never, I never realized it until just, you know, before she died. Neither one of her daughters took up nursing.

Church: That's sad. Yeah. Well, isn't it. So, you didn't have lifelong friends for a while.

Buelow: She was my lifelong friend and intimate because I mean, you know, they had, you know, very involved in our lives and of course she's coming from Wisconsin too. I think that was another thing that brought us together.

Church: So, when you were down there in Chicago, going through your training, your husband to be was here in Wisconsin, and her husband to be was her in Wisconsin? So did they come down there together?

Buelow: Uh, when I was on duty and, her boyfriend would take her with him. No, but when I was on duty and my husband, well he wasn't my husband then, if he wasn't….When he came to see me and I was busy he'd take her out with tickets to the show

Church Aaah! That's wonderful!

Buelow: But my husband followed me to Chicago in 1922 … 1923… He came to Chicago.

Church: He came to be closer.

Buelow: No, it must've been 24. It was 24.

Church: The year you graduated.

Buelow: The year I graduated, It was 24 that he came to school.

Church: And then when did you get married?

Buelow: 25, it was right after that. Um, when I finished training, I immediately, I finished my training out of Highland park. You know Highland Park was associated, I mean, that's where we had our private duty, where we saw pay patients. And we were there six weeks, and I finished my training out there.

And I couldn't wait to get onto the elevator and come in and get my diploma. And Mary C Wheeler gave me my diploma.

Church: Oh that's wonderful.

Buelow: I couldn't wait to get there. And then I went right out to my sisters and from then I then right away, I went into registry.

Church: The central registry?

Buelow: Yeah, essentially to be a private duty, to be a private duty nurse. And you know that in those days, if you wanted the case, and if you were ready for a case, you had to have a suitcase packed because there was a waiting list. And I did private duty until the 27th. Then we came back to this.

Church: Now, during that time, of course we were heading for the depression and people weren't going to be able to afford private duty.

Buelow: Yes, and I even began to feel it in 26-27, because when, um, when I blocked the case, whatever my bill was, I always got a bonus. You know. They'd give you an extra $20 or something. And that began to get to tighter. Yeah, I did private duty all along the north shore, Highland Park.

Church: Evanston?

Buelow: Evanston…, and there's another home.

Church: Winnetka?

Buelow: Winnetka, and uh when it—

Church: Lake Forest?

Buelow: Lake Forest, I had been night duty in the, in a whole for the Dole pineapple people.

Church: Oh yeah!

Buelow: I really wasn't involved with a whole lot of--.

Church: Interesting. That's a very interesting area. I live in Evanston, but that whole north shore area is very, yeah.

Buelow: I had a room on the north, on the north side of Sheridan road. And it was happy for me to get up there, but I did a lot and I spent six months in one home in Highland Park.

Church: Oh my goodness. So you like the private duty was, was good for you?

Buelow: Well I enjoyed i

Church: That was, was that pretty much your choice? Were there any other choices you could have? What else could you have done?

Buelow: I liked bedside nursing.

Church: Were they not hiring bedside nurses in the hospital with that or, mostly students?

Buelow: There was a lot private duty people, you know, coming in for surgery or something., they wanted special nurses three or four days. So I spent six months in this one home, but I went there and I went there to take care of a little baby because they had their nurse had got sick and I stayed six months. And that's what prompted me to, to get home because I didn't want to, I didn't like that. You know, I didn't think that I wanted to get back into nursing. And that was enough. That was in 1924. And when I came back to Chicago, I stayed out there. They made me move my room out of my apartment, out of my room. She said I had to save money. You know, we were going to $50 and $49 a week. So I saved money.

Church: Sure.

Buelow: So that first year I saved a thousand dollars just by being at that home.

Church: Now, where was your boyfriend during this time?

Buelow: He was in Chicago.

Church: He was living in Chicago. So …

Buelow: So, when I left this place and I went in Chicago and then we got married. I vowed, I told him. He had followed me for four or five years. And I vowed, I was going to work one year. Then, I got married.

Church: And then once you get married, you didn't work?

Buelow: Oh yes I did private duty in Chicago. I was on the north shore.

Church: Until 1927.

Buelow: Until 1927 then I come back here.

Church: And then why did you come out?

Buelow: My father had this little hospital and he was fairly unhealthy, had a diabetic condition and he needed help. And the depression was around. Right. And he encouraged me to come back and I guess that's things were getting tight…

Church: And was your husband able to find work out here?

Buelow: So, then I worked with him for a year and then I had, uh, my daughter was born. I had one, I had one daughter at the time she was born 1929. And then from then, from then until 32, I was home. You took care of my, you know, just, I never expected to work again. And then out, this town built a new hospital.

Church: Oh.

Buelow: And my father died in 29 just before my daughter was born. He died.

Church: He didn't see her.

Buelow: So then they built this new hospital and, um, my girlfriends and different ones when they have a baby or they'd have surgery, they had asked me to, they got me to… for them And, uh, so then I, you know, I'd be gone three or four days. I'd have to have a babysitter. And, um, so that's how I started to work. And I worked from 32 until 76.

