

Dr. Church:

Okay. Now like I said I have a set of questions that I need to ask to sort of get at the information that we want to get but if you want to add anything and if you can't answer the question that's no big deal either. Okay? Can you tell me a little bit about your life before you went to the Illinois Training School like where you lived as a child and where you grew up?

Mrs. Watts:

I was born in Sumner, Illinois the 28th of August, 1893. I was raised on a big farm. Graduated from the high school in 1912. I was a teacher for one year and I had an aunt that was a graduated nurse from Mercy Hospital in Chicago and she thought I should be a nurse. And so I taught school one year and then I put in my application at the Illinois Training School and was accepted and went in training in September, 1913. There was 56 young ladies in my graduating class.

Dr. Church:

That's a pretty good size graduating class.

Mrs. Watts:

Yes. We went in three months at a time. We went in for three months and then another class came in for three months until they had 56 in the class.

Dr. Church:

Can you tell me a little bit about your family?

Mrs. Watts:

I have one sister and one brother but before the sister and brother were born my mother had triplets and I was six years old and they were premature babies and at that time we did not have incubators, things for babies. And all three of those children died. Then when I was four years old I had a brother that died by meningitis when he was two and that was in Birmingham, Missouri and then they went back to Sumner and I lived there until... we still have the house there.

Dr. Church:

Wow. Were your mother and father born in this country?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes, they were born in Portland.

Dr. Church:

A number of ladies that I've interviewed so far, their mother and fathers came from Sweden. A lot of Swedish people, apparently, I'm telling you. Or at least the ones that I've interviewed went to the Illinois Training School. Can you tell me a little bit about your education prior to going to the Illinois Training School?

Mrs. Watts:

I just was a high school graduate and then to it. Ask me a question about it.

Dr. Church:

What, about your high school?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

Well what I'm curious about is that you said you taught school after high school. So you didn't need any more education to teach school?

Mrs. Watts:

I didn't take anything. No.

Dr. Church:

So in those days you could teach school with a high school education?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

Was it common for girls to finish high school during that time?

Mrs. Watts:

During my time yes.

Dr. Church:

Yeah? Most girls went to high school and graduated, huh?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

Okay. So you said you had an aunt that thought that you should be a nurse?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes. She had her training in the hospital in Chicago and she married my father's brother and so that made her my aunt.

Dr. Church:

Oh I see.

Mrs. Watts:

And my mother didn't think I should be a nurse but my dad did. So between my dad and my aunt they talked my mother into it. And we went. I went to Illinois Training School and I loved my training.

Dr. Church:

So were you a little doubtful about whether you'd like nursing? It sounds like you sort of got persuaded to go into nursing.

Mrs. Watts:

Well no I wasn't that thrilled about it. When my mother was so against it I didn't know whether or not I should go.

Dr. Church:

Oh, I see. Why was your mother against it?

Mrs. Watts:

Oh, she wanted me to stay home.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. It was going away.

Mrs. Watts:

She didn't want me going away. She wanted me to stay at home and go ahead and teach or anything that I wanted to do. But my aunt finally talked her into it.

Dr. Church:

What was it that your aunt thought about you that she thought that you would like nursing? Do you have any idea?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

She just somehow had a sense that you'd do well in it?

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah.

Dr. Church:

Okay. That's interesting. So how was it that you ended up choosing the Illinois Training School if you said your aunt graduated from Mercy?

Mrs. Watts:

Because she said that it was the best hospital for training that there was.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. Even though she went to another school, huh?

Mrs. Watts:

Even though she went to another school.

Dr. Church:

That's interesting. So which one of the sessions did you start in in school? Did you start in the October session or the January session?

Mrs. Watts:

September.

Dr. Church:

In the September session. Okay. And what year did you say that you started in? 1913?

Mrs. Watts:

13.

Dr. Church:

Uh-huh. Okay. And you graduated in what year?

Mrs. Watts:

16.

Dr. Church:

1916. Yeah I think I have that written down. Did you have any expectations about the school or any fantasies about it?

Mrs. Watts:

None.

Dr. Church:

None? Were you at all nervous about coming to the big city after living on the farm?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

No?

