

Interviewer:

Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about your life prior to going to the Illinois Training School, where you grew up, and what your family was like?

Mrs. Gugin:

Well, I was born in Oklahoma and we moved when I was nine years old. We moved to Oregon and we were there almost three years. Then we moved back to Illinois in 1916, I think it was. Because my father's parents were here living in Danville. He was born west, a few miles of Danville. He and his older brother were the only children, but his brother had died I think in the winter preceding our coming here in the fall. They wanted him to come back here to be close to them. That was the only-- Because we would've been still out in Oregon hadn't it been for that.

Interviewer:

Were you a farming family?

Mrs. Gugin:

Yes. My father was educated to be a lawyer, but he didn't care for it. He went to Illinois Wesleyan and his older brother John, the one who died was a lawyer. Grandpa and my dad at that time as a young man before he'd ever met my mother was in Michigan and had a business school. Business college they called them, and he loved it. My dad was a natural-born teacher. You know what I mean. Grandpa wanted dad home, wanted Charlie home. He says, "You go to Illinois Wesleyan and you become a lawyer and you go into office with Johnny." He said, "Will, you've just got it made." Well, dad wouldn't come. Grandpa kept on until he finally got dad to come. He went to school but he didn't--

He'd give people information all their life at his visitation when he died so many people came. My sister and mother didn't know. They said, "No you don't know us, but we know Mr. [inaudible 00:02:36]." He gave us such good advice one time and saved us a lot of money. He was always giving information, but he never charged anybody a penny. He was a farmer.

Interviewer:

What size family did you come from?

Mrs. Gugin:

Five children, I was the oldest and three of them are gone. I and my second brother are the only two left in the family. In the immediate family.

Interviewer:

What was your education prior to going to the Illinois Training School?

Mrs. Gugin:

Just regular eighth grade and then high school.

Interviewer:

Four years of high school?

Mrs. Gugin:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. How did you decide to go into nursing?

Mrs. Gugin:

I had known a long, even before we came back here. Up until-- I don't know. I think it was when our baby, the youngest child was born after my parents moved to Oregon. I think it was a neighbor lady that was there. I don't know why they were having me pour from one bottle to the other something. Whether it was cough medicine or what, I don't know. This neighbor lady said, "You are so steady you should be a nurse. Your hands are so steady." because I didn't drop any on the outside. Any, this liquid, whatever it was. Up to that time, I was going to be a teacher but the more I asked about nursing, I thought that [inaudible 00:04:30] being a teacher. That's really and of course, the further on I got in school, that was it. I had it all decided when I was about 12 years old.

Interviewer:

How did your family feel about your going into nursing?

Mrs. Gugin:

Doubts. The family, not the immediate family. My folks were always if we wanted to do something and if it was decent and respectable why we had their backing. But if the other members of the family. My dad had cousins living here and they thought I was crazy. My dad had dairy. One of his customers was a lady whose baby didn't get a formula to agree with it. Someone told her about try the milk from our dairy and her little boy just thrived on it. Her oldest daughter was older than I. I don't know how old she was but she was out of training when I entered training.

There was another family, in fact, two families that had babies that they couldn't get formulas to agree with here in Danville. Mrs. Chapman told them. She knew both families. She told them. Said, "If you try Mr. [inaudible 00:06:14] milk you'll find that your babies are doing okay." and they did. The one baby the doctor put her on a skim milk and in a dairy unless it's a great big dairy, you don't separate the milk. Dad had to buy a small separator to separate the milk because you can't skim it and get all the fat off, get all the cream. This child did just beautifully on that skim milk they were feeding her too rich a formula.

Then she did so well, all at once she began to vomit and not take the formula. Dad was talking to her mother one day and dad said, "What--" They began buying cream too besides the quarter milk a day, the skim milk. Dad says, "What are you folks doing this cream?" We're mixing cream in our formula. Dad says, "No wonder she's sick." Dad says, "I'm not selling you, folks, anymore cream." She, the little girl grew up to be a fine young lady. That's the way that went.

Interviewer:

How did you decide to go to the Illinois Training School?

Mrs. Gugin:

Well, it was Mrs. Chapman's oldest daughter who was in training up there. Mrs. Chapman just told us the wonderful things that-- I can't think of that daughter's name because I didn't really know her and how wonderful it was and what a wonderful place and how big it was and everything. She said, "There's where Ruth wants to

go." I wanted to go out here at Lakefield but Mom and Dad said, "No if you're going to go in training you'd better go where it's the best." Well, actually you don't know which is the best if you know what I mean. I went up there and I liked it. There are members of the family, not my own immediate gave me six weeks. They said, "Ruth will be back home in six weeks." but Ruth wasn't.

