

Interview with Sister Mary Daniel Leintz (ML)

Conducted by Mary Kay Miller Feist (MF)

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MF: Today is July 28th, 1998. I am Mary K. Miller Feist, a volunteer interviewer from the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at the North Dakota State University Libraries in Fargo. It is a pleasure to be here visiting with Sister Mary Daniel in Good Council, Mankato, MN. Sister Mary Daniel grew up around the Hague, ND area. Sister, could you give me your chosen name?

ML: Sister Mary Daniel Leintz.

MF: Why did you choose this name?

ML: Because I have a favorite brother that I grew up with who is right next to me in age and his name is Daniel, and so I chose Daniel.

MF: What is your date of birth?

ML: November 7th, 1925.

MF: Where were you born? At home? Was there a midwife that assisted?

ML: I was born at home and there was a midwife who later became my stepmother.

MF: Can you tell me your nationality?

ML: German from Russia.

MF: And what is your father's name?

ML: Lawrence Leintz.

MF: Would you spell the last name for me?

ML: L-E-I-N-T-Z.

MF: And how about your mother?

ML: As far as I know, she was born here in America.

MF: Okay, can you give her name?

ML: Elizabeth Fischer.

MF: Elizabeth Fischer. Okay, how many brothers and sisters do you have?

ML: Eight brothers and six sisters.

- MF:** So you come from a large family. Where are you in the order of birth in the family?
- ML:** I am the 14th one.
- MF:** Were there any other family members or relatives that entered the convent?
- ML:** Um hum. I had two sisters that entered. They're quite a bit older than I am. They were in the upper bracket of the family.
- MF:** Tell us about your support that your parents gave you for joining the Sisterhood.
- ML:** My mother was dead even before – I was only eight years old when she died, but my father had lots to do. In fact, he had everything to do with it. On his death bed he asked if I would become a Sister like my other two sisters. And I said, "No, never." I never wanted to be a Sister.
- MF:** Did the Holy Scripture and prayer play alot of – did you have alot in your home?
- ML:** Yes we did, but I don't know. I can't really say that that helped me to decide. It was more the wish of my father later on that this came to me.
- MF:** Did the pastor influence your decision in any way?
- ML:** He brought me down and he thought if I'd see the place, I'd change my mind, which I did.
- MF:** I know this from the part of the tape that we talked before. When you came down, you came down for a visit.
- ML:** I came for a visit just to see my older sister that was working in the diet kitchen here; just to be with her, to get to know her. My other sister was at Mt. Mary. And this was during the summer. I came around the end of August, beginning of July I think that's what it was because I did enter the 14th of July, not with the other postulantes. I entered by myself, alone, with the other candidates, postulantes that were in there.
- MF:** And what age were you?
- ML:** I was 15 then.
- MF:** So you were quite a distance from your family.
- ML:** Very much so; far away.
- MF:** How did you let your family know that you wanted to join the Sisterhood?
- ML:** Well, I wrote home, which would consist of my stepmother because everyone else was gone and told her that I wouldn't be back. That I would join the S's & E's.
- MF:** How many were in your class when you joined?
- ML:** There were 13 others. So there were 14 of us.
- MF:** Did all 14 go through all the stages to become nuns.
- ML:** Yes, up to final vows.