Mrs. Watts:

No. It was farm town but then there was Vincennes and Olney and Flora and good size towns that we went to where we did our shopping.

Dr. Church:

Okay and you said you started with 65 classmates?

Mrs. Watts:

56.

Dr. Church:

56. I'm sorry I had the numbers switched around. That's how many you started with. Now did that same number finish?

Mrs. Watts:

It was 56 that graduated.

Dr. Church:

Oh, I'm sorry about that.

Mrs. Watts:

We finished our training with 56 of us and I don't know whether I'm the only one that's left out of the class or not. Two years ago there was three. And two of us out of three were not just real close friends of mine but I've been corresponding with them so I don't know whether they're still living or not and of course we don't get pamphlets or anything from the Illinois Training School anymore.

Dr. Church:

Right. Do you remember where they lived? The two women who were still alive?

Mrs. Watts:

I don't recall on the map where they were.

Dr. Church:

Well you're the earliest graduate that we have talked to so far. I interviewed a lady who graduated in 1918.

Mrs. Watts:

1918?

Dr. Church:

Yeah.

Mrs. Watts:

Well that might have been somebody that I knew but if you could remember her name.

Dr. Church:

Oh sure. Let me see. She was Elizabeth Ridenour. And that wasn't her maiden name. I need to know her maiden name. Webber. Elizabeth Webber.

Mrs. Watts:

No. And she graduated from Illinois Training School?

Dr. Church:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mrs. Watts:

When they first had the hospital in Olney that's only 12 miles away from where I was but I don't know anybody that was in training.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Well she came from southern Illinois somewhere but I don't remember where she said she came from.

Mrs. Watts:

She probably belonged to the Webbers that was in that hospital because there was several Webbers and in fact I think most of the doctors in the hospital were Webbers.

Dr. Church:

Oh, gee. Okay. Do you remember why some of the girls didn't finish the program?

Mrs. Watts:

Well some of them decided to get married, some of them didn't like their training but most of them went through.

Dr. Church:

Was it a rough training? Was it difficult?

Mrs. Watts:

Well I think nursing is tough.

Dr. Church:

Yeah, many people would agree with you. I know I do. Do you remember what a typical day was like at the Illinois Training School? Typical day like what time you got up and what you did first thing?

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah. I think we got up at six and then we had our breakfast and we walked right down the street this way to the hospital back door. And as we walked down the street we looked right into the middle of the darn hospital that was two blocks long or a block long and there was a big front door that you entered, walked up the stairs and you knew which ward you were supposed to work in.

Dr. Church:

So were you given your assignments the day before or were you given your assignments that day on which ward you were supposed to work?

Mrs. Watts:

When you go work. You take a ward and there's so many nurses that went to that ward and we had our roles when we... real young nurses, we had certain things that we did. We poured medicine, we passed the medicine, we did hypodermics and the ladies ward we'd give baths and took care of the patients. But in the main ward we had orderlies that made the baths to the men and patched the bedpans and urinals things like that. We had nothing like that to do we had to manage where to go. But we did have [inaudible 00:12:07] to medicines, gave them hypodermics, and made rounds with the interns when they went. And at that time the intern talked about the medicine that the patients were getting, what it was for, and why they were getting it and how much we gave and why we gave that much [inaudible 00:12:32] and every patient went in and they got aspirin and cough medicine or whatever. If they were coughing, they got cough medicine. Everybody. And they just had the same kind of procedure that they went through to take care of a patient.

Dr. Church:

How many hours a day did you work?

Mrs. Watts:

Well we worked until... some of us worked from morning until noon and then we went back after supper and worked until 9:30. That was our day.

Dr. Church:

Did you attend classes?

Mrs. Watts:

Oh, yes. We had classes in the afternoon.

Dr. Church:

So you worked on the wards in the morning, you had your classes in the afternoon?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes but we would be working up until say 2:30 and then we'd go to class at 2:30 to 3:30. Then we'd go back and work in the ward again after the class was over until it was time for us to go home.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. Do you remember what types of classes were offered?

Mrs. Watts:

What?

Dr. Church:

What kind of classes were offered? What kind of classes you attended?