Church: Oh my goodness!,

Buelow: In this old hospital. and that a man and they got a brand new one who they have a lovely new hospital. It was 76, but I was still on the payroll as a big, they used to call me … oh, instruct—nurses' aid

Church: Oh, that's wonderful!

Buelow: And I was, so I worked in the hospital at him, not on general duty all the time. I've worked most, but when they needed, if they needed to a staff nurse or somebody, then they'd call me. I've told so many people that I, I would leave my washing in the washing machine because they call me and say they needed help on the floor. And I'd walk 12 blocks to the hospital and get 50 cents an hour. It was 12 blocks.

Church: …

Buelow: So that's how I got started and it all just kept rolling out into world war two

Church: 1940.

Buelow: And, uh, in the meantime, uh, we built, we built this little house in the fifties in 36, lived here 50 years.

Church: You built it yourself.

Buelow: We built his house. And so after the depression was over; my husband was a veteran and he got a bonus from the government. And he said, when I get that bonus I'm going to build a house.

Church: That's nice.

Buelow: And so then of course I felt as if I have to work to help, I enjoyed it. I liked it.

Church: Yeah. And you were making a contribution to your community. It was good for you.

Buelow: Well, I, and then,. I was just part time and, you know, off and on because I didn't want to leave my daughter all that time. And she, and we sent her to get her… university in 1950

Church: Wisconsin Madison?

Buelow: Yeah that's the one, And I said, I wouldn't take a full-time job. That would tie me down until she got through school.

Church: Sure.

Buelow: And, um, so then in 51, I went on the staff at the old hospital. And so I ran one floor medical floor for 14 years and I never took one day off. Worked the seven to three shifts.

Church: You really were a nurse. That's amazing. Now how did your husband manage without you home all the time?

Buelow: So, it worked out real good. When I, when I was on private duty and had to work nights or long nights, he was always home with my daughter. He was always home with my daughter. He's a wonderful wonderful father. And they, they would meet each other at noon and have dinner uptown. And then I'd be home in the afternoon when she would have been out of school so I'd be home.

Church: Worked out real well!

Buelow: And then by the time I am back to work he would be here.

Church: So, he and you didn't have to really commute long distance or any of that.

Buelow: No, no. We didn't even have a car in 45.

Church: You didn't need one?

Buelow: No. I walked over to the hospital.

Church: That's amazing.

Buelow I didn't do any nursing at homes except one home. You passed this big house on the corner, now a doctor lives there. Um, and he was from North Freedom, just west of here. And he was in training or he was in medical school when I was in training and he was over at the Illinois Medical School.

Church: Oh, sure.

Buelow: And I just saw her name in the paper, in that book here. He was dating a girl that name of uh Kubic. Um, she was there. She was at think in the class of 22, I think.

Church: Ah,

Buelow: Anyway. And she, she was at Elizabeth Kubik now.

Church: You kneww him before you went down there?

Buelow: No no, I knew he was from the North Freedom. And so, when he'd come over to, he knew that I was from Reedsburg, so he always asked me to dance.

Church: Oh, how nice!

Buelow: So, we've been very close, and I've worked with him and he has, he is now 89 years old. And, uh, he has practiced here. He came here in the spring of 27 and I came in the fall of 27. And so, from the time the hospital was built, I worked, I went to, and I'm probably, I was, he has music, a couple summers he entertains, or maybe every two months he has a group. Uh, 14 people has musicals. And I, of course, he always asked me and I always, uh, I always tell everybody there. I said, well, I've known him longer than anybody else because I knew him when he was going to school.

Church: Isn't that nice?

Buelow: And we have a very close relationship. Really a wonderful, dedicated doctor. He's retired of course now, but he can still get out. He, his wife died two years ago, and she was a St. Luke's graduate. He married, he didn't marry Kubic, he

married a girl from St. Luke's. … Yeah, but anyway, yeah, he has a beautiful home and he just, he just loves to entertain, and he's well taken care of he has two to take care of his best. That's the story of Dr. Paul is, but he's a real, and I'm very close to him. I talk to him.

Church: It's nice that you both have so much in common that he's right there.

Buelow: That I was going to say that I spent four months in that home four months in 43 and 44 taking care of the wife and the people that built that house. He was a banker here well off, but they needed somebody to be there at night. And I had pulled there and…and I'd sleep in the bed next to her, and then to go home in the morning at nine thirty. So I spent four months in that house.

Church: Isn't that interesting it's a whole different business, you know, private duty nursing was a real big portion of what nurses did, but then came the forties and right after world war two, and it just went downhill. Yeah, because the hospitals were now considered safer and there are more people who are graduate, trained, good trained nurses in the hospital. So people didn't use them the way they did then.

Buelow And they didn't need them. And honestly, when I look back the things that we did for people, we babied them too much comfort.

Church: Creature comforts.

