

JOE AND MARION MILLER

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JOE MILLER

and

MARION MILLER

An Interview by Wanda McDonough

Tape No. 8

Wanda McDonough Oral History Project

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ORAL/TAPED HISTORY INTERVIEW

Interviewee: MILLER - Joe + MARION  
Name Address Tel.  
Interviewer: Wanda McDONOUGH  
Name  
Interview: 7-2-93 Diocesan Pastoral CTR.  
Date Place

RELEASE FORM:

The sound recording and the transcript of my interview with Wanda McDONOUGH on the date of 7-2-93 may be deposited for public inspection in the oral history collection of the diocesan Archives, and used for scholarly purposes.

Joe Miller Marion Miller  
Signature Date  
7/2/93

MM: I was born in Las Animas, Colorado in 1916 to-- My mother was Elizabeth Kyle O'Malley, and my father was Walter Lee O'Malley. And I came to Salt Lake with my parents at the age of about one and a half. We made that our home forever after. What else now?

WM: Tell where you went to school.

MM: Oh, my mother died when I was four and a half years old, and my dad waited until I was old enough--until my sister was old enough--to go to school with me, and I spent eight years at St. Mary's of the Wasatch. Six of those years I was a boarder, living there all the time with my sister and all the nuns.

WM: What is your sister's name, Marion?

MM: Elizabeth O'Malley. She's Elizabeth Stinson now, and she's the mother of Barbara Stinson.

JM: Barbara Lee.

MM: Anyway, we only knew St. Mary's as children. We didn't know anything about the big world at all.

WM: St. Mary's covers a lot of territory. Where was St. Mary's then? The one on the west side?

MM: No. It was a couple of years after it moved out to the Wasatch. It was St. Mary's of the Wasatch, and it was home, and a wonderful home. I consider myself an expert on what it was like to live at St. Mary's.

WM: And you went through eight grades there?

MM: Mmmm hmmm.

WM: And then high school?

MM: No. I graduated from there. See, I didn't start until I was about in the fourth or fifth grade, and I skipped a grade.

JM: You went through high school at St. Mary's, though.

MM: Yeah. I went through twelfth grade, didn't I.

WM: If you went to high school there. Then did you have any university education?

MM: Yes, I had two years of the University of Utah. I thought I wanted to become a nun, and my dad said he thought that would be a wonderful idea but I'd better know how mean the world was first. So he put me in the university.

Joe and Marion Miller Oral History Interview - page 2

WM: Now, Joe, you give your background and your parents and all such.

JM: Okay. I was born in Butte, Montana, 1914. Father of the same name, Joseph Henry Miller. And my mother Edith. Her name was Edith Fryling. She was a Methodist. She was from Pennsylvania, and my dad was from Ohio. We moved to Salt Lake in the early twenties. My dad owned a hat store down on Main Street just above Third South. And he also traveled as a salesman on the road selling hats.

WM: Where did he travel? What area?

JM: Oh, in those days practically everything in the western end of the United States.

WM: My dad sold groceries, and he went all over.

JM: It was mostly by train. He went to Seattle and San Francisco and all of that area. And my Methodist mother, we bought a house on Eleventh Avenue--or my dad did. And that's in the days when you put the car up on jacks when winter came because you couldn't make it down the hills. And I went to the first grade at Ensign School for about a half a year. And then my Methodist mother decided I should go to the Catholic grade school. The Catholic grade school in those days was in the basement of this cathedral, and there were four rooms, four nuns, and eight grades. Each sister taught two grades. And as I recall, the four Holy Cross Sisters were Sister Ruth, Sister Archangel, and Sister Victory, and Sister Beatrix.

WM: Did you have each one of them as a teacher as the years went by?

JM: Yes, I went through the whole eight grades down there. It was a great place to go to school, and God bless those nuns. They were wonderful teachers. I think particularly following Sister Archangel, Sister Ruth. And Sister Beatrix was the seventh and eighth grade teacher. So she was sort of the principal of the whole group. Anyway, those nuns did a great job teaching eight grades. They'd teach one grade while the others studied. And then they'd alternate the recesses and all that sort of stuff.

WM: And can you remember what subjects they taught then?

JM: It was just the good old reading and writing and arithmetic.

WM: Did they teach music?

JM: I don't recall music, no. It was basically just the threesome.