Mrs. Watts:

Well we had maternity medical which is about medicine and we had anatomy which was about how the body was built. And I suppose that covers everything. Of course we had [inaudible 00:14:24] departments and they took care of the mother before the baby was born and took care of the baby in the nursery with the mother. And they took the babies out for their feedings, put them on a long cart and they just laid there on the cart like the mother wasn't really there. So you could take the baby and give it to that mother and take another one here and we never got them mixed up.

Dr. Church:

Now, somebody told me about a big wicker basket that they had and they would put half a dozen babies in the basket at the same time and push them down the road.

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah. Well we just had a cart. Just a cart. We put one head that way and then one head this way so that they wouldn't breathe in each other's faces.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Do you remember what classes you enjoyed the most?

Mrs. Watts:

I liked all of them.

Dr. Church:

You liked all of them? You said that you gave hypodermics and baths to the women and passed out medicine. What other kind of duties did you have?

Mrs. Watts:

I just about covered everything. Let's see. Of course in the ladies ward we had [inaudible 00:15:52] but in the men's ward we didn't do that. They had orderlies that did that. We were never around eat anything in the ward on duty and we never sat down in a chair. We never had a break when we were in uniform. When we had night duty, they played the Florence Nightingale candle on her [inaudible 00:16:18] and we put [inaudible 00:16:18] on and put her to bed this way and did our chart and put the charts [inaudible 00:16:26] and we had our Florence Nightingale candle lit.

Dr. Church:

So you could see while you were charting, huh? That's interesting.

Mrs. Watts:

It was like nightlight but it was light enough that you could see the picture and know that the patient was all right. But it wasn't bright light. It was dim enough that the patient could sleep and you made your rounds up and down and up and down and you could tell by the looks of the patient whether it was bleeding or they was bleeding or whether they was restless. Who's kicking the covers off and not only just he but whether it was a lady or a man.



Dr. Church:

Right. Did you go through a probationary period?

Mrs. Watts:

Three months.

Dr. Church:

Three months. Okay. So were your duties in the probationary period the same as when...

Mrs. Watts:

Yes, but it was all... we went to class and learned how to do things and then we could go on the ward and do them but somebody always inspected your work as you were doing it. Somebody went with you when you gave your first cycle.

Dr. Church:

Was it a teacher that went with you?

Mrs. Watts:

No it was just a nurse that had more training then we had.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. Was it another student or was it one of the...

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. And this was during your probationary period?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

And after you were finished with the three month probationary period then you could pretty much do things on your own?

Mrs. Watts:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. You talked a little bit about rounds, going on rounds with the doctors and they're telling you what the medicines were for and what kind of affect they had. And do you feel that the nurses and the doctors had a good relationship?

Mrs. Watts:

I think so.

Dr. Church:

Yeah? Other than going on rounds, did you go to any other medical meetings? Were you allowed to or invited to?

Mrs. Watts:

I don't remember going to many other [inaudible 00:18:48] meetings.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Do you think that the doctors respected the judgment of the nurses or did they ask them for their opinions at any time that you remember?

Mrs. Watts:

The doctors?

Dr. Church:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mrs. Watts:

Ask the nurses?

Dr. Church:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mrs. Watts:

No, they just told us.

Dr. Church:

They just told you? Okay. How do you think they viewed the education that you were getting? The doctors?

Mrs. Watts:

Well they knew by the uniform that we were wearing how much training we'd had.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Did they think you were getting a good education, though, at the Illinois Training School? The doctors? Did they respect the education that you got?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes, they did.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Well a number of other graduates that I've talked to that found out about the Illinois Training School from their family doctor because they had either had some contact with Cook County or something like that. So from what other people have said, a lot of doctors really valued the kind of training nurses got at the Illinois Training School.

Mrs. Watts:

Well see, that's past my time. When I went into training, see, we didn't have that. But we were never sick at our house.

Dr. Church:

So you didn't have a family doctor, huh? No need for it, that's great. Let me ask you another question. Do you think the emphasis at the Illinois Training School was hospital nursing, community nursing, or private duty?

