

MARGARET H. MAY

An Interview by Wanda McDonough

Wanda McDonough Oral History Project

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ORAL/TAPED HISTORY INTERVIEW

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Margaret H May 7-30-92
Signature Date

WM: ...recording of an interview with Margaret May, July 30, 1992. The interviewer is Wanda McDonough.

MM: I was born here in Salt Lake City on February, the 5th, 1921, at Holy Cross Hospital, the third child in a family of seven. My mother had come here as an eighteen-year-old from Concord, New Hampshire, and my father had come out to work for a cousin, J.C. Lynch, who ran the Salt Lake Ice Company. And he was also eighteen years old. He came from Sioux City, Iowa, and he and my mother met two years later and were married.

WM: What was your mother's maiden name?

MM: W-E-L-S-H, Welsh. And the Welshes were a family who came also from New Hampshire, who were cousins of Jim Ivers, and they came to go into business in Park City when it was a thriving mining community. The Welshes and the Ivers had large families of their own.

WM: What is the ethnic background of both sides of your family?

MM: We're both second-generation Irish. Our ancestors on both sides, we think, probably escaped Ireland during the Potato Famine. We haven't done a lot of genealogy, but we're pretty sure that that's the makeup of both families.

WM: Where did you go to school, Margaret?

MM: Oh, we grew up on the Avenues, on Third Avenue between F and G.; Lowell School was two blocks away, but we were sent across town to Judge Memorial for our entire grade school and high school training. Some Catholic families in those days simply insisted that we go to Judge Memorial, even though we were so close to the public schools. I guess because we were a minority, and they didn't want to lose us to the predominant faith.

WM: Do you remember the names of any of the teachers, sisters, in the grade school?

MM: Oh, yes. There was Sister Pat Felicia, and Sister Theresa Margaret, Sister Frances James, Sister Kathleen, Sister Jerome, Sister Geraldine. And they were all wonderful teachers. And by the way, we lived, like I say, five blocks from Cathedral, and we walked to and from school many days. Many times in the dead of winter we would take the street car, which ran then. But it was a long walk home. And again, we don't remember ever suffering from being too tired. It was just part of the education process.

WM: And after Judge Memorial, where did you go to school?

MM: And after Judge Memorial, I went to Holy Cross Hospital.

Again, had the Holy Cross nuns for three years of nurses' training. Became a graduate nurse. And that was 1942, and the war had begun. So when I graduated from training, within a year I was accepted into the Navy Nurse Corps.

When I went into the Navy, it was like going from a nice warm tub bath into ice water. It was a complete change for me. It was a wonderful experience.

WM: How long were you in the Navy?

MM: I was in the Navy for about two and a half years. And then fell in love with and married a Navy officer, and lived across the country back and forth on Navy bases for about six years. Then the marriage came to a sudden halt. So I brought my three children back to Salt Lake to raise them, because I thought my family, my connections, and my memories of a good solid life were here. So fortunately I came back, and even lived part of that time, raised my children, on the Avenues. They attended this Cathedral School for the first eight years of their education. Then my daughter went to St. Mary of the Wasatch, the only Catholic high school at the time, and the boys went to Judge Memorial. St. Mary's, as you know, was later sold, much to our disappointment. Now, my three children are all married--happily, I hope. And I have five grandsons.

WM: Do you remember the priests who were at the Cathedral during that time?

MM: Yes. There was Father Lamothe (Francis R.), going way back. My three younger brothers were altar boys during this time. And it seems like they got the six-thirty Mass many, many times. So an older sister always went along to protect them on the walk to church. Sometimes I was the one. And I loved going to Mass with them. It was pitch dark in the mid-winter, and then we would walk down to the Cathedral, and it was a thrill for me to sit and watch my brothers being altar boys. And the dark, and the quiet, and the candles in that big cathedral.

And the priests then, that I can remember, were Father Emmett Kelly and Father Lamothe who was a Frenchman. Bishop Kearney (James E.), of course, came along a little later, and we all loved him. And as far as the girls all growing up Catholic, we didn't get to do much around the Cathedral. Our mothers did the sewing and cleaned the altars, and we would get to help a little bit two or three times a year when the mothers, the Altar Society, would clean the whole church. And I think at times I wished I was a boy instead of a girl, because they got to serve the Masses, and they got to be in

all the exciting ceremonies.