WM: History?

JM: I do remember that I memorized "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" and stood up and recited it somewhere along the line in there. That's one of the main things I can think of. But it was a great place to go to school. I've often wondered: where did these nuns live? Were they at St. Mary's, or were they at the hospital? Probably at the hospital. Anyway, God bless them. They were great teachers.

WM: Well, you must have grown up in the Cathedral Parish. Can you remember the priests, the bishops, and all these people that you knew when you were younger?

JM: Well, when I first got here, Bishop Glass was the bishop. He had just finished decorating the cathedral. That would have been about 1921. And I was his first train-bearer. In those days the bishops wore pretty fancy robes. Looked like the pope coming in the cathedral, you know, with a big long train behind him. And I had a little red outfit that I wore, and I guess the reason I was selected was because it fit me. There must have been a reason because there were always little kids outside to do that train-bearing. And then, oh, let's see. A lot of great priests. Father Collins had the altar boys. You remember Father Collins? Did you know him, Wanda?

WM: Is this the same Father Collins that was down in Guadalupe?

JM: Yes.

WM: Oh, I've heard so much about him. I didn't know him.

JM: He taught us-- You asked if we had music. We didn't have music in school, but Father Collins played the clarinet and all that kind of thing. And he had-- I still remember the altar boys, he made up a little thing to the "In rain and shine we're there...." to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" for the altar boys, and he called us to the cathedral. And then let's see.... [Sung]

In rain and shine we're there.

We are called in our cassock and surplice.

We see that the cruets are filled.

Then comes the candle and book.

We started at the stroke of the clock.

At the foot of the steps we took our station.

Prepared to accomplish our best.

For the Cathedral Altar Servers Corporation.

[Clapping] I've never forgotten that. Father Collins was a dear guy.

WM: Did Father Collins make that up?

JM: Yes. We had a Cathedral Altar Servers Corporation. You know, it was really a great deal.

WM: I've heard so much about him. I've interviewed Willie Price and Phil Salazar, Eppie Gonzalez, and they all just loved Father Collins.

JM: Yes, he was a wonderful priest. And then of course Father Giroux (Wilfrid J. Giroux, later Msgr. Giroux) was pastor of the cathedral for so long (1931-1937). In fact, I went into the seminary after Judge for three years, and Father Giroux was pastor at that time. Also, of course, Bishop Hunt. He coached the baseball teams, had our uniforms. We played St. Anne's and Lourdes and all that sort of thing. And I remember one time we had a game when Herman Franks was the pitcher for Lourdes. And Bishop Hunt blessed all the bats because Herman threw them so fast, he didn't want any of us to get killed.

WM: There were other bishops in between?

JM: Well, of course, Bishop Mitty (Bishop John J. Mitty) followed Bishop Glass (Bishop Joseph S. Glass), didn't he?

WM: Yes, and then Bishop (James E.) Kearny.

JM: And then Bishop Kearny. I can remember them all so much. But anyway, you have them all on the walls with their coat of arms.

WM: But you don't remember any little stories like that?

JM: Well, Bishop Hunt was our real pal. In fact, he took four of us after high school, when I graduated from high school in '31--we were all on his ball team: Jack Maher, Bill McCrystal, and Walt Smythe, and I--on a one month's trip. We went back to where he was born in Ohio. He knew all the places. Everything was free. We stayed in rectories on the way. It cost us each \$90 for the whole trip.

WM: What transportation? Did you drive?

JM: He drove his car, a little Chevrolet. We went bingo! right out through Wyoming, and he crossed Nebraska and into Iowa.

JM: And we were in Chicago. He had all the connections with the baseball teams, the Cubs. We sat right behind the dugout and watched the games. Same thing in St. Louis with the Cardinals. He taught us how to keep score on the baseball game and all that sort of thing. Wonderful trip! He even taught us how to play bridge.

WM: I understand he was a pretty good bridge player.

JM: He was a good bridge player.

JM: Well, I still sort cards the way he taught us, just the way he taught us to pick up the deck, sort the four suits, and I still do.

WM: Speaking of Bishop Glass, Marion, he had some Blue Medalists. Were you one of them by any chance? Did you have one of his blue medals?

MM: No, I don't seem to remember that.

WM: The Archives has the names of some of the Blue Medalists.

MM: How did you win a blue medal?