- MF:** Up to final vows, okay. What was the typical daily schedule at the convent? What did you do in the morning? What did you do in the afternoon, evenings?
- ML:** Well, it wasn't too much different than what I grew up with. A lot of discipline, but I had that as a child as I was growing up. So we got up, dressed, came down for Morning Prayer, which we did at home also. Then we had instructions: scripture, formation, whatever. Dinner, more prayer, you could maybe be by yourself for a bit. I happened to go to the kitchen to work, so I was in the kitchen all day. I don't know what the others did. I was the only one that did home service at that time because I didn't have any education then. And so I worked in a kitchen which was my way of spending my day, which was very heavy at the time because I was so young yet. Those heavy pots were not easy to lift.
- MF:** I know when we went down and toured the kitchen, they were saying that they remembered such huge, huge pots.
- ML:** Roasters were this big, this high, and you lifted those. I mean you had to; there was nobody else there to do it for you.
- MF:** How was your communication continued with your parents after you got here? Were you able to communicate a lot?
- ML:** My parents were dead so I didn't have anything to communicate.
- MF:** How about with your brothers and sisters?
- ML:** Yes, yes. And they were very wonderful. As your brother who says, "You know, sis, if you don't like it where you are, you can come to my house. This would be your home."
- MF:** Was he still living around the area where you grew up?
- ML:** Yes, at that time he was.
- MF:** Okay, did you keep in touch with a lot of your friends from back home? You were awfully young when you came in.
- ML:** No, I did not. I really didn't.
- MF:** Would you describe the stages of becoming a nun, starting with the postulant?
- ML:** When I entered, I was young and they told me I'd be a postulant for three years because I had to be 18 and that was fine with me. I didn't care how long I'd be a postulant, just so I was in at the time. But after two years, I was received for various reasons. So I was a novice for a year; I was seventeen. So I was eighteen when I was professed, after a year novitiate. And then, you had three years of temporary vows. You took your vows and you had three years of temporary vows. And then three years later, you took final vows. That's the formation at that time.
- MF:** Could you describe to me the final vows ceremony? How it was performed?
- ML:** I guess the big thing I can remember is the pall we were under after we pronounced our vows and also I would say the dress that – we changed from the white to the black veil. We also got the thorn crown. You know, in reception in novitiate, we got the rose crown. Now we got the thorn crowns, showing us that this light is not the easiest light in the world, but if you do it for Jesus, he will be with you. So that

was the idea. And then under the pall, we really renounced everything that we had. Like if we had any, you know, monies or anything, you know, that family has given. That was all renounced and handed over.

MF: After you were here, did you – you came in young. What did you do for education? How much schooling did you get here?

ML: I did not. I was not educated right away. I did home services. I said before, I did cooking, laundry. I did a lot of host baking; just many, many things. And then, later on, they asked if I would teach. And my older sister said, “She’s not going to teach unless she gets her education.” And that’s when I started to finish my high school. I had started high school. I finished two different courses. I finished my high school and my college, which took me 17 years, but those 17 years, I also taught.

MF: Was your older sister you’re referring to one of those sisters that lived here?

ML: Yes, she died three years ago.

MF: Where were you first stationed? What was your first assignment after you were certified to teach?

ML: St. Peter, MN. I did have one year of kindergarten in Worthington, but I kind of discounted that because I didn’t like it. But I went to St. Peter and that’s where I had 57 children in first grade. I was there two years and then I went to St. Agnes in St. Paul for six years. Went to [99], MN for two more years and then coming back to St. Agnes for four more years. Then I took – I didn’t do this on the other tape, but it just came to me now. They gave me a year off to study. So I did that, then I went to Sacred Heart and taught there ten years. In between there, I got my certificate, you know, my degree. Then I took a sabbatical and then I went to [104], Mississippi for spiritual renewal, and the other half of the year I worked up here in health care. And then I was sent to Northfield. I was asked if I would like to teach some more and I did. So I went to Northfield and taught for six years and then I came up here to do pastor care work.

MF: Sounds like you have been very, very busy. Are there any experiences that you’d like to share that were one of those first few years you went out teaching?

ML: Yes, I didn’t know how to teach. Nobody ever showed me.

MF: I bet that was a challenge.

ML: It was a challenge, but I just loved it. I just picked everything up.

MF: Kind of learned as you went along?

ML: Yes, and it was surprising because the supervisor when I was at St. Agnes said that I needed my certificate for – not certificate, but credits for student teaching. So I says, “Fine, come in any time.” You know, I was not a bit afraid because I was going to do just what I always did, and she gave me A+ for student teaching. So that was consoling, knowing that I was doing what I was supposed to do.