Mrs. Watts:

I just don't know. I wanted to work in the hospital when I finished. I didn't want to go out and do private duty.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Did you get experience doing any kind of community nursing while you were there? No? You didn't go out with the infant welfare or?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

All of your training was strictly in the hospital?

Mrs. Watts:

In the hospital.

Dr. Church:

Okay, because I think later on they had some of the students go out with infant welfare or...

Mrs. Watts:

Well that was past my time. That was past 1916, see?

Dr. Church:

Right. I think some people talked about doing work with the Chicago lying-in hospital and helping to deliver babies at home.

Mrs. Watts:

Yes. Well we had a lot of nurses that did go there to work but that was after they graduated.

Dr. Church:

So that wasn't part of your training. Okay. Do you want me to move at all? No?

Speaker 3:

No. And will you be able to break and have a little lunch?

Dr. Church:

Oh sure.

Speaker 3:

Okay. Then I'll just go ahead and wind it up here.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Just let me know when you're ready.

Speaker 3:

Thank you.

Dr. Church:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Do you have a particularly memorable case that you nursed when you were a student? No?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

No person that you remember that was a patient of yours in particular?

Mrs. Watts:

No. See, there wasn't just one patient there'd be eight or 10 of them, a whole roll of patients that we were taking care of. The only way that we got to know the patient at all was by that chart. Picked your chart up and there was a name on it and we took care of that patient whether she was supposed to get a hypo or medication of some sort. We took care of that patient but her name was on the chart and maybe next to [inaudible 00:22:45] was somebody else, of course. But maybe in the mean time this patient over here went home from the hospital. Of course they stayed in the hospital at that time longer than they do now.

Dr. Church:

About how long did a patient stay in the hospital in those days?

Mrs. Watts:

Well if it was a surgical case it was for about 10 days.

Dr. Church:

Oh that is a long time. Okay. Do you have a particularly favorite memory about the Illinois Training School days?

Mrs. Watts:

Just the part we had when we weren't working.

Dr. Church:

Yeah? What kind of things did you do?

Mrs. Watts:

I think the nurses were closer to each other then than they are now because we didn't get out and go any place like people do today and nobody had cars to go any place. And we'd have a movie that was called the Nickelodeon that you could go to and Nickelodeon's are a real good movie.

Dr. Church:

Where was that?

Mrs. Watts:

Within walking distance of county hospital.

Dr. Church:

Really? Oh.

Mrs. Watts:

It was where you had a screen up in the park. And we'd go there and there'd be a lot of the nurses there. We had to be in at 10 o'clock.

Dr. Church:

Yeah I heard that, too, from a bunch of people. So what happened if you weren't in by 10 o'clock?

Mrs. Watts:

We never tried it.

Dr. Church:

You never tried it. Okay. Do you have any unfavorable memory of Illinois Training School?

Mrs. Watts:

None at all.

Dr. Church:

None at all. It was all favorable. Well that's wonderful.

Mrs. Watts:

I don't know of any. We were so much closer to each other than people are today.

Dr. Church:

Well you spend so much time together I think that probably was a big factor. And all living together in one dorm.

Mrs. Watts:

We had one of the reception halls downstairs where you could just... out of your room. Go downstairs to the living room or reception room and read. There's a piano down there that you could play and girls sing and just on their own. It wasn't a party it was just a get together. We just had a bed in the room and a chair beside the bed and a bedside table. And we got up in the morning and got fresh and went to work and didn't need anything else. But when you came home in the evening after they had their dinner then we'd go downstairs to the reception room and we'd have a nice time down there. Nurses were much closer to each other than are now because that was the only parties we had was just with each other.

Dr. Church:

I know that the school closed in 1929 and that was kind of a long time after you graduated but did you have any contact or?

Mrs. Watts:

Oh, we went back to it. We had a reunion every year.

Dr. Church:

Every year after you graduated?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes. Up until...

Dr. Church:

Well I know they had one in 1981. And the Cook County School of Nursing closed.

Mrs. Watts:

Yes, I went there.

Dr. Church:

You went to that one?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes. I didn't miss hardly any of them.

Dr. Church:

So when you graduated in 1916 you started going to reunions right after that?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes after that. After I got settled, after I got married then I went but I married a man that had his training at Cook County. And then he had his internship at St. Elizabeth Hospital and then he went to the First World War and that was all. We got married.