WM: Bishop Glass, apparently, just gave them to whoever he wanted to.

JM: You were up at St. Mary's.

MM: I was up at St. Mary's. And I was one of the little boarding kids up at St. Mary's that were just little girls, you know. They were very dispensable.

JM: Marion got acquainted with all the priests in the summertime, though, when they came up there for retreats. In those days they did their summer retreats at St. Mary's.

MM: Yes. Oh, Father (John J.) Nestor, Father (Albert A.) Pinckney. Those were two that we were just really fond of.

WM: Why?

MM: Oh, I don't know. They were very personable, and they were young. I think they both died quite young. Father Pinckney was tall and skinny, and he had been a flyer in the war. At least that's the story we got. Rumor had it that he was a pilot. So of course there were only about five of us gals who would live there in the summer. And so we would get cases, of course. And the sisters really had to keep their eyes on us because we were acting quite silly. But we all

got a case on Father Pickering because he had been in the war and flew. And of course maybe he hadn't at all. We don't know. So that was our summer--typical of our summers. The retreats didn't last all that long in the summer. They only lasted about-- And it was quite devoid of nuns. There was maybe one little old nun, and I can't remember her last name. But she was, to my eyes then, she was quite elderly. She probably was in her sixties, which of course is not elderly to me anymore.

She kept the place clean, and, I might add, very clean. She was kind of in charge of us, but there was one younger sister there who would come up, and I don't know where she came from. But we would see her about once a month when she'd come up to make sure we were all right and we were behaving ourselves.

But we were. They were long summers, and the highlight, of course, for us was this priests' retreat which maybe lasted two weeks.

My dad made real sure that we weren't raised at St. Anne's. You know where was a great terrible Depression the latter part of the time that we were there at St. Mary's. So a lot of people would advise him to put us down at St. Anne's. He said, Oh, no. We were going to stay at St. Mary's, come what may. And we did.

WM: Well, that straightens that out, and I'm glad it's on the tape. Now let's go back. Where did we leave you, Joe? You were still an altar boy and playing cards with Bishop Hunt. Anything else about the priests at the cathedral that you can remember? Any more songs would be great.

JM: Oh, I don't have any more songs. Golly, I don't know. There were just so many wonderful priests there. Father Keith.

MM: He was a real power at Judge.

JM: He was the principal at Judge when I was there as a senior. I graduated in '31 from Judge. Father Keith was there.

WM: Emma Egan used to talk about him. She taught school for him.

MM: Oh, yes. She did.

MM: I remember Dan Ingles (sp?), who was the dentist, was a student of Emma's. So he probably could tell you about a lot going on there and the priests who were--Father Keith and others. Or is he too young for that? But he did have Emma as a teacher, and he loved her very tenderly.

WM: Well, since you both lived on the east side of town, were you aware of the Catholic life on the west side of town?

MM: Not too much.

WM: People from the east side didn't seem to. . .

JM: Well, I don't know. You know you didn't get around that easily in those days. We rode on the streetcar most of the time. We played baseball against all of those teams like St. Anne's and so on.

WM: Guadalupe had a good team down there. I guess it was St. Patrick's then.

JM: St. Patrick's, yes. St. Patrick's and Ambrose and St. Anne's and Cathedral. Well, your life was pretty well contained where you lived. We weren't quite as mobile in those days.

WM: We'd like to hear about your activities in St. Vincent de Paul Society.

JM: Well, St. Vincent de Paul-- Paul Sullivan got me into the St. Vincent de Paul Society. And at the time I joined it, Mr. Fife was the president. It had been founded by Mr. Cosgriff and Mr. Fife. It was just to take care of the needs of the poor in those days. And of course the St. Vincent de Paul Society is all over the world. This particular conference was aggregated straight from St. Louis. So they had their own charter from the St. Louis headquarters of St. Vincent de Paul. And there are records of very early days when Mr. Cosgriff and Mr. Fife published each year an account of what was spent. We actually passed out food and a lot of that sort of thing, clothing and all of that. There was one interesting-- And, oh, let's see. I joined it when Mr. Fife was president.

For a long time. Many years. And Jim Cunningham was a member of St. Vincent de Paul, and so was Tom Carey who died, well, unusually early. He was a cathedral person.

