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Full transcript

of an interview with

JOAN DURDIN

31 July 1992

by

Jennifer Barker

for

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY
WOMEN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN
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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

DOROTHY JOAN DURDIN, AM

Miss Durdin was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1985. This was announced in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List of that year. This honour was for services to nursing education.

Her D.Univ was awarded by The Flinders University of South Australia for achievements during her career which were recognised as being related to the aims of the suffragists. 1994 was the centenary of women’s suffrage in South Australia.
DOROTHY JOAN DURDIN
BA Hons (History) (1984)

Date: Friday 31st July, 1992
Interviewee: Dorothy Joan Durdin (JD)
52 Cromer Parade, Millswood, South Australia
who, after retiring from her career in nursing, completed in 1984 her BA Honours
degree in History at the University of Adelaide.
As well as Joan's history, we will discuss that of her mother, Caroline Durdin,
whose maiden name was Williams and who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in
1915 at the University of Adelaide.
Interviewer: Jennifer Barker (JB)

TAPE 1, SIDE 1

JB Joan, can we start with just some brief details about your family and your early education?
What was your father's name and his occupation?

JD My father's name was Arthur Bruce Durdin, commonly known as Bruce and he was, at the
time of his retirement, and in fact for 30 years prior to that, the Manager of the Farmers
Cooperative Executor and Trustee Company. He took on the first managership of that
company when it was set up in 1919, just at the time when he was returning from the First
World War where he'd been with the 27th Battalion. He had been working prior to the
War as a law clerk in the firm of Homberg & Melrose, solicitors in Pirie Street, Adelaide
and I was interested to discover how that came about. Apparently when he left primary
school he went to what was known as the Agricultural School in the grounds of the
Exhibition Building on North Terrace (it was ultimately assimilated into the School of
Mines). I noticed when reading some reports of that school that Mr Homberg, who was
also a Member of Parliament, used to award prizes at that school and I have the suspicion
that he used to ask the Headmaster for the names of boys who might be interested in
coming into his firm. My father was only 14 apparently when he became a member of that
staff - probably as an office boy - but when he was 16 (according to a document I found)
there was an agreement between Mr Homberg and my grandfather and my father (my
father then being quite a young person) that he would serve that firm as a law clerk. He
continued to do so until he went to the War in 1915. Subsequently, as I say, he was the
Manager of an Executor and Trustee Company which is still operating but under a different name.

JB  I think, then, training in law was altogether quite different - at that time, in any case.

JD  Quite different - yes. And, he used to talk about going to Night School. Whether that was at the School of Mines - I suspect it was because I don't think there were very many other places - it certainly wasn't at the University - and he did studies which probably were in connection with his work as a Law Clerk and in a business situation he used to write shorthand - he didn't do typing but he certainly could do shorthand and he would have done other business subjects. He was relatively senior, I think he was 28 when he enlisted so he was well established in that firm.

JB  Was this your family home then?

JD  Not in those days, no. He came back from the War and became engaged to my mother and they married in 1920. His own family had grown up in Forestville and he was looking for a home for his bride and found one in the neighbouring street in Forestville and so that was where we all were born and grew up and it wasn't until after his death that my mother and I, being the only two remaining at home, decided we needed a slightly smaller house then so we moved here.

JB  How many brothers and sisters did you have then?

JD  I have a twin sister and we were the oldest of the family and then there was another girl and then a boy and then a girl - so there were five of us all together - one boy only and we grew up in Forestville. My mother, as I'll probably mention later, had attended a private school for most of her life and she rather felt that private schools were the way to educate girls and so she looked for private schools in the neighbourhood and we were very close to MLC on Park Terrace. There was the tramline that connected us very easily with school and so for the whole of my schooling, and for all of the girls in our family, we went to MLC - from Kindergarten to Leaving Honours.
What were your leanings during primary and secondary schooling as regards to subjects?

Well, there were not many choices of subject. You could either do a general course or a commercial course and we certainly were interested in the general course and we - I speak of 'we' because my twin and I tended to do most things together! - but actually, as far as careers were concerned I suppose without thinking about it very much I always assumed that I would go into a teaching career. Towards the latter part of my schooling I was interested in science subjects although I hadn't taken them at that stage in the Leaving - I'd done very much a general arts-orientated series of subjects - so in my final year I did physics and chemistry at Intermediate Level and I already had some botany and I was doing maths - with a view to going to the University - well, hopefully going to the Teachers College - and through that contact taking a science degree at the University. So that was my direction all the way through the latter part of my schooling.