MM: Well, life in the Cathedral Parish was very exciting. We used to enjoy Vespers, and I think it was Vespers were on Sundays at four p.m. The church was so much of a part of our family life, on Sundays families went to Mass together. Mother usually led into the pew, then the children, then the father. And of course the girls wore hats and dresses. And pews were rented by the families once a year, and a deposit.

WM: Did you have to pay for the pew?

MM: Yes. I don't really know how much it was, but it must have been very minimal. It was just a thrill to see all the big families. And we all had to march into our own family pew in that big cathedral.

WM: Where was your pew in the Cathedral?

MM: Ours was about the third down up on the left side in the front. And as I remember, our cousins, the James Mahers, were about two over and down behind us, and then our cousins the Ivers, were one up and in the middle. They had a much larger family, nine children and the mother and dad.

WM: Now Blanche McKay owned a pew somewhere.

MM: Oh, yes. Blanche had a pew for years up that left side aisle, one of the small half pews. And I think everybody growing up in Cathedral remembers Blanche and her husband sitting there, and Blanche always had beautiful hats. Everybody just claimed their pews and didn't sit anywhere else but in their pews.

Our school let out just at a little bit different time than the public schools, and we were called many names, just like children will do. And some of them were "Catlickers," "Holy Romans," and "Fisheaters." And we reported this to our parents, and they said, "Just smile and walk on. And do not let that bother you." So many times we would say, "We love fish," when they called us fisheaters. Or we would smile and walk on. And it was just something we got used to. We really stuck together. And the Mormons growing up had such wonderful activities for the children always going on. And we used to just beg our parents, could we just go to a few of those, that the Mormon kids invited us. But the answer was always, "No!" So we didn't get to step inside of the Mormon churches.

WM: We talked about your relatives up in the Avenues, but do you remember any of the other people who were Catholics up

there?

MM: Oh, my goodness, yes! There were the Mays, there were the Maloneys, the Hessians. This is just in my immediate neighborhood.

WM: The Hessians, is that one of Pat Hessians'?

MM: Yes, that's right. And they were a family of five children who grew up on Second Avenue. Related to the Maloneys. That would be the Patrick Maloneys who lived on Fourth Avenue. Then there were the Joe Millers, the Mac Driscolls, the Nortons, the Van Dirks. And then moving way up farther to the higher avenues, we had our cousins the James Mahers, and their cousins, the Frank Mahers. But they had wonderful families and lived a little bit higher up on the avenues. And like I say, there were probably thirteen or fourteen Catholic families, all quite large, and the children all traipsed to Judge Memorial for their education.

Another interesting thing: walking home, we would walk down South Temple, and we had Bishop James E. Kearney for a short while back in the early--mid-thirties. And he was beloved by all. And he walked up South Temple, we figured, almost every day for his walk and to say his Rosary. And we would spot him, a group of five or ten, and literally run across South Temple, and throw ourselves on our knees, and he would give us his blessing. And just to say, "Hi, Bishop," and have him say, "How are you?" and talk to us, was the thrill of a lifetime. We tried to keep track of his walks, but I think maybe he had many things to do, and missed quite a few times, changed his route probably, because we just pounced on him.

WM: But you were able to see bishops all the time, anybody living here. Where my husband lived, in rural Iowa, when the bishop came to town it was just like opening the Gates of Heaven.

MM: Yes. We were so lucky because being in a cathedral parish--

WM: You weren't afraid to speak to him?

MM: Oh, no! Of course we just said, "Good morning," or "Good afternoon." And waited for the blessing. And to kiss his ring, to be able, as young children, to run home and say we were blessed by the bishop today.

WM: I think we never got to do that. You just didn't approach the bishop. He came for confirmation.

MM: Well, we were very lucky in the Cathedral Parish because so many of these occasions took place here.

WM: Tell about some of the occasions.

MM: Well, for instance, I can remember back when they consecrated the Cathedral Parish (1936). And again, my brothers were altar boys, and the classmates were in this procession. And the bishops from the surrounding states came. Priests from all over the West were there. The music was wonderful, and that wonderful Adine Bradley was always playing the organ.