Tom lived on the Avenues, and he had--was in charge of--an electrical business here in Salt Lake. He did quite a bit of the early remodeling of the lights in the cathedral.

I don't know the logistics of it or where it was handled in those days, but by the time I joined the Society, most of the work that we did was calling on people who needed help. Monsignor McDougall, of course, and the different pastors and different people.

WM: You just worked through the cathedral and not through any of the other parishes?

JM: Well, we went all over the city. There were never any St. Vincent de Paul's in any of the other parishes. We'd just go anywhere in Salt Lake where people needed help.

WM: Can you remember any one call, where it was from, and what the need was?

JM: Oh, several of them. We had one lady that we helped over quite a period of time who lived over on, oh, below the capitol there on--what's the street that goes through?

WM: Center Street.

JM: Center Street, yes.

JM: Over a period of four or five years we gave her quite a bit of help, which she needed. She was a widow raising a family. And quite a few years later she came back and told us everything was fine, and she was down in Murray and so on. So that was one that we helped. There were just all kinds. I called on people down in-- We got calls from a lot of emergency travel type things, people in a motel down somewhere on State Street needing help. Just a little of everything, really. People will go to a Catholic Church for help in a town where they're strangers. And the cathedral was the main church here, so they got the calls. That's what they're doing today with this outreach thing which is just absolutely wonderful. I don't know another cathedral anywhere that's doing it from our experience.

WM: The lady you were talking about on Center Street, did you give out money?

JM: We paid bills. We never gave out cash. That was one of the rules. Because you didn't want to be used for something that it didn't need to be. But we would personally conduct whatever business needed to be done, pay for it, and report it. And we had a St. Vincent de Paul box at every church.

WM: And if she needed food, did you take out food like they do from the cathedral here? Or did you give her the money to buy food with?

JM: Well, no. We would buy food at the grocery, if that's what was needed, and take it to her. Then for a long time, when Father McDougall was here, we did pass out sandwiches which the St. Vincent de Paul people made. Marion and I made a lot of sandwiches, and brought them up once a week, and put them

in the freezer in the kitchen, and that sort of thing.

WM: At the cathedral.

JM: Yes. Tom Carey did the same thing.

MM: Oh, yes. There were several of us who did it for a couple of years.

JM: We'd just make 50 sandwiches at home, and we'd get the funds to buy the food from St. Vincent de Paul, and then bring them up to the cathedral and put them in the freezer. And they'd pass them out--they called them sack lunches--to the people that came.

WM: Is there any Vincent de Paul lasting now in Salt Lake?

JM: There still is a conference here, as far as I know, yes. I'm sure there is. We've been gone for six or seven years. When I left, \_\_\_\_\_. Oh, gosh, I can't think of all the names.

JM: The husband of the gal that was in the Altar Society with you, and she ran the \_\_\_\_\_.

MM: Oh, sure. Kathleen....

JM: Kathy.

MM: Oh, she's very busy. I think she's president of the Altar Society right now, or has been. Kathy Scott. She is wonderful.

WM: Let's go to your civic affairs. Forget the cathedral and the Church for a minute. What have you been active in in the way of clubs and organizations in the community?

JM: Oh, I guess Serra Club would be the main one, Wanda. I was in the Knights of Columbus, Serra Club, and I guess that's all. Most of what I've done has been in the Church.

JM: Oh, the Toastmasters.

MM: That's right.

MM: You mentioned-- Christian Family Movement.

JM: We did that. And we were in Marriage and Cana Conference-- and all that kind of stuff.

MM: Father Vincent \_\_\_\_\_ was head of Christian Family Movement, started it.

JM: The Christian Family Movement was a nationwide movement that sort of preceded Marriage and Cana. And it was basically for parents and families to bring a real Christian ethic into their way of living and what they did with their children and all that sort of thing. So we had weekly meetings, and they had a kind of a format of prayer and study, subjects to discuss, and so on. It was just Christianity alive in the family.

MM: Right. And it was national.

JM: I don't know who started it, honey. I really don't.

MM: It might have been a Spanish priest. He started Marriage and Cana I know. With the same people.

JM: It could have been the one that did Christian Family.

MM: Well, at least the same people headed it. I know that a couple named Crowley started it in the East someplace--had started the Christian Family Movement. And they also started Marriage Encounter. They went over to Spain and got going with the American movement.

JM: Weren't the Sullivans in that? Paul Sullivan?