Interviewer:

When did you start? Do you remember what month?

Mrs. Gugin:

September.

Interviewer:

In September, okay. The year was?

Mrs. Gugin:

1924.

Interviewer:

1924, okay. You graduated in 1927?

Mrs. Gugin:

1927. That's right.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you remember anything about the reputation of the school when you chose it?

Mrs. Gugin:

Mrs. Chapman couldn't say enough good things about. It was wonderful. You know what I mean?

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Gugin:

I really didn't know much about the school. I knew it was the oldest school of nursing in this part of the country but I didn't outside of what Mrs. Chapman said. That was all I knew.

Interviewer:

Did you have any expectations about the school when you went?

Mrs. Gugin:

I had no idea what training was going to be like.

Interviewer:

It was all a big surprise?

Mrs. Gugin:

Well, after we went there, I think we got there on a Wednesday. Our first Sunday, they didn't buy their bandages and dressings. We made them back in that day.

Sunday morning, we spent the day-- Well, maybe it was all day, the first Sunday after I took a noon lunch or dinner time. We making two-by-twos and four-by-fours. Folding them and then clipping them around the sides so they wouldn't come apart. Then they were sterilized. They were first put in bundles and sterilized. That was the way they had their- and that was an awful lot if you realize how big County was.

Interviewer:  
Oh, sure.

Mrs. Gugin:  
That was a lot of work.

Interviewer:  
The student nurses made all the dressings for the whole hospital?

Mrs. Gugin:  
Well, surely not all of them. I don't know, but that's what we started out doing.

Interviewer:  
Do you remember how many classmates you started out with?

Mrs. Gugin:  
I think it was 42 or 44, something like that. We had one girl from the Hawaiian Islands, but she didn't stay very long. She couldn't adjust to the climate.

Interviewer:  
Yes, it's a big adjustment from Hawaii to here, yes.

Mrs. Gugin:  
It must have been. I think there were 24 that graduated.

Interviewer:  
Do you remember some of the other reasons why some people didn't finish?

Mrs. Gugin:  
Well, actually, no. My first roommate was kicked out, and my next-

Interviewer:  
What happened with her?

Mrs. Gugin:  
I don't know.

Interviewer:  
You don't know?

Mrs. Gugin:  
You didn't find out very much in that day and age. You didn't know, they didn't have much of a grapevine. They were very cagey in what they-- She was gone one day when I came back from on duty. I have no idea. My second roommate was a girl who had been out of- she'd started in a class or two ahead of mine and she had become ill and gone home. The doctor had said she could come back and finish training. She

was my second roommate. Then my third one-- This second roommate became ill again and the doctor said she had to go home.

I got another roommate who had been ill and was sent home and they thought she had tuberculosis. It turned out, even after she graduated, they did this Mantoux test and it wasn't tuberculosis at all.

Now, what was it she had? There's something in the chest that resembles tuberculosis. They give Mantoux test in the one arm for tuberculosis and in this right arm, they would give it for this other. I can't think of the name of it, but you get it from bird droppings. You know what I mean? Where there's great flocks of blackbirds and starlings and they discovered it. How they discovered it, a group of children from some high school in Michigan went through a pasture or a field where there was a woods and a lot of crows and big birds were roosting in that area. All these children begin to come down with all these tuberculosis symptoms. Not all of them, but many of them. From that, the doctors got busy on it and I can't--

Interviewer:

Yes, I know what you're talking-- Yes, I can't think of a name of it either.

Mrs. Gugin:

No, I don't think of it either. Anyway, that was what she had. While the first girl, my second roommate was home, my third roommate lived with me. Then the third roommate, the doctor sent her home, and the other one came back and roomed with me.

Interviewer:

You don't have much luck with roommates did you? [chuckles]

Mrs. Gugin:

She became ill and when we were living here, we were living in what was called The Flats. It was connected to the nurses' home, but the nursing school had enlarged in their applicants who were becoming nurses. The classes were getting larger, so they bought some apartments that they could attach to through the living room of the nursing home by a hall. Because they were apartments, that's why they were called The Flats.