MF: And if you enjoy what you’re doing and it reflects on your performance.

ML: Yes, I think so, um hum.

MF: Okay, um, after school hours, what were some of the activities that you were involved in; in church and in the community?

ML: Well, as I said, the first 17 years, I studied. That's all I did. I just have to do that to get my credits. Otherwise, I'm a walker. I walk at least three, four miles every morning and so I've walked for years and years. I love to do it. I do crafts; I'm a crocheter. I did a lot of bedspreads and table clothes, doilies, and what have you. So I love to read, I love music, real fine, soft music.

MF: Comforting, kind of relaxing?

ML: Right, I do, yah.

MF: When you first came into the convent, you had – I don't know what you call it?

ML: The big, stiff veil with a wimple, right.

MF: And then you went to the . . .

ML: V-shaped one.

MF: After that, you got to wear street clothes? How did you feel about that? Was that quite a change for you?

ML: It was a very big change. Even some of my little first graders, when I told them I'd look a little bit different the next day, they didn't want to come to school. I had some calls, saying, you know, we want our Sister. We don't want her to look any different. So that kind of was a jar to me, but I just kind of put that aside. I thought, "I have to live." You know, I can't be doing what somebody else wishes me to do. So, I just changed overnight and I was in street clothes the next day.

MF: So you found out and then you just decided that you were going to make the change right away?

ML: Yes, and we could do it a period of time, any time you know. So I just did it because I knew the change was here and it seemed to be for the better because not only us, but many other congregations were doing the same thing and I knew it was something we needed to do.

MF: Okay, what are some of the biggest changes from when you first came in and joined the Sisterhood to now?

ML: I would say the clothes, yes, would be one. Also, I think a change of our rules that we could be more ourselves of who we are. That kind of a freedom, you know. Not that you would all run around, but you were kind of more free; you weren't held on a leash so much or supervised. You know, you could live. You know, it was a big change. Also, I would say the liturgy. That was a lift for me because I didn't like Latin and I couldn't understand it and I could never understand why we were doing it. And I questioned in my mind, however I never said anything because I knew we couldn't do anything about, but when the change came, I just went all for it. You know, that was up my alley.

MF: Changing over to the English?

ML: Right.

- MF:** Okay Sister, I would like to visit with you now about some of your childhood memories. When you were at home, what language was the main language spoken at your house?
- ML:** German.
- MF:** German. Can you still speak the language fluently today?
- ML:** No, not fluently. I know a few words and I can understand them if it's my dialect and if it isn't my dialect, I cannot understand it. I couldn't keep a conversation.
- MF:** Did you speak, do you think, more the High German or the Low German?
- ML:** Low.
- MF:** The Low German?
- ML:** Yup.
- MF:** What were some of your childhood chores? What were some of the things that you had to do around the house, around the yard?
- ML:** We had to help with everything that we did: the cooking, get things for Mom when she made bread. You know, her hands were in the big dish and we, you know, helped her. We collected manure for our fuel and, probably, I didn't say this on the other tape, but last night when I was in bed I thought, "I'm going to share this." You probably you know about the cow manure, but the horse manure was a little different because the boys would collect it and go beyond the farm a little bit and put it there and after they had a quite a bit there, they would take team of horses and they would trample that down. It was all in a circle, press it down. And then another layer, and another layer. So it became about, I would say like five inches or so. Five or six inches deep. Then they let it dry a little bit, then they cut it in blocks and when it dried a little bit in between, they lifted it up and that's where we came in. You know, we didn't care if it was on our hands. I mean, this was fuel we were doing. This was important. So we stood it up so it would dry underneath and then maybe a week later, we would put it in bigger piles, maybe about this high to let the air go through some more. It had to be dry all the way through. Then, it was put onto like a long straw pile. It was put on there kind of crisscrossed so the air could get through. Then, we had to cover it because of the snow storms. How to do it? Well, put straw in a barrel and manure, and you mixed it with your hands and that was my job. And my stepmother didn't think I would ever do that. Well it made no difference to me because I was collecting manure from little on. So I mixed all that, just like you mix bread. And then that was used for a covering for that manure that was spilled on a – like a haystack, you know. And it became like clay. There was no way that the wind could go through or snow or rain and when we did get the manure and bring it into the house, we had to use a chopper to chop that off. And we just did a little bit at a time so the snow wouldn't get in. Now that was like coal. Like if Mother did a lot of baking, then Dad said we could use that because it burned longer. It was just like coal. And sometimes he even used it for night. You know, to heat the radiators upstairs. So that's something I wanted to share.
- MF:** I'm glad you did because I've never heard that.
- ML:** You never heard that before. A lot of people that I talk to that have asked me about my childhood and I share that. You've never heard of that. You've heard of cow manure.