And that would have been in the late 1920's?

Yes. I started school in 1929, and my last year was 1939.

We should, I think, just record your date of birth.

That's right! I remember now, I hadn't said that. I was born on the 16th of May, 1922.

Then of course, I left school and presumably towards the end of that year would have put in an application to be accepted as a student at the Teachers College which was in Kintore Avenue at that time - and to my surprise and considerable disappointment I had a letter indicating that I had not been accepted. I haven't kept the letter. I can't remember how much information it gave me, but I have the understanding - or have learnt since - that the staff at the Teachers College was depleted as members of the staff had enlisted and the number of students was reduced and whilst I had a matriculation at Leaving Certificate level, from private schools it seemed to be that they were looking for people with a Leaving Honours Certificate - and I had only one Leaving Honours subject.

That must have been a disappointment.
JD I am sure that it was, but I very quickly adjusted to it. I do recall being very shocked and disappointed at the time but my twin had never aspired to teaching. She always wanted to be a social worker and she left school the year before I did and went to business college because she had been making enquiries through the right avenues about social work and found that she had to be 21 before she could begin that course and whilst they recommended her to do kindergarten teaching as a preparation she didn't feel drawn to that and so she did a business course and worked in a couple of appointments in the city. She decided, within that twelve months of going to business college and entering the workforce, that instead of waiting until she was 21 and going into social work, she would train as a nurse and then perhaps move into a social work programme. So she must have made up her mind about this because I know that when I had my setback so to speak I immediately said: "I won't be a teacher at all. I'll be a nurse, and then Pat and I can train together."

JB I see.

JD I was fortunate in a sense to have something else that I felt comfortable about and I didn't give teaching another thought for about 10 years. And so we made the necessary arrangements. In those days you had to be 19 before you could begin nursing training at the Adelaide Hospital and for some reason we were absolutely set on going to the Adelaide Hospital and had no other thoughts in our minds and I don't know why that was really. It's not that we knew many people - although I suppose it may have been that we had friends who were going there but we certainly wanted to go to the Adelaide.

JB There were other options?

JD There were. There was the Children's and the Memorial - they would have been two possibilities, I think, anyway. But we didn't really give them any consideration at all. My father was shocked. He didn't want us to be nurses and he said some things that shocked us about the Adelaide Hospital - but then that was only hearsay - what a lot of people thought about the Adelaide Hospital in those days.

JB I was going to ask you about your parents' attitudes towards what you would do after
school.

JD  Yes, well, mother must have been very philosophical about it because she came from a teaching tradition. I don't recall her expressing any particular regret or distress at my not being accepted for Teachers College. And nursing was quite an acceptable alternative career. When I think of what my friends at school did: there were only 12 of us in the Honours Class, the year that I was there, but I think that four of us went into nursing and at least four went into teaching - and one or two others went on to do other careers through the University, so it was still at that time a very popular and acceptable career to move into.

JB  And your parents didn't oppose it?

JD  Not at all. I think the thing that really persuaded Dad was when he discovered, we thought fairly quickly, that some very well-connected young ladies whose mothers were friendly with my mother - one of them I remember was Betty Price who was the daughter of Archie Price as he was then - the Headmaster of St Mark's College - when Dad heard that people like Betty Price were training at the Adelaide he thought that it would be alright for us. He didn't take much persuading really, and ultimately he was very proud of us - that we'd trained as nurses.

JB  What conditions were required in order to become a nurse? Did you have to pay a fee?

JD  No. In the early days nurses used to pay a premium, a bond of five pounds which in those days was quite a lot of money. However, that had been discontinued by the time we started. No, we didn't have any difficulty in gaining acceptance at the Adelaide. We certainly went to the Matron - perhaps we made enquiries before we were 18 - and then our names were entered on a waiting list, but we were given clearly to understand that we wouldn't be called before we were 19 and so my sister went on with her job - she was working at 5DN in the record library, and I stayed at home. We had three more children still at school and I helped mother at home for 18 months, I suppose. During that year my sister and I both did one unit at University.