Buelow Yes. They didn't need all that. They would have been better off without all that stuff.

Church: Probably, but, you know, I think people are so frightened that just to have somebody there that they can feel that that they can turn to—

Buelow: That's right, that's right

Church: is really what, and there's so little known in those days there wasn't the same kind of treatments and medicine. Well, that's interesting. I guess what I wanted to do is find out if you can, and I know it's difficult to do so if you can't, that's okay. To try to describe what a typical day as student was for you, that you remember in terms of your education. Did you, for example, work eight hours and then go to classes or did you go to classes eight hours and then do some work? Uh, how did it work? What was it all about?

Buelow: As I recall, we didn't have, did have certain periods that, that, you know, two or three days or so at a time that we had attended the classes and then we'd go back on duty on the county floor.

Church: So, so you did both in one, one day shift kind of thing.

Buelow: We had split shifts. There was no such thing as a straight shift.

Church: So, what does split shift mean? Does that mean like eight to twelve and four to seven or something like that?

Buelow: Yes, you'd have the hours off and you go back at seven,

Church: We had that in, in the fifties too.

Buelow: As I recall, that's the way we did it.

Church: We had another one, ten to seven, so that you, you came after breakfast and took care of the morning care. You were there during two meal times you were there during lunch time and supper time. You left after supper. So the ten to seven was a long, long shift.

Buelow: So, yeah. And we had split shifts except the night.

Church: Now, how much night duty did you have as a student?

Buelow: Well, I don't recall that I put in as much, you know, whatever. There was a certain requirement. I remember doing that duty.

Church: What about evening shift? Three to eleven on three-thirty to twelve?

Buelow: Yeah. I don't recall, it wasn't, it wasn't anything like that. I think it was seven to seven and you'd have a few hours off. And that would be seven at night until seven in the morning. I think that's … if I recall. Yeah. I don't remember, uh, uh, an evening shift.

Church: What about your classes that you did have, who taught them? Did you have nurses teaching you? Doctors teaching you?

Buelow: Nurses.

Church You had no doctors teaching you?

Buelow: Well, I think we had, I'm sure we had some, but I can't remember who it would be, but looking back to here, I can see the different ones, Cassie… and um, the night supervisor she taught us, and the one that taught nursing technique Hattie J. Robinson, She really gave me the, that that was the basic nurses training as far as I was concerned, she was the one that taught us how to make beds and, you know, all bedside skills.

Church: Basic skills.

Buelow: Basic skills.

Church: What did Ms. Wheeler teach? Did Ms. Wheeler teach anything?

Buelow: Can't remember.

Church: Okay. Did you have her for any, any classes at all or anything?

Buelow: I'm sure that we did, but I just can't remember.

Church: What do you remember about Ms. Wheeler?

Buelow: Uh, she was very, she was, we were scared to death of her.

Church: Really?!

Buelow: Oh, sure. You just didn't want to, you know, if you met her in the hall, you just straightened up.

Church: Was she difficult to talk to?

Buelow: Well no, but she was, she was domineering.

Church: Domineering.

Buelow: You know, you just looked up to her. She was ahead. Yeah. Very… I got to see her going around and around the corner to her room, she had certain area in the nurses' home. I mean, we never went into it unless it was something very special.

Church: Oh, really? Did she, did she join you at tea or lunch or supper or any of those things? Any social thing?

Buelow: Oh yes, sure sure, she was there at social things.

Church: Was she there, like at mealtimes so that you could all sit down and eat together?

Buelow: I don't remember.

Church: You don't remember. The reason I'm asking is because shortly after Ms. Wheeler—well, Ms. Wheeler left in 24, but you had already graduated at that point.

Buelow: I graduated in October.

Church: In October.

Buelow: But she was still there.

Church: She was going to leave earlier, but she couldn't because Logan—

Buelow: That's right, she was supposed to leave in the spring. She was the one that gave me, handed me my diploma.

Church: And that was in October the 25th,

Buelow: October 25th.

Church: And she was still there.

Buelow: Still there.

Church: She left in November.

Buelow: She did.

Church: And in November Logan came.

Buelow: Yes.

Church: What do you know about Laura Logan?

Buelow: I didn't know her at all because I never was there. I was never there after that.

Church: Do you remember hearing anything about her before or after?

Buelow: No, I don't, no.

Church: Well, you know, the agreement to, um, phase the school out was announced officially in 1926. They sent a little bulletin around, we have a copy of it, and I think there's something in the, uh, in the book that shows a copy of it. And it's an announcement that was made with great excitement that the school was going to phase out. But the University of Chicago was going to initiate a generic program. They were going to have a baccalaureate program. And so, this school would phase out and that program would pick up and now they would have a wonderful baccalaureate program. Well, we know it didn't happen. When I talked to some of the graduates after you, the class of twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, they recall things that I can't find evidence for, for example, that it was Laura Logan that made the decision to, uh, go to the university and to close the school. Or it was, uh, Laura Logan was the one

that insisted on being called dean, not a superintendent. And there are lots of things that they remember about that.