The second roommate went home ill and the third one was ready to come back to reenter training. They found out that she didn't have tuberculosis at all. They asked me if I was afraid to live with her and I said, "No," I wasn't because well, I just wasn't afraid. I just thought that even though I had a brother that died with tuberculosis when I was in training, I was very careful about getting very close to people. These girls didn't call, neither one of them. They both entered training before I did, but the one died and then the other one graduated in the class after ours because she had missed some of school.

Interviewer:

Can you describe to me what a typical day was like in your training?

Mrs. Gugin:

The first day? Have you ever seen County?

Interviewer:

Yes, sure.

Mrs. Gugin:

Have you been in?

Interviewer:

I've never been inside.

Mrs. Gugin:

Well, we were starting out on women's medicine, and if I had ever seen it before I entered training, I would never had gone. It was huge. I really wasn't enthused about it. I did love the nurses' home, it was really beautiful. Oh, was at 509, South Honore Street. Just you came out of the front of the hospital on to Harrison Street and midway you cross Harrison and then on the corner was the Greek restaurant and then the nurses home.

Interviewer:

The Greek restaurant was there when you were in training?

Mrs. Gugin:

Is that is that Greek restaurant still there?

Interviewer:

No, it burned down about six maybe seven years ago.

Mrs. Gugin:

No, well-

Interviewer:

It was there that long?

Mrs. Gugin:

Yes, it was there when I entered training. I thought and all the girls did too thought that it was such a nice clean place. If you were tired or bored and it was your afternoon off and you didn't have anything else to do, you'd go over there for ice cream or something. I remember one day, they weren't very busy and this man came out with a new clean rag and was wiping the tables off. [inaudible 00:18:44] take that.

Interviewer:

Oh, no. [laughs]

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh, man just folded the cloths up and went [inaudible 00:18:52] so I didn't go into the Greeks. I told the kids.

Interviewer:

I don't blame you.

Mrs. Gugin:

You don't know what you're getting into. When you know of a place when you think it's nice. I think in many cases, restaurants have to be more careful nowadays.

Interviewer:  
Oh, yes.

Mrs. Gugin:

I think that there is better supervision with inspection and stuff. They have courses in sanitation that people have to take. That work in foods, handle foods. Danville area college has a course.

Interviewer:

We were talking about your typical day?

Mrs. Gugin:

Yes. Well, that was part of my typical day, but it was so-- We got off at 1:00 for our first class that afternoon, but got-- We're supposed to get off at 12:00. We had one whole side of a wing and I can't remember whether it was 15 or 20 beds on the side, those wings go back. There were four wings that went back and it was terrible. We'd had a lot of classes you see before we were put on the floor. Of course, our teachers, our instructors were there to help us. We had the line. We all finally got through about one o'clock after and we had to line the beds up so the foot was all the way down was just a straight line. My line was, it was in line, but it went like this.

Had the nicest bands in it and I guess the rest of them, but only that one time. After that I realized that you had to, not only, you couldn't have any bends or curves. You had to make them straight. Gradually you got so that you got off duty on time.

Interviewer:

How much time did you actually spend in classes?

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh, now that I can't say. I can't even remember what-- Our first would be medicine, medical, surgical, pediatrics, OB, and then we had extra classes too. What did they call it? It was pertaining to health and sanitation and stuff like that. We didn't have classes all the time because we furnished the nursing school, furnished all with the nurses for the hospital. As we became more efficient, they could put us on duty off more, you see. We had classes, we had a certain number of classes that we had to have in certain subjects. Pediatrics and pharmacology, and ethics, history of nursing. All of that stuff. Besides women teachers that we had that lived in the nursing home, the doctors gave us lectures in medicine and in surgery and in pediatrics and whatever.

Interviewer:

Do you remember what classes you enjoyed the most?

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh, I had never had-- It was physics. We had to have take physics as one of our first subjects and I didn't take it when I was in high school. That was the one I liked the least. I can tell you that. It was terrible. I didn't have any-- Everybody else had had in their high school. I tell you, it was [inaudible 00:23:40] nearly died and I survived.

Interviewer:

What kinds of things did you do when you were working in the hospital as a student?  
What was your responsibilities?

Mrs. Gugin:

They began with us doing bed care for patients and our instructor would give us- we'd all had to have what they call a nurse report in the morning, and they would be a nurse supervisor on the floor would say like, "Miss. Keesler, now these are your patients, so pay attention to special." Then the supervisor would also say, "This is interesting to all of you." She would review if any special illness had been admitted. Anyone had been admitted and what it was like, and why the patient had to come hospital.