JB  What was that?
JD  That was psychology - first year psychology. I suppose we thought it would be useful to
us. By that time obviously things had moved on to the point that we knew we were going
to do nursing ultimately and we may have thought this would be a useful subject. I don't
remember seeking any particular advice on it. But we went to evening classes.

JB  That was in 1940?

JD  In 1940 - yes, that's right. Dr Constance Davey was the lecturer and the classes were in the
Mitchell Building, upstairs. We went up the central staircase - the room on the left was the
main lecture room. I don't remember much about the other students. A cousin of mine
was amongst the other students. She was a little older than us and she certainly seemed to
cope with the course much better than we did. She could talk about psychology, whereas I
don't think I ever learnt enough to talk about it. We used the same text books that my
mother had used in 1914 - this was 1940 - and I would think that the lectures were perhaps
somewhat, obviously, along the same lines. Dr Davey came in and delivered a lecture from
her lecture notes at 6 o'clock each evening, I suppose it was twice a week. We wrote down
notes, which I haven't kept - and at the end of the year my sister decided that she certainly
didn't know enough to pass an exam and didn't enter, but I had the temerity to enter and I
think I probably got the lowest marks anyone ever gained in a psychology exam. I can't
remember the actual number, but my name certainly didn't appear in the list of passes. So
that was the year that I was filling in time before starting nursing, and my first experience of
being a university student. I loved the contacts, although we were doing evening classes, a
lot of our friends were at the University and my sister having been in an office all day - we
used to go down to the refectory and have an evening meal there. I loved the sausages and
mashed potatoes! We would sit at a table with our friends of the same age; we went to a
few freshers' welcomes and things like that that uni students did. We didn't get much
involved in university life, obviously, but it was pleasant contact - such as I had at that
stage.

JB  Have you retained those friendships?

JD  Yes, they were mostly people whom we had known earlier. I wouldn't say that I've
retained many of them on a close friendship basis, that's true. There are ones that I remember well - but our lives did diverge as they went on in university careers and we went off to the Adelaide Hospital, which was a life of seclusion, of necessity.

JB And were some of those women contemporaries from school?

JD Yes. That's right. And not only from our own school but from other schools. We had quite a lot of contact - partly through family friends and partly through schoolgirl holiday camps and inter-school debates and drama - a variety of activities in the latter years of school that brought us into contact with girls from other schools. So I remember them. Suzanne Blackburn, who was actually a family friend - she was doing first year medicine and was one that I remember clearly - perhaps because we had known her earlier - and some of her friends.

JB Well, you started nursing - nurse training ...

JD Yes, that's right - and that was in September 1941. We were 19 in May, but being wartime, I think the number of girls applying to do nursing had increased. Some were perhaps beginning a career in nursing which they might not have ever considered had it not been wartime. I think that most people felt that they needed to be doing something useful in the community and nursing was a fairly obvious choice for many of them - and so we just waited patiently. I don't remember badgering the Matron to find out when we would be admitted. We were finally going to be called - we must have received a notification - that we would start on the 23rd of September and then on the 14th of September when we were just about to set off for a week's holiday at Port Lincoln, we had a phone call saying would we start on the 16th, and we very nobly cancelled our holiday. I think that if we hadn't accepted that call we might have been waiting even longer. And so we started on the 16th of September. At that time, and for a number of years thereafter, the hospital simply maintained its staffing level by calling in one or two women from the waiting list at any time when another nurse finished training. And so obviously there were a couple of nurses who were due to finish their training on the 15th of September so we were lined up to start on the 16th.
JB  Did you finish your nursing training in 1945?

JD  Yes. It was a 3-year training, but I had a lot of sick leave - as many people did - not necessarily very serious. You were allowed 12 days sickness in a year and had to make up any extra, but I had a lot more than that so I didn't finish until about 9 months after the September date when I was due to finish.

JB  I should think that a hospital's a good place to pick up infections.

JD  Oh yes - in those days it was, particularly. A two-month period which we had to make up was as a result of evidence that we'd been in contact with TB - and any nurse when she showed evidence as a result of a skin test was sent off duty for two months with no pay - just to look after yourself and keep healthy.

JB  Not to a sanatorium?

JD  No indeed. My twin and I had two months at the same time.

JB  After completing that training, what came next?