Buelow: I never knew her—

Church: But you don't remember anything?

Buelow: I suppose I met her, but I—

Church: Did you go back to the Illinois Training School at all for anything? So, you're just nothing. You have no way.

Buelow: I, I must've gone back at different times because my sister was there too. She was in training.

Church: Now, when did she finish?

Buelow: She finished in twenty-six.

Church: Right.

Buelow: So she was there….

Church: Now, he's now she's no longer alive?

Buelow: No, she died two years ago.

Church: Do you remember hearing anything from her?

Buelow: I don't, I don't remember hearing anything from her. She, I haven't, we weren't together. She went to California. So in the later years it was just nothing but correspondence back and forth. And I saw her a couple of times in that time, so I never had any—

Church: Yeah, well, it's interesting because, um, in 1923, the Yale university school. of nursing was established. And in 1923, the Case Western Reserve school of nursing was, was established. So, so there was a real move in the country to start baccalaureate programs. Uh, so it's understandable that a good school, like the Illinois Training School would be one that might be considered a good candidate to move on, to become a baccalaureate program for the University of Chicago; so it's a very exciting kind of thing, but I think people who are very loyal to the Illinois Training School and loyal to Ms. Wheeler felt that this was a turn that she might not have taken that Laura Logan came in and did it! But Wheeler didn't and Wheeler stayed the longest, she was there for like 11 years.

Buelow: She was there from eleven, 1911 to 20.

Church: It's a long time.

Buelow: And so well, when in, our class was the last one to have a 30 months' training too.

Church: Well. Now why was that?

Buelow: Well, I think they instituted that during the world war-- after world war one, because they were in need of nurses, they had, you know—

Church: They streamlined it.

Buelow: You know, they needed, there were so many, um, so many nurses went overseas and all in the first world war, so many of the graduates. And I suppose the nursing situation got to the point, that they needed more nurses and they cut the course down so that people—

Church: So that you're saying they expanded it after that.

Buelow: And then after twenty-four, then they extended it to two years again.

Church: And by twenty-six, they knew they weren't going to take any more classes. And because the twenty-sixth class came, and they graduated in twenty-nine and that was the--.

Buelow: The end in twenty-nine.

Church: And that was the last class. Well, that's, that's one of the things you really want to get at, and it's very hard to get information.

Buelow: Now, I don't know anything about Miss Logan. I really don't. I just know that she was there when I mentioned them; when I mentioned this, to Ross, my neighbor here, he said that he was at county when Ms. Logan was there and he didn't like her.

Church: A lot of people didn't!

Buelow: He expressed that.

Church: Why didn't he like her?

Buelow: I don't know. I didn't go into it.

Church: I have a feeling that, what were some of the words that your classmates and your, your fellow graduates used about her was that she was very haughty. She, she distanced herself. And then instead of being called a superintendent, she insisted on being called a Dean.

Buelow Sounds like Laura degreed herself.

Church: Well she felt that was smarter. She felt that it was more important to impress or something. But the other thing is interesting. Just if you look at the book and if you look at the pictures, all the superintendents of nurses have uniforms on with caps. Yeah. She's the only one that doesn't, she has just regular clothes, you know, like a Dean. So, she really believed what she was doing. And then removed herself from the traditional nursing business. Which I suppose is one way to change. That was change.

Buelow: That, it was coming.

Church: Yeah. The other thing is the students, um, seem to, um, your fellow graduates from the Illinois Training School, they remember Ms. Wheeler as being much more by comparison to Logan as being much more, uh, available. She always was available.

Buelow: I would believe that! I would believe that. So if you had any problems, you could go to her. Yeah. You sort of held her as somebody—

Church: She was special. You were pleased to have her hand you the degree, the diploma.

Buelow: Oh yes!

Church: That was special.

Buelow: That was extra special.

Church: Yeah. Yeah. So, she was very well respected is what you say. So, getting back to, uh, the nurse physician kind of thing, we have, as time has gone on and nursing has become more sophisticated; there's a lot of conflicts in terms of what nurses do and what physicians do as times have changed. What was it like in your day, in the twenties when you were there, did the nurses and the physicians work together or were they really so separate that you wouldn't even communicate with each other?

Buelow: I looked up to them.

Church: Yeah. You looked up to the physicians?

Buelow: Well, we'd be there and we thought they were pretty something special because they were doctors and we were just—They were going to be doctors and we were going to be nurses. Assistants, you know?

Church: Did you feel that you had anything to contribute though for them because certainly you helped them be what they-- do, what they do. But there was no real working together though. Not as a peer.

Buelow: I have, I have a couple of pictures here that kind of struck me. I, saved these to happen. Here's a picture of the nursing home Now, for instance, now here's a, here's a picture of a doctor and one of our nurses and I don't … But anyway, we had a lot of, fun too, because he was, we had that Dr. Kearney, he was, uh, an Irishman and he was so full of fun.