See, they talked, those supervisors talked too, as well as the teachers that just talked, and she clued us in on a lot of things. From there you went-- I was on women's medicine and I think I went from there to ward 24, which was men's surgery. Now, I think that's the way it was. You just went around where-- We did have contagious. We had contagious and they had a psychiatric hospital there whether they still have, or not. I don't know.

Interviewer:

No, they don't.

Mrs. Gugin:

They did then, and we had to spend our allotted time there I didn't like that. None of that for me and after that you would go on women's surgery. That's a completely different type of nursing, very much so. They didn't have all the new stuff that they use now for people that are sick. All these IVs and all of this oxygen. They didn't even give oxygen here because after I was finished in '27, then I worked a year at TB, Tuberculosis Center on Crawford Avenue, North. Then I went into [inaudible 00:26:33] nursing and I was there five or six years. It was six years altogether. Then I was married, but you did a lot of your learning just the same as nowadays by your working in it, doing it.

Interviewer:

Learning by doing?

Mrs. Gugin:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Do you recall what the nurse's relationship was like with the doctors?

Mrs. Gugin:

We were warned against familiarity and nurses could not sit down, we did all of our charting standing up.

Interviewer:

What was the purpose of that?



Mrs. Gugin:

I can't think of the word. I can't think of the word so that we wouldn't fall into wrong. Lazy, get lazy and we had learned to learn how to pour medicines. When we did that the supervisors, whoever was in charge of a floor were always there to help you. Medicines were nothing then compared to what they-- Aspirin for headaches and digitalis for heart trouble. There was hardly any meditation.

Interviewer:

That's what I've heard from other people.

Mrs. Gugin:

You just wouldn't believe.

Interviewer:

Medicine has changed a lot.

Mrs. Gugin:

I couldn't go back and nurse now and be worth anything.

Interviewer:

Yes, it's complicated.

Mrs. Gugin:

It's very.

Interviewer:

Did you attend any medical meetings as a nurse?

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh, no. I don't think they did then. I don't recall now. I know that when I was doing visiting nursing, we would ever so often [inaudible 00:28:55] in Chicago, the Visting Nurse Association was a private organization. It wasn't city-oriented and ever so often we would Miss. Edna Foley was the supervisor or superintendent of that, head of that, and she'd have different speakers come in on things that thought we might be interested in or should know health-wise doing public health work.

Interviewer:

Did you feel at the time that when you were a student at the Illinois Training School, that the doctors respected the judgment of the nurses?

Mrs. Gugin:

We had so many doctors, so many interns there and so many taking residency in different, in eye and in surgery and medicine and all of that stuff that you respected everybody, they were a good doctor and they're here to learn just like you are. There wasn't all that much fraternizing. Is that the word I want?

Interviewer:

Yes, probably. How do you think the doctors viewed your education? The education that you were receiving.

Mrs. Gugin:

Well, most of the doctors were very nice. I think they respected the nurses because

evidently they'd been clued in on how they were to act towards the nurses the same as we'd been told how to behave towards them. I know one time, when I went to work, we worked nine hours a day. Was it more than that? Well, it was a three hours. From 6:00 to 9:00.

The night nurse went on at 9:00 and came off at 7:00. They had to have a nurse on from 6:00 to 9:00. That short time. You had the hours off in the afternoon and then you would go on at 6:00. I know I was in OB and a young doctor came in, all excited in the office. He said, "Oh my," he says, "Come and look at this baby's eyes." He says, [inaudible 00:31:27] He says, "Were you here when this baby was delivered?" I said, "No, I wasn't." Well, he says, "I don't think it's had the silver nitrate put in its eyes." because that was something new when I was in training. Now, if you can picture that and reasonably and I was scared the death to go in and look. I said, "No, that's a silver nitrate reaction."

I said, "I'm sure of it." He says, "Are you sure?" I said, "I'm sure it is." I said, "Look on the chart." I said, "It'll be on the chart if the baby had the silver nitrate drops put in the eyes." He was just new. They just had a new bunch come in. He was probably as scared as we nurses were, but we were.