JD  Well, there were various options, but they had to be subject to the approval of the Manpower Authority. This was 1945 and the War hadn't ended and nursing manpower, as was the same with other avenues of activity, were controlled by the Commonwealth Government. I don't know whether any of our colleagues were immediately invited to take positions on the trained staff at the Adelaide because there were a limited number of positions there. My sister and I wanted to go to Melbourne to do our midwifery training but the Manpower Authority wouldn't permit that. There was a very tart lady who had very firm ideas as to what we could do and we certainly couldn't go outside South Australia. So we decided to go to Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital and worked there for six months and gained a Certificate in Infectious Diseases Nursing. Then there were vacancies for the position of a staff nurse, which is a first year registered nurse at the Adelaide Hospital and so we went to the Royal Adelaide. I suppose that was January maybe of 1946. That's right. I finished in May 1945 and did six months at Northfield, so it
was probably January 1946 that we went to the Adelaide for one year as staff nurses and then we both went off to Melbourne the following year to do midwifery training.

JB    At which hospital?

JD    At the Queen Victoria Hospital, Melbourne. It was an interesting hospital because it was staffed entirely by women. The medical staff were all women too. And we made some interesting contacts there too.

JB    Did you enjoy life in Melbourne?

JD    Oh yes, very much indeed. We had some family members over there - some relatives of my mother and a number of nurses from Adelaide were there. Again, we didn't have a great deal of free time - we were still working a 48 hour week I think in Melbourne. But they so organised our off-duty time that we used to have almost 2 days - we'd work part of one day and then have almost 48 hours off before we were required on duty again. So we had a lovely time getting to know Melbourne - living right in the centre of the city.

JB    Was that your first time there?

JD    I had had one very brief visit to Melbourne before. This was the first time of moving away from home really. It was a new venture and a very customary one for nurses. I think we saw that our training in nursing had equipped us to be useful in a variety of places and we all aspired to travel. And sure, there were midwifery hospitals in Adelaide which were quite highly regarded - the Queen Vic. in particular - but some of my friends left - a great many of my colleagues went over to Sydney or Melbourne or Tasmania - they were perhaps the most popular ones - but it was mainly with a view to seeing a bit of the world.

JB    From Melbourne then ...?

JD    Well, I was still the wandering nurse! I don't know what influenced me to go to Sydney and I went entirely on my own. My sister by this time had decided to make application to the Australian Board of Missions to become a missionary nurse and so she stayed in Melbourne
and gained more appropriate experience in operating theatre nursing, which is perhaps not necessarily the best choice but she enjoyed it anyway, and then came back to South Australia. I went off to Sydney and did three months at the Children's Hospital and then joined a friend who I met there - an English girl - and went to Queensland for four or five months. While I was there I received a letter from the Matron of the Adelaide Hospital advising me that the Florence Nightingale Committee, of which I'd never heard, was offering a scholarship for a nurse to study overseas and she thought it would be appropriate for me to put in an application. It was almost like a command. That was the way of Matrons in those days! However, it sounded interesting.

JB  It was a compliment.

JD  I would have thought myself to be with limited equipment for that sort of move. However I suppose I'd been seen to acquit myself reasonably well in my year as a staff nurse at the Adelaide Hospital and so I applied and then came back to Adelaide in time for an interview by the Scholarship Selection Committee and I was awarded the scholarship.

JB  Can you say just a little bit more about that scholarship?

JD  Indeed. It was called the Florence Nightingale Scholarship and the funds for the scholarship had been raised by the South Australian Florence Nightingale Committee which was linked with other Florence Nightingale Committees around Australia as part of the National Committee and that in turn was linked with the international organisation which was called the Florence Nightingale International Foundation. It had its headquarters in London at that stage. The Foundation was set up in 1934 and the South Australian Committee was set up in that year and by 1936 they'd raised sufficient money to offer a scholarship and the first winner was Miss Kathleen Scrymgour who was in fact the Matron who wrote to me in Queensland and suggested that I should apply for the Scholarship. She had a year in London, then came back to South Australia. In 1938 another Scholarship was offered and that was awarded to Lucy Lilywhite who had trained at the Memorial Hospital. She went to London but unfortunately she developed tuberculosis while she was there, and then the War broke out. She was actually visiting Norway - I'm not perfectly sure of the circumstances - but she was certainly in Norway when Norway was overtaken by the
Germans and she had to remain there and she died there of tuberculosis so we sadly didn't have her back in South Australia.