MM: Paul and Frances.

JM: And Jack Maher.

MM: And Betty Maher.

JM: About ten or twelve couples from Cathedral Parish.

MM: Some people I can picture whose names escape me completely.

JM: It was just to make us realize what faith meant in our home and to our children, and to try to raise them that way.

MM: Well, it sure changed our values. However, we couldn't always convince our children of that. It was interesting. It was Marriage Encounter that really changed our lives personally.

JM: Well, I think we gained from what we did. Sure. We have all good kids. They don't all go to church and so on. But they're living good Christian lives, that's for sure.

WM: Anyway, the Church is getting much more lenient about a lot of things that they objected to.

MM: That's right.

WM: How did you make a living, Joe?

JM: Oh, I was a salesman for Jantzen, the people that make the sweaters and swimwear and all that sort of thing. And I worked for them for 44 years, and I traveled one time from El Paso to the Canadian border. But I wound up with a rather small area between southern Idaho and Utah. I did that. It was a great job, and I loved it.

WM: Did you travel with him?

JM: Oh, yes.

MM: Mmmmm mmmmm. Not with seven kids.

JM: Not with seven kids. But toward the end I thought we did

MM: That's when we decided to retire. I made too many mistakes helping.

WM: Can you tell now your children's names that we can get on the tape?

JM: Oh, that's easy. Our oldest is Joe.

MM: Joseph Henry Miller V now.

JM: There are now four living generations of Joseph Henry Millers, the same name. All firstborn sons in the family. Our son Joe, his son Joe, and his son Joe.

MM: Are all the firstborns in the family.

JM: Four generations of us. He's in Washington State. Our second child is Mary Lee, who is now a lawyer in San Diego and Las Vegas. Our third is Susan, who has a master's in--

MM: Ocean affairs.

JM: Well, ocean affairs, and worked for seven years for the State of California.

WM: Ocean affairs?

JM: Yes. Well, she did things like helping put together the offshore oil rig in Santa Barbara and places. Then John, our son, who is in New York, is doing very well; he's in the financial business. He's the Class of '30 at Judge. Then Melanie who is in Minneapolis and works in the Hungry Mind

Bookstore in Minneapolis; is not married, a very full life. And by the way, we're living in the condo in Park City our son John bought. When he went to the University of Utah, he was on the ski team, went through there on a scholarship, got a master's at Santa Clara, and has done very well. He just always wanted a condo in Park City, so about five years ago he bought one, and we get to use it for the summer which is a great blessing when you live in Sun City West, Arizona and it's 113 down there in the summer.

Then Betsy got a master's in human relations--human resources I think is the real official name. She lives in Mountain View, California.

MM: Where Joe was in the seminary.

JM: Yes, I went to the seminary at Mountain View and St. Joseph's after high school until I ran into O'Malley and the Cathedral Parish. No, seriously. My father died, it was 1931, and we were broke. I had to go to work. No, '31 I graduated. It was '34 that my dad died, and we were really down to nothing. The Depression had just wiped us out. I worked at a WPA job at Forest Canyon that Father Giroux helped me get into. I came home from the seminary one spring. My father had cancer, and he died. And that's how I got started with Jantzen.

WM: What did you do with the WPA up in the Canyon?

JM: We helped build with pick and shovel the road that goes around from Wasatch Boulevard--they were building that in those days. But anyway, how did we get into this?

MM: Where Betsy lives.

JM: Yes, that's right. We're onto the kids. So Betsy's in Mountain View where I went to school. I was three years in the seminary, St. Joseph's. And then our youngest child, Monica, is in Kinderhook (sp?), New York, right below Albany. She is a very fine artist, and so is our oldest son, Joe. But Monica makes a good living as a lobbyist for the Natural Foods people and also for the homeopathic doctors. She headed up the whole organization for the New York Homeopathic Doctors for two or three years.

WM: But that has nothing to do with her artistic ability.

JM: She does the art on the side. But she's a wonderful artist.

WM: Does she display--exhibit?

JM: Yes. So does our son Joe.

MM: Yes, they both. But Monica for a long time--well, for two years--ran the I understand it's famous, I had never heard of it before--gallery in Albany.

JM: What times is it, Wanda?. We're going to lunch with Bishop Federal. Would you go with us?

[End of Interview]