I was right on that because after all, it's a matter of losing your eyesight or having your eyesight. Then when I was working on men's surgery one time, this was-- I'd been working several-- Well, this must have been in my third year. It was a men's surgical floor. It was the worst massive cross infections you ever saw in your life. For some reason, the doctors that had been there had taken their turn at that particular time, working. You have to work so long, just like the nurses did in certain departments. They weren't interested in men's medicine or surgery. I don't know.

The new doctors that came on, they had a meeting, called a meeting and they came to clean that place up and they did. They fixed the carts all up. They were two carts, one with all sterile on it and the other cart, you didn't put any of your dressings or any of your forceps that you used in changing dressings on the clean cart. You had in to another cart. Took all of the contaminated stuff. They really cleaned that up beautifully. I learned a lot from that. I thought I was very fortunate to be there at that time.

The supervisor of that floor was very-- I was helping Dr. Solomon do some dressings. It was in the pubic area. I can't remember what it was. He was asking, I was handing him stuff. Okay. This little nurse came to turn down there and took hold my shoulders and whipped me around like this. Then she turned in and she says, "You shouldn't have a nurse in training helping you."

He said, "I shouldn't?" He said, "How's she going to learn?" and he says, "That's one of the reasons that this ward was in the mess it was. It didn't have any teaching, good teaching." He talked to her, she told me when she left, go back to the office. She said, "You don't have to stand there and look, you can hand me whatever [inaudible 00:35:10]."

When she left, he says, "Don't pay any attention to her." He says, "You won't learn anything." He was right. He was right.

Interviewer: Do you recall the kind of emphasis that the Illinois Training School placed on the type of nursing that you learned? Was it community or private duty or-

Mrs. Gugin:  
We had-

Interviewer:  
-hospital nursing?

Mrs. Gugin: We had [inaudible 00:35:36].

Interviewer:  
All of that?

Mrs. Gugin:  
All of that. In our last year, we had a choice of two months of the visiting nursing that was extra or two months of infant welfare. Part of the girls-- I took visiting nursing. That's how I happened to be a visiting nurse because I love that. I just thought that was the greatest. Let's see anything [inaudible 00:36:07] I don't know.

Oh, we had a course in social service too. One of our questions on one of our exams, one of the final exams in social service was-- They gave a history of a man that came in with a sore on his leg or someplace that didn't heal. "What should the doctor or what would you suggest that be done?" Every one of us hit zero on that question. We didn't.

When we went to class and got our [inaudible 00:36:49] every girl got nothing on that question, no grade at all. The social service worker just landed into the class. "What's the matter with you people? As long as I've been teaching in, you don't know what to do? Why didn't any of you write [inaudible 00:37:08] test for syphilis? Test him for syphilis.

We looked at it. We said, "That's automatic. At County, you don't have to write in a special order. That just automatically is done on every patient that came into county hospital." The reason they could do it, it was a county hospital because most of them didn't pay any money at all.

Interviewer:  
That's interesting.

Mrs. Gugin:  
She thought some of us should have known. When we didn't write have a washerman. Do a washerman on him because that was automatic. We were told that when we first came in.

Interviewer:  
Can you tell me about a particularly memorable case that you nursed while you were in training?

Mrs. Gugin:  
Oh, no, really. I learned more after I was out of training and doing private duty. After I was married, I did some private duty. I learned more by working in private hospitals.

Now that's a crazy thing to say but County was so big that by the time you heard that there was somebody with smallpox or some other unusual diagnosis they had, they would be transferred or died because it was so big because, the girls, you didn't see all the girls in your class every evening work.

Because I lived in the flats. A bunch of us lived in the flats, some lived in the main nursing. Also we had floors, first to second floor. You didn't see all of the nurses in your class when you were off duty. In fact, three nurses that was in the class following mine, in the class of '28 became closer friends with those than I did in my own group, in my own class because you often didn't work with the nurse, with someone in your class. When you did, you didn't work the same shift. I don't know. It's just, we were rooming close together. That was the reason why.

Interviewer:

Do you have a particularly favorite memory of your Illinois training school days?

Mrs. Gugin:

I don't know how to answer that. They gave us swimming. I learned to swim, but we walked to the [inaudible 00:40:27] and up on Ashland Boulevard and I loved that and we took it in the wintertime. That was another thing we had with the class of '28, the class of followed hours. I enjoyed that a lot and they did lots of nice things for us. We had a chorus and we had-- I can't remember what they called it. Oh, we had to make our own dance uniforms. Dance, Thai dance or Taya die. They taught us that when we first went in and then we'd have that once a week during one of the years.