MF: Yes.

ML: You know, you stack that up too you know, or bring it in. But you never heard of horse manure. And it seems as though, when I look back now, that my father didn't want to waste one thing, ever. Not even that. Like the corn cobs that the pigs, you know, chewed the corn off.; the next day, we collected that. That was a chore. Again, we collected that and burned it. Now granted they burned fast, but it still helped us to – we had no wood, so you had to use something, you know. So we collected those and brought them in.

MF: But you were kept quite busy.

ML: I was very busy all day long. And then another thing, we were sent out to kill gophers because they harmed our fields and we got a penny for a tail.

MF: And I bet there were a lot of gophers? North Dakota seems to have quite a few. Did you help a lot in the house also?

ML: I was kind of small when my mother was living yet. You know, she died when I was eight and a half, so. I helped her around the house, but then a little later, when I was a little older and my mother died when my dad remarried and I had a stepmother, she taught me how to sew, how to cook, how to do many things.

MF: So who did you learn to crochet from?

ML: I learned it by myself. No one showed me because I'm left handed and no one could show me so I learned it just by looking at a book. And now I've taught many others since.

MF: Great, that's great that you can pass that on. I know my grandmother crocheted and I wish I would have had her teach me how to do it. The ones that do it just make it look so easy. I mean, like there's nothing to it. But, yah, I wish I would have learned. I'd like to talk about where you went to school. Could you tell us where that was?

ML: I went to a country school three miles from home and it was – we had maybe about 10-11 students at the time, that I remember. I went there up to the sixth grade.

MF: And was it, um, a one-room school house where grades – whatever, one through twelve?

ML: Yes. All the grades, right – no, one to eight.

MF: One to eight?

ML: Yes.

MF: What was the language that was usually spoken there?

ML: German, until the teacher caught us. Nobody wanted the English language because we didn't know it, you know. We hardly understood what they were saying.

MF: Was the teacher able to speak German?

ML: I don't remember that. I had never heard her [speak German].