Dr. Church:

What kind of a doctor was he or was everybody a general practitioner?

Mrs. Watts:

He was a general practitioner, yes. And he had a big office and he had a specialist in each. He had maybe three doctors that helped with surgery and then they had the medical specialist. Yeah, eye, ear, nose and throat. And he had a brother that was a dentist that was also in the big office with him.

Dr. Church:

So did you have any contact with anyone who was involved with the school when the school closed in 1929?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

No? So did you have any information about it or were you told about it or anything like that?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

No.

Mrs. Watts:

Uh-uh.

Dr. Church:

Okay. So you don't have any impressions of what it was like when the school closed in that year?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

Here's another question about the closing of the school. Do you have any inkling at all... Now you may not be able to answer this question since you graduated in 1916, but do you have any thoughts about the difference in training that the nurses got at Cook County when it became the Cook County Hospital School of Nursing rather than the Illinois Training School? Do you have any thoughts about whether their education changed at all?

Mrs. Watts:

No, I don't know anything about that. I was clear...

Dr. Church:

So you were long gone. Okay. Well that certainly makes sense. Okay.

Mrs. Watts:

But nurses did get excellent training at Cook County Hospital.

Dr. Church:

Oh, they certainly did.

Mrs. Watts:

That is, Illinois Training School did.

Dr. Church:

So you don't have any sense of how it differed at all after the change over?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

Okay.

Speaker 3:

Will you have coffee?

Dr. Church:

I sure will. Thank you. Do you remember who made the educational requirements at the Illinois Training School, who decided what classes you were going to take and that kind of thing? Was it the nursing people, the superintendents?

Mrs. Watts:

Superintendents.

Dr. Church:

It was.

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

Okay.



Mrs. Watts:

We went to Miss Wheeler for everything.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. So was she able to make those decisions independently of say, for instance, the hospital administrators or the doctors or anything?

Mrs. Watts:

As far as I know she decided everything. No doctor told us what we was to study. The study part of the Illinois Training School was in the Illinois Training School itself.

Dr. Church:

Okay.

Speaker 3:

Should we break and have a little lunch?

Dr. Church:

That's fine. This is a good point to break, too.

Mrs. Watts:

Something about Miss Wheeler. You got this going?

Dr. Church:

You don't want to be tape recorded? Yeah, it's going.

Mrs. Watts:

Maybe you better shut it off until I...

Dr. Church:

Oh, it's all right.

Mrs. Watts:

I think we have to.

Dr. Church:

Well I think just before I shut it off we were talking about the difference between the Cook County School of Nursing and the Illinois Training School.

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

If you knew anything about that.

Mrs. Watts:

Illinois Training School is under the jurisdiction of Miss Wheeler. Nobody else. And then she dealt with the hospital board but we didn't have anything to do with the hospital board, the nursing part at least.

Dr. Church:

Right. So did the hospital board maybe tell Miss Wheeler what kind of classes that you needed to take or?

Mrs. Watts:

I don't think so. I think it was all Miss Wheeler's call.

Dr. Church:

She was fairly independent of the hospital board?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

Okay. You said...

Mrs. Watts:

We had no connection with the board at all. We just went and we worked in the operating room. The doctors I suppose were on the board, were they?

Dr. Church:

Probably, yeah.

Mrs. Watts:

Hospital board.

Dr. Church:

Or maybe some of them were, yeah.

Mrs. Watts:

And we worked with that doctor and he told us what he wanted us to do. When I was in Dublin, Virginia and I was working in a hospital there, I just assisted the doctor. We'd get an emergency in, big railroad accident or something like that and the doctor and I were the two that went to the hospital to look after the people that were injured in the wreck.

Dr. Church:

I bet that was interesting.

Mrs. Watts:

That was way back in 1917. '17 or early '18.

Dr. Church:

Okay so when you graduated you said you worked at Cook County Hospital for a while?

Mrs. Watts:

I worked in the hospital but I worked for I suppose Miss Wheeler.

Dr. Church:

Oh, no. I'm talking about after you finished school.

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah.