I enjoyed that. I enjoyed the chorus we sang at different occasions and the Presbyterian hospital was just kitty-cornered from this way from the flats and they had a choir or a chorus too. We sang someplace that was a contest. I don't know how many other schools, but there was-- I know that ITS and press had sent theirs and they sang the bells of St. Mary. You know, that?

Interviewer:

Sure.

Mrs. Gugin:

It was beautiful. They took first prize on it.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Mrs. Gugin:

It was just beautiful. I'll never forget that but one of the girls, one night we were having this rhythm and stuff, it was to break the monotony and give us something to do and relax us of course, and stuff like that. Our instructor said, "now I'm going to dim the lights and you folks do just what you feel like doing. If you feel like laying down on the floor, lay down on the floor and go through any exercises that we've been doing." It was in-- and I've forgotten what they call this. This was a big, big room. It was where we had our classes. It was in the flats too. They must have taken out the walls. I don't know what else and when we had--

When they had the nurses' party or the dance, it was up there in that room and they put all folding chairs and they would line them up, lean them against the wall and you would hear snickering and laughing and carrying on and Ms. McAllen said, "call this nurse by name." She was in the class of '28. She said, "You are a perfect leader" but she says, "you lead in the wrong direction."

She was one of those that was kicked down. I never knew why. She and her roommate both were kicked down. They were small and cute and pretty, but why? I don't know. I don't know what else. Oh, we went on picnics. We had a great graduation. We had a week of festivities and they took us on picnics and our families were there and oh it was just great. The graduating class had a special dinner and their guests were there. It was just nice.

Interviewer:

How about an unfavorable memory? Do you have an unfavorable memory?

Mrs. Gugin:

There were lots of times that you were discouraged and I'd never been away from home [inaudible 00:44:48] when I knew, and I know this was in the wintertime and one Sunday afternoon. Oh, I was so homesick and it was so quiet like evidently everybody was sleeping and resting so, or gone out and I thought, oh, if I could just smell, come home from school and smell a cattle of beans on the back of the stove cooking, I would give everything I ever had to be to come home, walk into that and because my mom always cooked beans on wash day and we had cornbread and it wasn't that I was hungry but I was homesick.

Interviewer:

A memory associated with home.

Mrs. Gugin:

Right. Okay, when we went there, I can't think of the superintendent's name. Mary-

Interviewer:

Wheeler.

Mrs. Gugin:

-Wheeler. That's it? Mary Curtis Wheeler. She was a beautiful woman. She was an ITS grad and we'd been there a year, year and a half, maybe just a year and she retired and Laura R. Logan came. She was a completely different type of an individual than Ms. Wheeler was and she--

Interviewer:

In what respect was she different?

Mrs. Gugin:

She'd been to college. I don't know how many degrees she had-- and I think she graduated from the hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, and we were told how much harder the nurses state board exams were in Ohio than they were in Illinois. All of that stuff and that Ms. Logan was going to change the face at Illinois training school and really nobody cared for the nurses. Very few. I won't say nobody because must have been in that group. A lot of nurses did but they had been talking about if the Illinois

University of Illinois would take over the Illinois training school and would have their school in the Illinois medical buildings there and which was Baca county.

Interviewer:  
Right.

Mrs. Gugin:

That was what Ms. Logan was supposed to do when she came. That's what we were told. It ended up that she sold the school to the University of Chicago and there's no school, nothing in it about them taking over to the school and so, she was questioned about it. You're going to have a room down there with all of your memorabilia and it'll always be open to anybody that wants to go in so, that was the impression that practically all of the girls had of her, that she had her way. I don't know what else to say.

Interviewer:

How would you compare your education to your education at Illinois training school to the education that the nurses got when it switched over to cook county school of nursing? Would you say there was any difference?

Mrs. Gugin:

Now, repeat that again.

Interviewer:

How would you compare the training you got at the Illinois training school compared to the Cook county school of nursing after it changed over?