Church: So there was, there was a casual kind of connection?

Buelow: Yeah that brings that out.

Church: Yeah. Well that's very nice. Yeah. Is that you?

Buelow: No, that's not me. Yeah, no, that's her name was …

Church: Now her hair was short, they must have changed their mind about haircuts. Isn't that interesting?

Buelow: …And here's her Dr. Carney taking that same with...

Church: Oh, now where was this picture being taken?

Buelow: Well I don’t think her hair was short.

Church: Maybe pulled back.

Buelow: No, probably pulled back because I know that, you know, that when I was in training, we worked in kid’s hospital and I got bugs.

Church: Oh, sure, lice.

Buelow: Yeah. And I had long hair, it was just terrible. So that was one of the reasons that I cut mine.

Church: So that was one of the reasons it was a problem.

Buelow: And then after that, then they, you know, they let them have their hair cut, but, when I was there they didn't so, they may have permitted bobbed hair after that.

Church: That's interesting, so with the physicians there was a, more of a social thing and physicians and nurses could socialize?

Buelow: We weren't supposed to socialize with them.

Church: Oh, you weren't?

Buelow: No, no heavens no dating. No, not, no, we were not supposed to.

Church: But you did, some of you.

Buelow: I didn't … You weren't allowed to be seen around the block or walking with them. We had to be very careful.

Church: Right. I dated a couple of them in fact, I think about this one, that when he fell, you know, they were all Jewish, so many Jewish doctors, I used to date him and … shoulder and out to all the dances or not.

Church: Not so anybody should know. Now some of you—

Buelow: You were allowed I suppose maybe it was, maybe it was that if you were in uniform, I suppose that was it.

Church: They didn't encourage it. But if you had a dance, then you could invite them

Buelow: Yeah, but to be seen on the street with them-- I think probably in your apartment … yes, we weren't supposed to be socializing with them.

Church: So, basically there was a mutual, casual regard for each other, but on duty, they were very much in charge the physicians. Um, let me see if you look back on the Illinois Training School now, in terms of your education. What do you think they were preparing these young women to do? What was the role that they thought they had for them? I mean, you're going to all be nurses, but was there a special kind of nursing that they became known for? Was there, were they supposed to go out and start hospital schools or were they supposed to go out and do bedside care or were they supposed to be administrators or was there something special that drummed home that was sort of what the Illinois Training School Nurse was supposed to be?

Buelow: Well of course, there were a few that were, you know, there were special and wanted to go on and do something different. I just don't recall.

Church: Did you have a sense of you before you went there, and your brother-in-law was telling you that this was the best place to go? Did you ever have second thoughts about that? Or did you feel it was the best place?

Buelow: I felt it was the best place and it was so exciting. There was never a day where you were bored on duty; there wasn't something different. It was just exciting every single day. And I was there at the time of the gangsters in Chicago. And when we were in the emergency room, these people would come in and the police, I mean, it was always something exciting. They had a lot of excitement, but I don't recall, some of the girls that went on or that would have different. The idea that they wanted to do something, but I didn't, I, I was just there after I got through training, I just wanted to get out and make some money.

Church: Sure, sure. Did you have a sense, because shortly after you graduated was when they decided to move the school into an educational arena, like the university, did you have a sense that the instructors were gearing up for that, that people were talking about? You know, any kind of, 'we should always, it's lifelong learning and we should always go on for more education or any of those kinds of things?' Nothing like that?

Buelow: I can't remember. That's a long time ago.

Church: The thing is some people I've talked to in fact, went to the University of Chicago for one year after they, got out of ITS, this woman in Racine that I visited last week, after she graduated, they gave her a year scholarship to go to University of Chicago. And then from there, she went to New York city and she got her, uh, she went to the Lowenstein clinic and became a nurse midwife. And then she went and got her master's degree at teacher's college. And it was like, one thing led to another,

Buelow: I suppose it would be whatever they wanted

Church: If you wanted to do it, but there was no real push for it is what I'm trying to get at. They weren't pushing, they weren't saying that this is, what you should do.

Buelow: I didn't have any further ambition.

Church: No, but I mean, if you want to, you could. What I was trying to get at was, was this instilled in the thinking as the teachers talk to you and so forth, that wasn't there as far as you can--

Buelow: I thought, I mean, during the years that I've been working here with different people and I've had so many people telling me that I should have gone up in the medical school, but I just, I never thought of it at the time. But now, I wish that I had. But at that time, I suppose, because I got married and you know, I

just, it wasn't a part of my life. I didn't, I had a lot of close associated with all of the doctors.

Church: Well, you were from a family that had a doctor in it.

Buelow: That's right. All the doctors that I've worked with here. I mean, I always respected them, but they respected me too because they, to me, they would listen to me too.

Church: You had experience and wisdom from experience, so certainly you made a contribution. Well, getting back to ITS, can you remember anything as a student, a particular memory of either something very good that happened or something bad that happened, or just something that happened that stays with you as a, as a student nurse, working as a student, what kinds of things can you recall? What do you remember? I still remember, for example, patients that I had when I was in the emergency room at children's hospital in Boston, I remember specific things that happen that stay with us.