Dr. Church:

When you finished school, where did you work after you graduated?

Mrs. Watts:

I worked in the hospital.

Dr. Church:

At Cook County?

Mrs. Watts:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Church:

But you said you worked for Miss Wheeler?

Mrs. Watts:

No, I didn't work for her then.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. This is when you were in the Illinois Training School. Okay. So for how long did you work at Cook County after you graduated?

Mrs. Watts:

About two years and a half.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay.

Mrs. Watts:

Two years and a half or three years. And my operating room supervisor was an ITS graduate, too. And I had worked with her in the hospital at Cook County Hospital. Then we went to Omaha, Nebraska and worked in Omaha, Nebraska. And I worked there for a year with her and I think that she wrote to me and asked me to come and work.

Dr. Church:

Oh, so after you stopped working in Cook County, then you went to Omaha, Nebraska?

Mrs. Watts:

Shortly afterwards. I worked someplace in there between. I don't remember. It was a smaller hospital.

Dr. Church:

Did you work in the operating room in Cook County? Is that where you worked after you graduated?

Mrs. Watts:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Church:

Okay. And that's where you got to know the supervisor.

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

And then she asked you to come up to work in Nebraska with her.

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

I see. Okay. What kind of work did you do in the operating room at Cook County when you were working there?

Mrs. Watts:

In the operating room?

Dr. Church:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mrs. Watts:

The nurse assisted the doctor.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. Did you interact or see any of the student nurses when you were working there? Did you have any contact with any of the student nurses when you were working after you'd graduated?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

No, you didn't?

Mrs. Watts:

Unless they were working where I was. They weren't students, they were graduates.

Dr. Church:

Oh, okay. So the students didn't come into the operating room at all?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

No. Okay. Why did you decide to leave Cook County?

Mrs. Watts:

When did I start what?

Dr. Church:

Why did you decide to leave Cook County and go some place else to work?

Mrs. Watts:

Well I don't know. Maybe I got an offer of a better job.

Dr. Church:

Okay. It wasn't that you didn't like Cook County anymore? You just had a better offer in another place?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

Okay. So you worked at Cook County for about two and a half years and then you said to went to work in another smaller hospital?

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah.

Dr. Church:

And then you went to Nebraska?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes, and I worked in a surgical department in the Omaha, Nebraska Methodist Hospital.

Dr. Church:

Okay. How long were you there?

Mrs. Watts:

Year and a half.

Dr. Church:

And then what did you do after that, do you remember?

Mrs. Watts:

I went back to St. Louis. Back to the hospital in St. Louis. That was in Missouri. And someplace when we left Nebraska we went to bed and we all had a job. Then they had an election. All the Republicans were laid off and the Democrats got the jobs.

Dr. Church:

Oh, no! I never heard of anything like that. Politics in the hospital, huh? Boy. That's amazing. So it sounds like you worked in just a whole bunch of different places in different settings.

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah. Some places I worked quite a while but back day if you were offered a better job and better pay you changed.

Dr. Church:

Were you married at the time when you were doing all this traveling around?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

No. Okay. How long did you work before you got married?

Mrs. Watts:

Have to stop and think of it. When did I get married, 1930?

Speaker 3:

No, you got married in... was it '26? I don't know.

Mrs. Watts:

When was Alberta born?

Speaker 3:

She was born in '28. You must have gotten married in '27 because I think you got married and had a baby in about a year. Maybe '27.

Mrs. Watts:

At the end of World War. The young man that I had been going with all this time came back from the service and soon as he had his office established we were married.

Dr. Church:

I see. Okay. And was that when you were in Virginia or was that after?

Mrs. Watts:

After.

Dr. Church:

After Virginia. Okay. What type of nursing did you do during that whole time? Was it mainly operating room?

Mrs. Watts:

Mostly in the operating room.

Dr. Church:

Mostly operating room.

Mrs. Watts:

Surgical nursing.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Do you think that your nursing education at Illinois Training School was adequate for the kind of work that you ended up doing?

Mrs. Watts:

Well, yes it was.

Dr. Church:

I'm sure you had quite a bit more to learn, though, after you graduated. Did you have any exposure to the operating room when you were in school?