She was also a wonderful choir director. Ethel Hogan Hansen was another organist. And they always had a wonderful choir. I wish I knew the names of all of them. Art Allen was one. He used to sing at funerals and weddings. Had a magnificent voice. And Larry Brennan always sang in the choir.

WM: What about civic activities or celebrations? Were there any that you participated in as Catholics? Right now they have the Days of '47 Parade and the Hibernians.

MM: Of course the big '47 Days and '47 fetes have gone on forever. But I don't believe that we ever took a big part in those parades. I think as time went on, maybe in the forties, the different parishes started having small floats. And this parish--I'm bringing to mind St. Ambrose--has always had a big float in that Days of '47.

WM: You knew Bishop Hunt very well. Do you remember his funeral, what went on then?

MM: Oh, yes. It was a beautiful funeral. I'm trying to think of the exact time of the day. It was in early April 1960. But he was a very beloved bishop. I remember attending his funeral. The cathedral was packed. Bishops again from all over the West attended, and he had many friends among the non-Catholics in Salt Lake. And he was very stern-looking, but underneath he had a heart of gold and was very approachable.

WM: Do you remember his talking on the radio and the TV when he was there?

MM: Oh, absolutely. Every Sunday night. He had such a clear, lucid voice. And he brought in many converts, and I used to love to listen to him on Sunday nights. When I was in training, Bishop Hunt had residence at the Holy Cross Hospital. He lived up there in one of the rooms. And he

walked the halls at night with the night nurses, and he'd say, "Don't worry. The 'rustle' is there...." He had a big cape that he wore, and he walked and said his beads every night up and down the halls. And always spoke to the nurses, and everybody loved him. He was kind of unobtrusive.

WM: Let's go back to the families. Let's talk about the Kearns family or the Ivers.

MM: We always considered the Kearns family as part of the Avenue group, even though they lived on South Temple, as did the Cosgriffs, who were also a wonderful family. But we seemed to know the Kearns family better because they had three children growing up about the same time; for instance, Tommy Kearns was in my class at Judge Memorial, Katherine Jane was two years older and went to St. Mary's, and Colleen was two years younger. And the parents always included all of the Avenues kids and everybody that was in the class at the many parties, birthdays, and so on, of their children. And it was such a thrill to go down and see that magnificent house, and be able to attend parties there. When my children were growing up, on Trick-or-Treat Night, we would knock on the back door at the Kearns' mansion because they had wonderful treats, handed out by the staff of course. If we knew the kids, sometimes we were invited in, and Halloween was always kind of cold.

WM: How about the Ivers?

MM: Wonderful family -- we claimed them from the Avenues even though they grew up on First South in a huge big house that was later torn down, and there were nine children in the Ivers family.

WM: About where on First South?

MM: Between Fifth and Sixth East. And there's now a big mortuary next door. But they tore down the house to make room for parking. Mr. Jim Ivers was a cousin of my mother's. And he made his money in Park City as director of the Silver King Mine. And of their nine children, five now survive; four of them died.

WM: Did you have any interaction with those living on the west side, the Mexicans and the Italians? You're talking only about Irish people.

MM: I'm sorry to say that the only interaction would have been at Judge Memorial, which Judge accepted everybody, rich, poor, well-to-do, whether they had the money or not. So we had quite a few children from Hispanic origin and Italian

origin there. And that was probably the only interplay that we really had.

WM: Do you remember any of those students at all?

MM: Oh, from the west side were the Lawsons and the Parks. The Brennans for a short time lived out on the west side. I think we all who grew up in Salt Lake remembering that wonderful, saintly Father Collins.

He was just a walking saint, and we all knew about him. And every once in a while--it was a treat--we could go down under the viaduct to go to Mass just to see this man. We felt that he was a saint. And I still think he probably could easily be canonized.

WM: Under the viaduct--? That was that old Guadalupe--?

MM: That old Guadalupe Mission. And you just felt the warmth in it. That's right. There was a few names here I've forgotten like the Days, the McHughes, the Meaghers. I think Mary Alice was there on the altar; and the Catholic Women's League.

WM: In the thirties Mary Alice was?