Buelow: You're younger. And you can remember,

Church: Well, do you remember any? Anything at all negative or positive as a memory of being a student?

Buelow: I just enjoyed every day. I just, I think one of the most impressive things that struck me was when you see, we came from an area where there are no blacks. And when they took us on into the ward, the ward had fifty beds you know; and Hattie J. Robinson, was with us and we stood there at the door. I think it was fifty beds in the ward, then she pointed out what, five, six or seven beds or something like that. The beds that I was supposed to take care of for morning care and rub their backs, you know? And they were all colored people and I had never in life touched a colored person. And that impressed me because we didn't have blacks in this area. And then that was always very impressive to me. I just can't recall anything. It was so much or trying to think about things. Yeah.

Church: What about, just the whole idea of living in a dormitory and living with all these other young women? What kinds of things do you remember about that?

Buelow: I enjoyed it.

Church: You did.

Buelow: Yes. I enjoyed it. And we had roommates, you know.

Church: You probably had some very strict rules though.

Buelow: Oh, yes. Yes we did. You know?

Church: Did you have to have your lights out at a certain time?

Buelow: Sure, sure. Of course. We had to be in at 10 o'clock at night.

Church: Well, Sydney Pearson told me she almost got kicked out because they thought she was smoking, and you weren't supposed to smoke in those days… So it was a whole different kind of,--

Buelow: … my roommate was … and I don't know where she is. I've never, never kept in touch with her afterwards.

Church: Did you get along with her?

Buelow: Yes, but she was different than, I mean, she, we weren't, we weren't too compatible.

Church: Did you have a choice? Could you have changed your—

Buelow: I don't know whether we could have, I didn't. I don't think I ever—

Church: Oh, there she is. You see there. She's right next to the Sydney,

Buelow: She was a girl from Nevada. Out from Nevada We had girls from all over the states. Which was very unusual, very unusual.

Church: So, so to standardize nursing education would be difficult cause they all had different kinds of high school experience. They were all high school graduates at that point, weren't they?. Okay. Well, if you think of any special memory as we go along, it's okay. No problem. But if you do so as far as the last class graduating in 1929, now, even though you didn't go back to the alumni training school, how did you hear about the school closing?

Buelow: Well I felt sad about it

Church: But how did you hear about it?

Buelow: Well, I just don't recall, but I've always been in touch, you know, I was picking the Chicago paper, so I suppose I knew what was going on. And then of course I always kept in touch with Sydney Pearson and our classmates. And I always went back to all the reunions

Church: You did?

Buelow: Oh yes. I went back to all the years. I tried to find a picture of that I can't—Ruth Perry, Lash. She married a doctor, Doctor Lash, and she was in that picture with us. We had, we had reunions up until 78, 79. Or what year was that? The, was that 60? That'd be over 20 years

Church: Well, I know they had a newsletter too. You used to get an alumni newsletter. Cause we have those, we have copies of all those.

Buelow: Yes, oh yes. Oh, I looked forward to that

Church: Sydney did a lot of that work.

Buelow: Yeah, she did an awful lot.

Church: She kept it going. Yeah. And, Viola Strick.

Buelow: Yes, that's right. Is she still with him?

Church: Um, you know, we have her address and we've written to her and we've gone to the door and there's just nobody there. So I don't know what that means. I don't know if she's in a nursing home or if she's ill, it's just, we can't get it. We can't get any response. Her name is still on the door. I don't know. I saw her when I spoke to Sydney about three years ago, either. No, but I saw them both about two years ago, two or three years ago, and Sydney and I had gone out to lunch and she said she heard that Viola was sick.

We don't have to go on and on but let me see what we didn't cover here. As far as you know, then you've somehow heard about the closing of the school. Um, you didn't get any official information. You didn't get any notification. Or anything like that. Okay.

Buelow: That was 50 years ago.

Church: I know, I know 50 years ago. Um, do you know anything about the cook county hospital school of nursing, and what kind of nurses came out of that program or any contact with them?

Buelow: No, I've never been in contact with them.

Church: Okay. Cause you see, that's what we're looking at.

Buelow: I couldn't get over. I can't, I had a class with Dr. Carl Myer and he came in here—

Church: Oh yeah, we have pictures of him back at the—

Buelow: He was at the head of the hospital at the time.

Church: He was very important.

Buelow: He was a very important person. My pal around the corner here was around at the same time he was, in the same town with him, in Gillman, Illinois, that's where she was born. She knew that he was at County. And she came to County to interview him, to go into training. And he did not advise her to come to Illinois training school. And he sent her over to the university hospitals. And that's where she graduated now. I don't know why, but just see she was four years younger than I am.

Church: It might've been when it was closed down.

Buelow: Come to think of it. That's the time that the school was closed and …

Church: So he might have already known.