- MF:** What are some of your special memories about your childhood school? Can you think of anything that kind of sticks out in your mind that you can remember?
- ML:** Yah, I remember, especially my brothers, you know, that went to school with me at the time – I think there were two or three. They would always throw snowballs at us. That was awful. You know, they would put us into the outhouse because we needed shelter because those snowballs were coming at us. So they were throwing it so they were at the school door so we always got late and then we were punished.
- MF:** What kind of a punishment did you get?
- ML:** I don't remember that, no. I think it was extra school work. It seems to me that's what it was, extra homework because we missed.
- MF:** What were some of the playground games, recesses? What did you do at those times?
- ML:** Jacks, we played jacks. We played jump rope; we played catch, tag, antie antie over. Just the fun things that they do now. We had no playground equipment, none whatsoever. That I remember. Completely empty.
- MF:** No swings?
- ML:** Yes, just the outhouse and I remember one shed and we used to take that for shelter when the boys were after us. But otherwise, there was nothing else but that one room and an outhouse. That was it.
- MF:** Can you remember anything about your teacher? Does anything come to mind?
- ML:** I remember a teacher that I had for four years and I just loved her. And we did this: the parents would invite the teacher to out to the farm for the weekend and every family would take a turn. And if a family said no, then we were glad because we could invite her again.
- MF:** So you go an extra turn.
- ML:** That was a real joy for me, yah. To have my teacher in the house, that was great.
- MF:** So she could just come into your house?
- ML:** Um hum. And be with us, eat with us. Yah, she had a room by herself because we had a very big house. We had four bedrooms upstairs.
- MF:** Quite a treat to have the teacher come to visit you.
- ML:** Yes.
- MF:** I'd like to talk now about some of your spiritual upbringing. Was religion and church and education – did that inspire you in a lot of ways? Was it a big inspiration in your family?
- ML:** It was, yes, but not to inspire me to become a religious, no. But I'm sure, looking back now, if I wouldn't have had that, I'm just wondering if I'd be here, you know? We had prayer, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer; we had Rosary during Lent, kneeling around the kitchen table and up straight – that was a biggy for my father. And if we weren't, he would be right there to remind us we kneel up straight and fold our hands. We also had scripture reading. We had a Bible – not a Bible, but a book of All Saints, and every

day he would read a Saint, you know, the life of a Saint. Also, he received a paper in the mail that was a continuation story, and this was all in German. He read in German.

MF: In German?

ML: Yah, script. He was fluent.

MF: And you understood it all?

ML: Sure, we understood everything, yes. And I remember – this is really an aside now. When he'd do that, I'd gradually crawl through the radiator, you know, and the boys had their mittens and caps on them and that looked so soft to me you know. And all of a sudden I'd be up there on top of the radiator you know and then he was busy reading and he'd see me up there. I remember that, yah.

MF: How often did you go to church services and what was the language spoken at your Masses?

ML: It was, I imagine, Latin, but then any instructions or anything was all German, yes. We went Sundays, confessions. Otherwise, we didn't go during the week because it's five miles [away]. And I guess we were the first that I remember, I don't remember of anybody else having a car.

MF: So you had a car?

ML: We had an old Chevy back when I grew up, yah, that the boys sometimes used to go out. We also had a pony, so they could also use the pony to go someplace in the evening after their chores.

MF: Okay, let's talk about some holidays. How was Christmas celebrated in your family? What did you do for Christmas Day, Christmas Eve?

ML: I don't remember much of that, except the preparation before Christmas. My mother wanted to decorate a little bit with a little fake tree and putting the little candles on it. I couldn't wait to get that lit and just to see that with little gifts around. We also had St. Nick coming which was one of my brothers you know, and then we'd get – well, it was a riot. It was riot. We'd all hide under the bed because we were ready to spank us, you know. But that was a big looking anticipation, looking forward to having St. Nick come. See, we didn't know it was one of my brothers until later on you know.

MF: Right. Was a lot of baked goods prepared for the holidays?

ML: Oh, absolutely. Just real – and I remember Dad coming home with a big sack of nuts and a hard tack candy; that old-time candy was in there. It was a mixture. No chocolates, but that's all part – oh, it was such a joy when mother would go in and get a big bowl full and set it on the kitchen table. That was a treat I tell you.

MF: Enjoyed by all, I'm sure.

ML: By everyone, yes.

MF: What were some of the things that were baked?

ML: Cookies. Of course, bread. Nobody wanted anything but bread. It was so good. Now I can't eat it.

MF: Did your stepmother – was baking bread kind of a daily thing?