Mrs. Watts:

We didn't have too much operating room when we were in school.

Dr. Church:

No? So I would guess that you had a lot to learn afterwards if that was the only kind of nursing that you did for a while? When you got married, then did you stop nursing? Did you stop working?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes.

Dr. Church:

Did you ever go back?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

Never went back after that?

Mrs. Watts:

No.

Dr. Church:

Did you miss it?

Mrs. Watts:

Well, not especially. No.

Dr. Church:

No, you didn't?

Mrs. Watts:

You still kept contact with surgical nurses every place. A lot of my friends were full time nurses. They've been nurses at some time. And they were doctors wives and I knew the doctors and them, too. So I didn't miss it.

Dr. Church:

Okay.

Mrs. Watts:

Quite a big hospital way back then.

Dr. Church:

Did you settle in Indiana then after you got married?

Mrs. Watts:



Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Church:

I see. So all that traveling around the country and you came back again to the Midwest, huh? Do you have any idea what most of your classmates did after graduation? What kind of nursing they went into?

Mrs. Watts:

No, I don't know.

Dr. Church:

You don't know?

Mrs. Watts:

See, unit 12 was the nurses that went from the, during first World War. And I had quite a few classmates that went there, went to the first World War. But, I stayed at the hospital and worked in the operating room in the hospital instead of going overseas.

Dr. Church:

Who was the superintendent again during your time at Illinois Training School? Mary Wheeler?

Mrs. Watts:

Mary Wheeler.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Do you have any recollection of what she was like as a person?

Mrs. Watts:

She was very strict and very kind, very good. And she'd come out to us how we [inaudible 00:42:26] when we were working and she'd work in the hospital. She'd come out and if we were [inaudible 00:42:37] the surgical department she'd pick the little babies up out of the bed and pat them and visit with us, see how we were getting along and how everything was going, everything was all right.

Dr. Church:

So she was around a lot?

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah, she was very, very kind. Very strict but very kind.

Dr. Church:

How would compare your education at the Illinois Training School to the kind of education nurses get today?

Mrs. Watts:

I don't know anything about how the nurses get today.

Dr. Church:

You don't? You don't have any contact with any nurses or have you ever been in the hospital?

Mrs. Watts:

Yeah, I had a broken hip once and I was in the hospital for maybe a week. Then that time I got up and walked.

Dr. Church:

So you don't have any thoughts about how that was different, huh?

Mrs. Watts:

Yes. I don't think that they had the contact with the doctors and the treatment the patients were getting and why that we had. I don't think they had that down.

Dr. Church:

Yeah, it sounds like the rounds that you went on with the doctors were really pretty educational when you were in school. Now I remember you mentioned earlier when we were talking that you said that you used to keep in contact with some of the people that you went to school with. Do you keep in contact with anyone anymore?

Mrs. Watts:

Well everybody that I went to school with has died.

Dr. Church:

Okay. Now you said you thought maybe there were three of you left but you didn't know them very well.

Mrs. Watts:

Right, from school. But no, after you [inaudible 00:44:19].

Dr. Church:

So you were saying that after you graduated you never went... no, I think I lost your train of thought.

Mrs. Watts:

After I graduated I kept house and entertained and my daughter was born at the end of the... almost 18 months after I was married and I took care of her and my young friends who'd had young children, I associated with them and bridge parties and went to church circles and just had a real active life. I would send somebody [inaudible 00:45:21] the baby [inaudible 00:45:21] take your children [inaudible 00:45:23] and things like that which nowadays a lot of the young folks take their babies with them when they go someplace but we never did. They had somebody take them while we were gone. And we had quite an active social life. Had dinner parties and played bridge.

Dr. Church:

What part of Indiana did you settle in with your husband?

Mrs. Watts:

In Gary.

Dr. Church:

You were in Gary. Oh, okay.

Mrs. Watts:

Out on Lincoln Street where they had nice red brick houses.

Dr. Church:

I'm pretty much finished with the interview. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me? Anything that you thought of while we were talking that you'd like to add?

Mrs. Watts:

No, I don't think so.

Dr. Church:

Nothing? Okay. Well, thank you very much.