Buelow: So apparently that must've been one reason why Dr. Myer advised her because she would have been, uh, at the tail end of it.

Church. Yeah. I can understand.

Buelow: I hadn't thought about that. I have to ask her what she, if she remembers that she doesn't remember an awful lot, she has a lot of mental problems. Yeah, we talk every day.

Church: You've already answered some of that next questions which have to do with after your Illinois training school and how you came back here to Reedsburg and worked at the hospital here, and you stayed on and worked at this hospital here first private duty. And then, and then you took on staff. Okay. And you don't, um, you didn't really keep in touch with many classmates at that point.

Buelow: Just Sydney. And I used to meet her in Chicago and have lunch with her. And she's been up here.

Church: Oh, really! Oh, how lovely.

Buelow: I don't… that was probably six or seven years ago.

Church: She was an amazing woman. She did a lot of traveling. She was always telling me about her trips to Europe.

Buelow: I always heard from her. I always got a long letter from her on Christmas. And then this one Christmas, I didn't hear from her. And I had already written her

and apparently her the mail didn't get to… and finally the niece wrote me and said that she had died...

Church: Yeah. I had had lunch with her two weeks before she died. And what had happened was very interesting. Um, first of all, Sydney got in touch with the Cook county, hospitals, schools, nursing archives, and she wanted to turn over the memorabilia from the Illinois training school alumni association. She felt like she couldn't be responsible too much. So, she asked them if they wanted it. And they said we don't collect those things, but they know about me because I have a history center. I should give you my card. And so, she called me and we talked and she said, would you take care of these things if you have room? And I said, well, we have room at the, at the university. It would be very happy to, so Sydney and I got to know each other really well. It was really lovely. And, uh, and we went to lunch every now and then, and I never put her on the tape. We'd talk, and she'd tell me all kinds of things. And I used to say to myself, I really must get the tape recorded because what if something happens to her?

Well, in the end two weeks before she died, I took the tape recorder. I didn't know she was going to die. She was doing real fine. She was up anf about and everything, but she was getting weak. I wonder if she's just tired. I think she was very tired and she lived alone. And so I said, could I take you to lunch? So she said that would be fine. So there was a restaurant across the street from her apartment building. We walked around the corner, went to the restaurant, we had a nice lunch. And then we went back to her apartment and I put the tape recorder on and we just talked. And then I was going to send her a copy of what we did. And I called and there was no answer. And then her sister called me, cause her sister knew about me and telling me that she had died just two weeks later, but. She died at home alone. Yeah, that's my card.

Buelow: I am the last time. Well, it is five years now to back to 82, and then it was in March when she died in May. But in March I was down there. I'm down there in March. I used to go down and stay with them, um, … she lived with her. So I'd talked to Sydney, … met me at the train.

Church: Oh, she was very active a

Buelow: And that was five years ago; that's the last time I saw her. So, I think it was two years ago. I think it was two years ago that she died.

Church: Well she was a wonderful person and she did, she did make sure that we got all the memorabilia. And at one point we had—

Buelow: … That's what that was her whole thing and she really just lived for that.

Church: We had an open house and we put all the pictures up. And, when she came to the open house, Viola Strick also came and she said, where's the clock? And I

said, what clock? She says, there's a grandfather clock. Where is it? I said, you told me to go pick this stuff up over at the Cook County. This is all they had.

She said oh no. She says there's a grandfather clock and it was in memory of Ms. Wheeler. She said, and you must find that. So, I went back to Cook County and I said, apparently with all this material, there is supposed to be a grandfather clock. And they said, oh no, no, no, we don't have any such thing. I said, well, what's that over in the corner there? They said, oh, well that grandfather clock's been there for years. That's not it. So, I went over there and there's this little plaque and it says class gift to Mary C. Wheeler, Illinois Training School. If that plaque wasn't on there, they weren't going to give it to me. So now we have it, in the university and it ticks away. It has the most beautiful chimes still working since 1926. It's amazing. Oh, it's lovely. But that's another reason why I think Ms. Wheeler was so well thought of because they, the whole class just, I mean, everybody chipped in,

Buelow: We just thought she was extra special!

Church: So, this was a special gift for her.

Buelow: I can always remember, just because I can just see her. She was a big, big woman, very big.

Church: She graduated from the Illinois Training School; just interesting. Anyway, well, let me, I think we're pretty much done. I don't know if you have anything more you'd like to add or anything more you'd like to say. And I don't know. I think for me

Buelow: Any, any time that I have told anybody, anything; even in the later years, anybody where I graduated, they're always all, know that it was special. And many of the doctors today that they thought of County of -- And I was surprised that my nephew from Lebanon, Pennsylvania, they just spent a week here. And he practiced here for 10 years before he went out there. He was in partnership with another doctor here and somehow, they had some sort of a contract. If he decided to leave that he couldn't practice within a certain number of miles of this doctor here. And of course, he came right out of medical school and he, and he did so well and he just did everything and he really built up that man's practice.