- ML:** Yup, daily, yes.
- MF:** You said you had a large family so I'm sure . . .
- ML:** It's when my mother died, before my dad remarried, I did the baking. I was eight and a half.
- MF:** You made the bread?
- ML:** I made the bread.
- MF:** Oh gosh, every day?
- ML:** Every day.
- MF:** How many loaves did you have to make every day?
- ML:** Oh, about eight or nine.
- MF:** Being you had the big family, you were busy. What kind of musical entertainment did you have in your home?
- ML:** We really didn't have any. I don't remember any singing until my brother Daniel began to start on the piano, to doodle around on that. And finally he really played something that he had heard. He could do it by note. And then I used to stand next to him and sing. And then he'd sing with me. That was about the only thing that I remember about music because there was no radio, no television. Except going to church and singing in church. I belonged to the choir from little on.
- MF:** Did you do any dancing?
- ML:** Yes.
- MF:** Where did you do your dancing?
- ML:** In the dance hall, just a small dance hall. I didn't want to, but my brother, more or less, said, "Yes, you are going. I'm older than you are." So he showed me how and I'm so appreciative that he did and I loved it.
- MF:** What are some of the dances that you learned?
- ML:** Polkas, most of it, and waltzes, two-step, foxtrot.
- MF:** Where would you go to these dances when you went?
- ML:** In the dance hall right there at Hague.
- MF:** In Hague?
- ML:** Yah, we didn't go out of town, never.
- MF:** How often were there dances? How often were you able to go?
- ML:** Maybe once a month. That's about it.
- MF:** Was there a large number of people that would come to these dances?

- ML:** Quite a few, yah. Even from Strasburg, I know they came, Linton when they heard. And same thing when Linton or Strasburg would have a dance, you know, the people from Hague would go over (the farming area).
- MF:** Did you have bands playing?
- ML:** Yes.
- MF:** Do you remember any of the names of the bands?
- ML:** No, the only one that I remember is Lawrence Welk. That's the only one I remember. I got to see him sit up on stage. And I remember one time – I don't know if this was Lawrence Welk's band or not, I have not recollection, but I was dancing with my brother Daniel and the pianist got sick. And they said, "Is there anyone in the audience, in the dance floor that can play?" Nobody went, so he went. There I stood, so I went home. I was so embarrassed.
- MF:** You didn't have a partner huh? What kind of games or puzzles did you play as a child?
- ML:** I think I mentioned jacks before. Jump rope – a lot of jump rope with my friends like Sunday afternoons. Playing in the shed where the wheat was, hiding. You know, getting yourself hid and they'd have to find you under the big piles of – that was a fun thing. Or in the hayloft, crawling in the hayloft. And I remember a little later on, we had bales of hay so it was fun just to play tag in there or to hide from someone.
- MF:** How about playing cards?
- ML:** Very much so, yes. But see, I was too little, so I just stood and watched. Like we played poof rank [?, 350]. I don't remember that is. I don't remember it anymore. We played whist, which I still play. But those were the only two games that I remember that they played.
- MF:** Was it usually with family members or did friends come over?
- ML:** Friends came over. And my parents would go some night and play with them.
- MF:** Were you allowed to go along?
- ML:** No, never. We were glad because we could make candy. This was another good thing to share I think, would be. Mother would come home – I remember one time my brother Jake and I, we had the fudge [and] somebody else had the taffy and somebody else had divinity. So Jake and I had fudge, but we heard the car come in before the fudge was finished, so he ran it downstairs. He said, "We can eat it tomorrow." So the next day, I would gradually come to the kitchen, get a spoon, hid it behind me, ran downstairs, and had fudge. I had to scoop it in. And then later on, Jake would do the same thing. And then we'd tell the others, you know, if you take a spoon we had downstairs, you could have some fudge and so we kept doing. And finally, I guess my mother got tired of that. She said, "I'm just wondering how good it tastes?" So mother didn't know. And I remember saying to her, "Mom, how did you know?" She said, "I looked at the sugar bag."
- MF:** She could tell there was sugar missing?
- ML:** Absolutely.