Mrs. Gugin:

I had very little contact with it so I really accept that I was after-- let's see what our-- I was married and we had our first two girls and I began to feel like that I should be getting back in nursing if it was possible. I called central nursing, what did they call it? Registry and asked about private duty and she said it isn't any good, but she says, "I'll tell you what they are doing--" No, that was earlier. That was earlier, that was the first part of the year. This was the last part of the year. It was the first part of the year. I called about private duty and she said, it's just no good but she says, I'll tell you what they're doing and she says you've just got in under the line. In fact, just under the wire, she said we were in the depression. You see. We were married in '35. She said they need nurses. The hospitals are beginning to need nurses. They are asking that the girls that trained at the hospital, that they will come back and give-- I can't remember whether it was three weeks or two months they'll pay you and you will work there. She said the thing of it, the importance of it is that they are making a new regulation that anybody that comes back has to take a refresher course if you-a If you get in before this date and I was just in, it just happened I just got in under that. She said, then if you will do nursing, two or so times a year at your school where you're trained, she said you won't have to take this refresher course.

That's what I did. I never ha had to have a refresher course and-- because of that. When I did private duty then it got better, at that time. I began to have-- do some private duty, not a lot. I didn't do it steady because girls were-- that had been doing and making their good living on private duty all at once the crash came and there was no work for them.

Interviewer:

Yes, sure.

Mrs. Gugin:

They either had to go home or starve and so they went, had what they called six months refresher courses and the girls from any school if you wanted to do it that way, you got your room and board and laundry for the six months. Then you worked there, they didn't pay you anything. Then you worked there for \$50 a month for six months to pay for your six months of the refresher course, and by that time by the time they were through why they were-- most of them were able to find work.

Interviewer:

Getting back to the difference between the Illinois training school and Cook county school of nursing, do you think that a different nurse was produced in the two schools?

Mrs. Gugin:

Well, I had very little contact with them, but I know that the year following that when I was doing my stint of working at the county, I went back to work at \$5 for \$8. That's what they were paying and one meal a day, which would be the noon meal, because I worked seven to three and the scrub women at county were making more than the RNs. Well, now that that's the honest truth, because they were unionized and I don't favor unions not to the point that it is the extent of which it's they've gotten so much power.

They've got too much power, but anyway I went back, this was in the summertime, and I had my signed patients. We gave afternoon care we called it PM care. You washed their hands and face and scrubbed their back, washed their back, and alcohols rubs, powder, changed them if necessary and--Am I taking too much time?

Interviewer:

Oh no, no, that's right. I'm just checking the time.

Mrs. Gugin:

I had aid to help me because I had an award, six-bed men that needed two to help to turn him and one man, Mexican, he couldn't speak any English, if he did, he didn't use it. Oh, he had the worst bed sore you ever set your eyes on, it was terrible. She said, well, I'll get the cart and the water and the soap and the towels, and the wash cloth. I said, okay, so she did, so how do I begin? She had to hold him, turned him on his side, and held him.

I washed, I rolled the draw sheet up under him and washed [inaudible 00:55:08] took my washcloth and soaked it, and squeezed it, that soapy water down through that gapping bed sore in the back. It was raw and nasty-looking. There was no infection in it, but it was just a bad sight. Oh, she says you're getting the bed all wet.

I say what's under the draw sheet? A rubber sheet. Yes, I said, and we're taking the draw sheet up, we're putting a clean one in, I said, that's the only way to get these bed sores healed up is to keep them clean and so we went on that way and the second week or third week that I was there, she says, do you know something? She

says that Mexican man, she called him by name, his back is beginning to heal. I said, yes, because it's being taken care of right. No county had taught me that.

Interviewer:

Do you remember who made the decisions about the educational requirements at Illinois training school? Was it the superintendent or was it the nurses or the hospital administrators?

Mrs. Gugin:

The hospital administrators. If it was the Cook county they had absolutely-

Interviewer:

Well, no Illinois training school.

Mrs. Gugin:

Well, the Illinois training school did. They just furnished the nurses. They said that we will furnish the nurses for Cook county if you'll pay us so much a year but you're not to interfere in the way we run it.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay. So they were totally independent.

Mrs. Gugin:

We were totally independent training school was, yes.

Interviewer:

Do you remember what most of the nursing-- most of your classmates did after graduation?

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh, it varied. I did visiting nursing. Lucy did visiting nursing while she was in '28. I worked 13 months at the TB San, Chicago, tuberculosis Sanitarium. Then I went into visiting nursing and she and a girl in the '26 or '25 class, I don't know which it was were living. She was doing visiting nursing she got appointed with her with Lizza I think when Lucy was taking for two months, affiliation with visiting nursing as a student, as a senior.