But anyway, he, um, he decided to go east. So he went on, he was ready. He said I'm going to hit Lebanon.

Church: Oh, and it's lovely out there.

Buelow: And then he's just going to town. But anyway, they were here this week and we just had so much fun talking. I didn't realize that, that he had spent some time in Cook County. I was telling you about this all. He was like, he was

going through this book and the actual pictures. And then all these years, I've never really talked about it when he was here. They'd been gone for 20 years. So all this time, I've never had any comments but he said that he, he was an intern in Chicago. And, uh, I don't mean not county, but I didn't remember that. I didn't remember where he was, but he used to go to County. So I said, you're having—it's coming back to you all. What's going to happen there at county?

Church: Well, the county school is closed. They don't have a school. And what's happening is that the university of Illinois, which we're really connected to is that we have an undergraduate program, we have a graduate program, and doctoral program in nursing. We have a completion program for nurses who want to go back and get their degree. And we're really working hard, but the problem you see what's happening in nursing today. I dunno if you've seen it on television, but there's a very serious nursing shortage.

Buelow: Well, that's what they say, and it's hard to believe right?

Church: It's very serious.

Buelow: Even in our community here, they're writing it up in our, in our weekly paper.

Church: It's very serious. Now. What do you, what do you think that's from?

Buelow: I don't know. Probably--

Church: Well, think about it. Think about the women today. Do you think they want to do what you did work 14 years without a day off?

Buelow: No, no.

Church: And, you know, you know how much they get paid, they get paid less than truck drivers. They get paid less than a lot of others. So, women today are saying no more, we're not going to do anything more. So, what's going to happen? This is serious. It really is.

Buelow: Right here in our community here, there is a shortage.

Church: Oh, everywhere. Every, the whole country. So, it's very serious. Nurses, our school is shrinking and the numbers of students coming to the-- it's, the state university, the college of nursing in Illinois, the numbers of students applying is shrinking. Now, one of the questions I didn't ask you, which I think might be part of the solution is what about men? Did you have any men in nursing?

Buelow: Oh yes, yes we did.

Church: Did you have students in nursing school? Any students at the Illinois Training School?

Buelow: Oh no, no, no, no, no. There's nothing like that. There are now.

Church: Yeah. Well, what do you think about that?

Buelow: What do I think about, I think it's great.

Church: Because see, I think that's part of our problem. We have been a female dominated profession. And we're treated second class because we're women,

Buelow: You know, we have one man out here now… neighbors

Church: But, you see, I think, we've labored too long thinking that this is a woman's profession and we've done ourselves a disservice because by doing that with treated the way women in society are treated generally, which is you don't have to pay them as much. And as we go, we have very little to appeal to young people today who are bright. Who have many more opportunity women today can do anything/

Buelow: Well I am on the veteran's club here and then I've run a nursing scholarship, and I've been in that for years and all the time that I've been on there able to get one girl to apply for the scholarship and get it out of our district here. And, um, last year I couldn't get them. Couldn't get one person that was interested in it. Not one person.

Church: That's right. And this is what's happening. They realize that there's very little future in terms of advancement in terms of career development, unless they go on. And that's one of the situations we have to improve upon. If we get them all started at a baccalaureate level, they have a nice foundation on which to build that's equal to everybody else in the health profession. The OT, the PT, the dietary, the social workers, they all have bachelor's degree. Nurses have not made it a requirement. If they make it a requirement, it seems to me then that would give them a step up and they can then move on and be advanced, certainly.

But if they don't and they insist on not doing that, then they are doing themselves in. And this is what we've-- Yeah, this is what we've been doing. It's very sad. I feel bad. I keep thinking that by doing the history, I might be able to get people more inspired or interested, but, uh, women today have many more choices than even I did, and I was in the 1950s. I graduated from high school and I went into a diploma program. I only applied to one school. That's the one I wanted to go to. And nowadays people don't even consider nursing as a career. So, we're really, it's really very serious. Yeah, I don't know, but I'd like to see men involved.

I'd like to see more men in nursing and see if that would make a difference.

Buelow: They're getting involved. I don't know you're getting involved and aren't just here to him. Our anesthetist here, he's been here for 20 years now. He was a nurse,

Church: A nurse anesthetist,

Buelow: He was a nurse, but he's gone on and gotten further--. You know, they've all, all of them go on and are ones that are the head of the hospital.

Church: Well, if you can think of any way to try and make it more attractive, let me know if you think of a way to get young women into it, it'd be wonderful, but I don't know if we're going to be able to do it overnight.

Buelow: They said, oh, the class that graduated last year. There was not one. And I went down to the school and talked to the man that's in charge of it and he said they're just not interested.

Church: There are too many other exciting possibilities. And we've got to figure out a way to make nursing look like it's exciting.

Buelow: And everything's different now in the hospitals too, I mean, you're not, you don't, patients are not feeling well, they're discharged. They don't, they don't keep them as long as they should. They just, set them off because it's a government thing

Church: I was a patient in November. I should turn this off.