MM: Yes, Mary Alice Hart. Plus her sister Katherine married Jim Ivers back in the forties, young Jim, and they had two children. Then Katherine died rather young, too, and her father--her husband--has remarried since that time.

WM: Now let's have your connection to Park City.

MM: Well, my dad came to work for his cousin, J. C. Lynch, who ran the Salt Lake Ice Company. And somehow or other, that alliance didn't last too long. So after he was married to my mother, who was connected with the Ivers and the Welshes, and they were big in Park City at the time, my dad went up to Park City to take over a store, a grocery retail store, in Park City, and ended up running it until Park City went belly-up, so to speak, in 1946, and they had to close the store down.

WM: What was the name of the store?

MM: Welsh, Driscoll & Buck, W-E-L-S-H. So you could see the Welsh connection there.

WM: And Driscoll?

MM: Welsh, Driscoll-- Driscoll was not related, as far as I

know, to the Kearns family. And the Bucks, who were native Parkites. And that store, that's where my dad made a living. And like I say, through the horrible Depression that we grew up in we always had enough to eat, which was wonderful.

WM: Nice to have your grocery store in the family.

MM: Yes, it was, it was very nice. They had a lot of people up there in Park City that couldn't pay their bills and debts and so on. And also, speaking of that Depression, I remember on the Avenues people had the homeless coming up from town and knocking on the doors, and we always gave them a sandwich and a piece of fruit, even though, you know, there wasn't that much to go. But none of us ever turned them away.

WM: The Depression wasn't so bad because we were always--I mean as children--in the same boat as all the other kids were in.

MM: Oh, absolutely! And hand-me-downs were the thing of the day. And we didn't care. We just loved them no matter if they fit or didn't fit. Hand-me-downs were certainly the mode of the day. In a way, I think it was a leavening experience to grow up in that Depression because later on, now I think that maybe there's been too much financial security, perhaps, in a lot of cases. And in a way, I think it's worse to start out with not too much and accrue, than it is to have grown up wealthy and have everything and then not having anything in the end.

WM: What about Park City, the people you knew up there?

MM: Well, actually we lived here in Salt Lake all the time, and so Dad, if he were alive, could tell you more about Park City. But he lived at the priest's house up there during the week during the winter. Monday through Friday he lived up there with Father--they have a sort of like a boarding house.

WM: Father Who?

MM: Father Burke (Martin E.); and Monsignor William F. Kennedy was the priest up there. And Father Butler (Thomas F.), who later came from Park City and was the principal of Judge Memorial High School for many years, most of the time while I was at Judge Memorial. He was followed by Father Keefe (Joseph S.) at Judge, as the head--principal.

WM: Father Keith, now, reminds me of someone else, the Egans. Did you know them?

MM: The Egans? No, I didn't. You know actually--when I think back--the Avenues group pretty much stuck together, and probably it was transportation. The names that I mentioned were just some of the Avenues group, and some of the Cathedral Parish group. I just knew of the Egans.

WM: They lived on Thirteenth East.

MM: And the Joe Millers were in our parish. And the Driscolls and the Nortons.

WM: You know anything about Joe's wife Marion, her background?

MM: Well, her name was O'Malley, and she had a brother Leo. There were two girls, Marion and Dorothy O'Malley, and Marion was in my older sister Mary's class, which was only two years older, when I say older, three years. And she and her sister and brother were orphaned at a very early age. It seemed to me, in the back of my mind, it was an auto accident. But Leo lived with--was my age--and lived with a family on the Avenues. He was a good friend, and I asked Marion--we had a big Judge Memorial Reunion about three years ago; they have an ongoing reunion every year--and I asked Marion about her brother Leo. And she said he's fine and lives in Phoenix, and has a big family. And her sister is fine. In fact, I think her sister is the mother of the editor of the Intermountain Catholic. She does photography and she writes.

The Hinckleys are a name I forgot, too. The Hinckleys were big here on the Avenues. And they had a family of six, and they had some tragedy early on. They had one boy in the family, Bob Hinckley, and he was a football player at Judge Memorial. I think he was a freshman in high school, and was killed on the football field, which was most unusual. And then they had their youngest, a two-year-old girl, was swimming out at Warm Springs, and was drowned in the pool. They had some real tragedy in that family early on. And maybe you know Sister Angela who is the nun--

WM: Holy Family?