- MF:** So she caught on to your little cooking. Do you recall any home remedies or cures?
- ML:** The only one that I recall is liniment that my father would sip. He'd heat it with some water and he had asthma so I would just think that it felt good on his throat, that's why. Some of the family members used to say he should never do that, that's too strong, but yet, he just didn't sit there and drink and drink. He just took little bit at a time and at that time – I just smelled it, but I didn't know what it was for. Another thing is my mother had headaches very badly and she used to steam some water and let that steam go on her face and head to relieve it. I don't know if it did or not, but she couldn't stand the pain. But those were the only two remedies that I remember.
- MF:** I would like you to tell me about your First Communion. I think you had a really good story to share about that. So would you tell me about that please?
- ML:** I do not recall that I was excited about my dress or veil or shoes or [400], whatever. The big excitement was the wreath of roses that my sister received and we talked about that previously when she became a novice. That's what we got to wear; for three days we could wear it. And she had sent it home and my mother framed it and I used to ask her what that was. Well, I didn't understand. I couldn't understand. And when it was my communion year, she said if I am a good girl, that she would take that out and I could wear that for my First Holy Communion. Well I tell you, I was the best child in the whole farming area because I wanted to wear that because I just loved it. It was light pink and it had pretty flowers on it. Oh, it was so beautiful. And so, that was the biggest thrill; that I could wear it for communion. Another time I could wear it was for Corpus Christi. The children could dress up like their First Communion time. And mother said I could wear it again. So for a number of years I could wear it for Corpus Christi which was real wonderful for me.
- MF:** Is that the time that you made the flowers out of the crepe paper?
- ML:** Right.
- MF:** Would you tell us about that?
- ML:** Mother had a beautiful basket and she decorated with crepe paper. Fringes on it; it was just so beautiful. I can just see it. And then my job was to cut all those papers for flowers and so I'd fill it with that and then when it was time to possess all of church, the girls – the communicants, the boys too. The little boys and the little girls, they would line up like two rows. You'd have a partner with their baskets right in front of the blessed sacrament. And then the two front ones would come and strew flowers on the ground all the way down. Then you'd genuflect and go in back of the line. That was so beautiful and a lot of the color that I saw was in my crown you know, my crown of roses. And I just thought if I really matched, and I was so proud to do this. It was a real thrill.
- MF:** Oh, with something that you really enjoyed doing and seemed to have many good memories about. Okay Sister, are there any other thoughts or observation, stories, anything that you can remember yet that you would like to share with us? Things that you think we'd like to know about you or about your background, your home life, your life here at Mankato?
- ML:** There's so many things, but you know, unless someone asks a question, you can't recall, you know. So I don't know what else I could share. There are many more things. Like I had quite a social life before I

came so I felt that I didn't need it. I didn't need that; that I wanted something different. I wanted to give my tolls out to God.

- MF:** So you felt you had the opportunity to visit with friends, visit with family, go out to these dances, that you were ready to do something new and coming to the Sisterhood is what you chose?
- ML:** That's right. And I never doubted it even though I was very young.
- MF:** And you came about it in such an unusual way. Just coming to visit and ending up staying.
- ML:** And not knowing that I would be accepted. I just presumed that I'd go in and be done with it. You know, I didn't know. And I was. And I remember Mother Nanciata was the superior and remember kneeling in front of her and saying "Mother," because that's what everybody said. I don't know why we called her mother. She wasn't my mother, but I did it because I had heard somebody else say it. [I said,] "I want to be a Sister, now!" I remember saying, "Now". And she said, "Are you sure? I don't think you're ready yet." "Now," I kept saying. I wanted it now.
- MF:** You were young, very young.
- ML:** I was only 15 and that's why she kept probing me and saying, "Are you sure?" you know. But see, those words that my father said on his death bed came back and kept saying "you must be a Sister, you must be a Sister." And that really stuffed me. You know I tried to put it away, but it didn't work see. I kept saying, "I'm never going to be a Sister." But see, it kept coming and to me, it was God's call. I see it as a call from God direct.
- MF:** Did you have any of these feelings for the calling while you were at home?
- ML:** Never. Oh my, no. And my two sisters came home when my mother died. In fact, they were home quite a while because she was in coma and they could stay until she either died or get well. So they were home quite a while. That's the first time I had ever seen them and I thought, "Oh, they look awful. I never want to dress like that."
- MF:** Did they have the black . . .
- ML:** The big one, yes. And so the next time they came home, they were still in that big one when my father got sick. That's the only time I had ever seen them. So I really never [493] either of that.
- MF:** Until you were up here? Then you got to know them a little bit better?
- ML:** That's right, that's right.
- MF:** You said that they were so much older back when you were at home. You didn't really have a lot of communication and they left, I'm sure, home before you really got to know them.
- ML:** Only the communication and you could only write so often you know. Christmas and Easter, that was it. So we never heard much from them at all.
- MF:** And when they joined, they weren't allowed a lot of home visits. I think it was when the mother died and the father died.