They said, yes, I could move in. Then we three lived together until I was married and we lived in three different apartments. We got larger. The last one, we had four rooms and it was a nice big apartment on Jackson street. '34, '35, I think was the number, something like that.

Interviewer:

Let's see. How would you compare your nursing education at ITS to the training that nurses get today?

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh, they get so much more than we got because we had no access to all of this new advancement science-wise that the profession has made in diagnosing, treating, and everything that goes along with nursing. It's so different. We got good training for our time. There was no question about it. We got good training, but it didn't compare at all to what the nurse get now.



They have much different courses, much-- Well, they just have a lot more than we were offered. We were offered everything that the schools gave them and I think Illinois training school was a good school. I think it was one of the best but the comparison is none, and I'm not being derogatory toward my school, toward the Illinois Training School when I say it. They did the best that they offered the best that was given at that time.

Interviewer:

At that time. Do you keep in touch with any of your classmates at all?

Mrs. Gugin:

No.

Interviewer:

No?

Mrs. Gugin:

I went to our 50th-year reunion. It was nice, I enjoyed it, but very few of our class was there. Really, I can't remember how many of us there was but it was less than-- No, I just don't remember how many, 10 or so were there, and I think it was 22 or 26 graduates. We had a nice time, but-- There's been a lot of deaths too since then. Our alumni has disbanded. I have some of the last books, reports of the Illinois Training School alumni put out. You just wouldn't believe the deaths in those last few years. After our 50th year, how many of the girls begun to die. I'm 83, so I don't know [inaudible 01:01:27]. [laughs]

Interviewer:

We're having trouble finding people to interview, just because of that fact, that there aren't too many still living.

Mrs. Gugin:

No, there aren't. The ones that are, are far away.

Interviewer:

Right, California, Arizona, Florida, I think.

Mrs. Gugin:

Right. Arkansas and in the East, and the last I knew, Lucy and Lisa, both were in, I don't know, it was North or South Carolina. When they retired, they went in that direction. Lisa didn't have any family, just the brother, and he might have been dead by the time she retired. Lucy, her father was dead when she had her training. Her aunt and uncle raised her because her mother went to work. She had a brother, and he married, he had two children. She was close to her brother, but she didn't see him all that much. You lose track of them. That's the only way I know how to say it.

Interviewer:

Do you have anything you'd like to ask me? I'm pretty much finished with asking all the questions now.

[laughter]

Mrs. Gugin:

Why, you said that you thought there might be something else other than the history of the Illinois Training School in the book, that you might-- Interesting things to find out. Now then, what are you studying to do this kind of work?

Interviewer:

Actually what I'm doing--

Mrs. Gugin:

Are you an RN?

Interviewer:

Yes. I'm working on my PhD in nursing.

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh.

Interviewer:

I'm actually working for Dr. Olga Church, who is a nurse historian, and this is her research.

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh.

Interviewer:

I'm working for her, and basically, what she's doing is interviewing the graduates that we can find that are still left in the Illinois area from the Illinois Training School, just so that we can get a picture of what it was like at the Illinois Training School firsthand from the nurses themselves. Because we have the history, the books, it was written, but Dr. Church wants to get a picture of what it was like firsthand.

Mrs. Gugin:

Dr. Church?

Interviewer:

Yes. Doctor Olga Church is her name.

Mrs. Gugin:

How old a woman is she?

Interviewer:

Probably 40s.

Mrs. Gugin:

I wouldn't know, I had a friend who married a man, a minister whose name is Church.

Interviewer:

She's from out East.

Mrs. Gugin:

Oh, she's not.

Interviewer:  
She's not from around here.

Mrs. Gugin:  
She's now a [inaudible 01:04:05].

Interviewer:  
She's a professor at the University of Illinois.

Mrs. Gugin:  
Yes, I know. That's it. That's interesting.

Interviewer: Eventually, what she would like to do is to then interview a group of graduates from the Cook County School of Nursing, and to compare the two types of training-

Mrs. Gugin:  
Oh.

Interviewer:  
-that nurses received.

Mrs. Gugin:  
I see.

Interviewer:  
Since ITS became the Cook County School of Nursing. For right now, we're just concentrating on ITS graduates that we can find.

Mrs. Gugin:  
The ones that you have seen in the Chicago area, are they-- Most of them would be of the older class because several of my girls within my class have died since our 50th reunion, and--

Interviewer:  
Let me see. I have my list here. Let's see, I interviewed somebody from the class of 19-