MM: Yes, the Holy Family Order. And she is up in Heber, and she and I went to school together at Judge Memorial.

MM: She was Agnes Hinckley. We called her Aggie; I still call her Aggie. Wonderful girl. And she is lent to us from the Holy Family Order and works out of Heber in that St. Lawrence Mission up there, the old Ward House. And she runs the thrift shop in the basement to make money for the school. She does a good job. I think the Holy Family

motherhouse is in California, and I believe that they started by taking care of children of working mothers. When that job was no longer needed, she was lent to this diocese about ten years ago, I'd say. Her sister is Mary Hinckley, who's in the Cathedral Parish now, and we could get her to tell about the work she does in the Hinckley Family.

When Sister Angela first came, she was sent down to Helper. I think she was there two, maybe three, years, at St. Anthony's. I think that was her first assignment. And now she's up there in Heber, which is a very big parish. She's under the jurisdiction of the Park City priest, who is now Father McNamara.

WM: Now you said you were going to talk about the Mahers.

MM: They were our wonderful first cousins. Aunt Julia--that would be Bernice Mooney's mother--and my dad were sister and brother. And there were five children. Uncle Jim, that's the father, died early on in his very early forties of a heart attack. And Mary Catherine's the oldest, then Jim the only boy, then Norinne, then Bernice, and then Jule Marie. And you know about the good work that Bernice is doing. But we had lots of fun, family get-togethers, growing up.

With each child, they were two or three years younger than each of the cousins in my family, the Hearley Family. There's always been a close alliance, and it's been just a great attachment. And they've all done well. Three of them live here in Salt Lake now. And of course Mary Catherine, I'm sure you knew, she was president of the Catholic Women's League at one time, and she now lives up in Island Park, Idaho. And they have all done very well. They lived on L Street and Eighth Avenue when they were very young. And Fourth of July was always spent in their backyard with fire crackers. They had the biggest backyard, so we were allowed fire crackers. And then sometimes allowed to go over to Ensign Park to see the big city lights. We had lots of fun.

WM: Is that all you remember about the Mahers?

MM: Well, Mary Catherine was married early on in like 1942 when I was a Navy nurse--'43, I believe. And her husband, first husband, died like six months after she was married. He was in that big--the first battle in Normandy, I believe. In fact, he's buried there. And then after a year went by, Mary Catherine joined the Navy. So our paths crossed in the Navy. When I was married in San Francisco, Mary Catherine stood up with me. And we've always been very close. And then after seven years went by, she married--she left the Navy; worked for Judge Reva Beck Bosone when Mary lived in Washington,

DC, attending Catholic U. And then she came back here and worked for Commissioner Fred Tedesco, who headed up the City Parks. Anyhow, she met Ralph McBroom and married him, and then subsequently had five children. And now lives up in Island Park, Idaho. She has a fine family.

WM: You were a nurse. You were a Public Health nurse?

MM: When I came back and I was faced with the revelation that I had three children to educate, I was very happy that I was a nurse. Because although the pay was not very good, there was always work there. So somehow or other, I managed to squeeze in a little extra education at the U., and I had the emergency room at Holy Cross for about eight years. Loved it! But then the hours were a little bit difficult with young children. So I had an opportunity to go into occupational medicine, which is preventive medicine. And the big company called UNISYS today was called Sperry then, and I was hired as their first nurse. They were wonderful to me, and I enjoyed the job.

And they gave me some grants for some extra education, and subsequently I became the first nurse-practitioner in the field of preventive medicine. And 16 years later after UNIVAC, I was asked to set up a program for the US Postal Service. So I worked there for, let's see, 16 years, and set up programs for them. Then I was invited into the Salt Lake Council of Women. I always figured that if I could get these three children raised, I would pay back to my community for the fact that I was still healthy and able to get about. And so I've done a lot of volunteer work and was lucky enough to be the recipient of the Woman of the Year, which is awarded to women who do some outstanding volunteer work. And the next year I also, like you, Wanda, was happy to receive the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal sent from Pope John Paul II, and that was a real thrill.