ML: That was it. And then when I entered, I was told that I could never go home because my parents were dead. Even though I had a step-mother, I couldn't go home for her because she was not my real mom. So I was told that – and yet, it made no difference. And when I was postulant, when I had just entered, Sister Erma, who died three years ago, she was at Mt. Mary and she did not know that I was on the hill. And then I entered, and she still didn't know. She had no idea I was home and she only had seen me twice. And so when she came in, the authority told the Sisters not to tell Sister Erma, let her find out for herself. Well somebody did, and she was pretty angry. She came up to the postulantsy and she took me in her room. She hardly greeted me. She just, "What are you doing here?" And I said, "I'm going to be a Sister like you." No big deal, you know. And she says, "Who cut your hair?" See I had never had my hair cut before I came to enter. It was real long and wavy and blonde. And that's what she remembered. She said, "Who cut that hair?" And I said, "Well, Sister Mary." She said I have to have it cut. I says, "Who cares?" It didn't bother me just because I have a haircut. She was just too nice to me, I thought, then. However, looking back, she was just trying me. I'm sure she was elated. I know she was elated that to think her little sister is joining the convent. You're not going to fool me with that. And so, yes, no matter what you're going to say, you know, whoever you are, I'm going to be a Sister. I'm in, so you can't do anything about me. You know, I'm here, I'm here to stay. And so she was okay.

MF: She was okay with it then after she had tested you. You passed the test, evidently.

ML: Oh, and you know, here's another little story with Sister Casta, the older one; was older than Sister Erma just by a year and a half. They were next to each other in age. She had to come home to take care of me when I was born and she told me after I was in the postulantsy, she says "now I can tell you." I says, "What are you going to tell me?" She said, "When you were born, and I had to come home and stay home a year to take care of you, I promised the Blessed Mother to pray the fifteen decades of the Rosary. It's [553] every day that you become a Sister."

MF: Her prayers were answered.

ML: Yah.

MF: Sister, could you tell me the name of the chosen names of your two sisters that were here in the Sisterhood?

ML: The older one was Adolheight [sp? 560] and she didn't choose, she got that name: Sister Casta.

MF: Oh, she didn't get to choose her name?

ML: She did not and she hated it ever after. It was a relic of a saint that was put in the day before.

[End of Side 1]

ML: [Some interruption] go back to Margaret; it's such a pretty name. She says, "Yah, I like it too, but there's so many Sister Margarets and why at my age do it." And I said, "I understand what you're saying," but I didn't care for Erma. Although it was more of common than Adolheight. You know, Adolheight was just – but at that time, Sister couldn't change to go back. And she wouldn't have anyways. Casta was bad, but so was Adolheight.

MF: You never got back to North Dakota to do any teaching?

ML: No, never.

MF: You never did get back in the area?

ML: No. I never got back to take care of my things back there. I didn't care about that. Whatever was there, they could throw away.

MF: Just left everything?

ML: Left everything.

MF: Thank you so much, Sister. You've shared so many good stories; you've given us so much information. I'm so glad I got to visit with you.

ML: Well thank you.

MF: Just wonderful. I hope it [the tape] works. Thank you.

ML: You're welcome.