WM: Did you know anything about any Catholic doctors who were in the community?

MM: Oh, yes. None of us can forget Dr. John J. Galligan. He was the pillar of Holy Cross Hospital. He grew up two blocks up the street from us. He was just so well esteemed and so well thought of. And those were the days when doctors made house calls. And many a time we would walk by the Galligan home on Third Avenue, and he was either coming or going with the bag in hand, probably to deliver a baby or to do an emergency operation. He was a general practitioner, and a handsome, wonderful person. And his wife was very charming also. Then we had a Dr. Viko, who was a wonderful Catholic doctor, the leading cardiologist, I'd say, in the whole City of Salt

Lake, probably the State of Utah. And he was on LDS's staff. And a wonderful doctor. He probably lived to be about 56. He was one of the big starters and movers of the Salt Lake Clinic which is run and owned by the LDS Church. Then we had a Dr. Thomas Welsh who's part of this Welsh family that I come from. He was a well-known eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist, and he was on the staff of Holy Cross Hospital, and he brought to town Dr. James Cleary, who was a very good ear, nose, and throat man. Thomas Welsh died very young--he was 42 years old--of a heart attack. And he left three very nice children. One, Mary Barbara, became a Holy Cross nun. John Welsh lives here in town, has nine children. Heads up the Hibernian Society and several things like that.

And Dr. Hummer was very prominent in those days, and he was Catholic.

I must say that we did attend church a lot when growing up Catholic. But it was a wonderful thing. We always looked forward to Mass. Part of the growing-up process of being Catholic was that we went to confession every Saturday, knowing that we could be struck down by some awful tragedy, but if we had been to confession, we would be forgiven our sins and go straight to heaven. So therefore we went to confession every Saturday. We had to think up some good sins, and it didn't seem hard to do in those days. We must keep the slate clean.

Now, Lent we always looked forward to so that we could fast and pray and get indulgences. They were so important to us. We always had a week-long retreat with Mass in the morning and then a homily every night between seven and eight-thirty. And that last day we all went to confession. We seemed to go to church a lot, but somehow, looking back, it was a labor of love. Big holidays--rather, Holy Days--like Christmas and Easter, the families went to church first before anything else. Our Catholicism was really first in those days. We were sort of warned at school and at home, that when we grew up we should find a Catholic to fall in love with and marry. Otherwise we would have problems galore with getting married by a priest in the church. Our love for the bishops and the priests was ever present and overpowering. All in all, in looking back, it was a wonderful association and a strong alliance with our religion, and I felt it was a very powerful influence in my present life. And I am happy to say that I feel just as strongly now about having the privilege of being raised a Catholic.

When you asked me about west-side people and growing up, I forgot the names of the Mayos, Silvio and Mary Mayo. They

went through Judge Memorial, they were pillars of the west side down there then, and they're now pillars of Cathedral. I don't know how--I guess it's like forgetting your own next-door neighbor. But I want to be sure and put that in about Silvio and Mary. They were always active, and now they're more active than ever. I don't know what Cathedral Parish would do without them. And they were of this Italian and Hispanic background.

We had Vatican II, and I must say that we found those changes very difficult at first. The "cradle Catholics," that is those of us who were baptized as babies and raised, it was quite foreign, the Vatican II changes, the sudden Protestant-like singing and joining and that sort of thing. And I found it difficult at first. And I have friends who still find it very, very difficult. We, the Catholic Church, must grow and must be part of the times. And we cannot survive if we don't reach out and make these changes. So I am happy to say that after much trial over them, I feel that it is a good thing, and I feel quite part of it. And I think we were a little bit too solitary in our dealings with each other. And now there is a congeniality or whatever that is, bringing people closer together. And the lay Catholic is, of course, much more prominent and doing more. I think our generation left too much to the priests and the nuns in the raising of our children. They had all their training for baptism and confirmation. Well now they're reverting back to letting parents do this. The lay person in the Catholic Church is now doing more and more, and I think this is good. I suppose it's partly due to the shortage of priests and nuns, and that, of course, is sad. And hopefully that will be taken care of. But the good result from all this is that the Catholic person himself is taking on more responsibility for his own spiritual well-being.

[End of Interview]