And then the Scholarships Committees went into abeyance during the War and as soon as the War was over they got active again and I was actually the third post-war Florence Nightingale Scholar from South Australia. And I went to the Royal College of Nursing in London to do what was known as the Tutor Sisters' Diploma which was actually - the College was affiliated with the University of London and the examinations which we took for that Diploma were taken by nurses at other Postgraduate Colleges in London as well, but our programme was actually conducted and the lecturers were all appointed by the Royal College of Nursing.

JB And you were there for a year?

JD Yes, it was a twelve months' course. I left Adelaide in early July 1950. I should say that I was actually awarded the scholarship early in 1949 but one of the conditions of the scholarship was that the applicant had spent at least two years in charge of a ward, and I hadn't done that. I'd done my wandering around, and collected a few certificates, but whilst most of my year as a staff nurse had been spent in fact in charge of wards because they were so desperately short of charge nurses at that time, it was obviously necessary to have some more experience and so the Committee - I think I was very fortunate in this because they did have other applicants who would have been ready to go straight away, but they selected me on the condition that I spent a year in charge of a ward at the Adelaide Hospital - which was invaluable experience from my point of view. I would have felt very ill-equipped without that additional year. So I went off in 1950 and the course started, as most tertiary programmes do in the UK, I think early in September and we did our final exams in June the following year.

JB And you were associated with women from other countries?

JD Oh indeed. That was one of the great advantages. Yes, being Florence Nightingale Scholars - actually there were four from Australia that year, two from New South Wales and one from Western Australia and myself from South Australia. It was arranged that we
would live at a home in Cromwell Road, Earls Court which was owned by the Florence Nightingale Committee and the Red Cross in England and it was reserved for accommodation for nurses from any country of the world who were undertaking postgraduate study in London at that time. We were doing a variety of courses.

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

JD There was a course for those who were going to be nurse administrators and another for nurses who were undertaking Public Health nursing, particularly the girls from the Asian countries - I can remember that from Malaya, Singapore and Hong Kong there were students who were doing Public Health nursing which was very new to us because our nursing education in South Australia at that time was very limited and very narrow. We were fully hospital oriented, and so it was very interesting and valuable to me to be living and sharing study facilities with nurses who were doing other courses. One I remember particularly was from Cyprus and it was interesting to get to know people from different parts of the world.

JB Having completed your course there, did you return immediately to Australia?

JD No. I think that I was aware that in the past the Committees had been generous to students who had gone overseas and were happy for them to get some more experience. So I wrote and asked the Committee if they would agree that I could obtain an appointment in England and get some initial experience in teaching and I was actually more than a year overseas from the time that I finished my course. I had six months at the Hammersmith Hospital in London (I think that would have been about from September to March) and I taught in a preliminary training school which was a new experience for me because we had no such preparations for nursing in Australia - not in South Australia anyway - and also had other experiences there. Then I had some holiday time - about two months of visiting friends and places in England before I went to Canada and I had four or five months working at the Western Hospital in Toronto which I had learnt about by meeting, at the house that I was living at in London, a woman who was the matron of that hospital in Toronto and who herself had been a Florence Nightingale Scholar in an earlier year. So I made arrangements to take an appointment on the staff of her hospital for about four months, I think. And that
was a very broadening experience too - to have something of working in a Canadian hospital culture. After that I came back to South Australia and I took up a position at the Adelaide Hospital in January of 1953. But at that time they had no position for a Tutor Sister because wheels move very slowly in a bureaucracy and we were very bound by the bureaucracy and whilst Matron, who had encouraged me to go away, was probably most anxious for me to get an appointment and would have been glad to see an extra position created, there simply was no position. There were two older women, elderly women, close to retiring who had been giving lectures to nurses for several years and what the Matron arranged for me to do was to be an assistant to the Home Sister whose job was largely concerned with domesticity and I was able to give an occasional lecture to nurses. That didn't please me very much. However, things gradually changed.

JB  At least you kept in touch with teaching.

JD  I did. That's right. I had a small contact with it, regularly, and so as positions then became vacant I was well in the running for taking up a full-time position as a teacher. I think it was about a year before I was able to get a full-time position.

JB  So you became a Tutor Sister

JD  Yes.

JB  How many?

JD  There was one. One of my predecessors, who had been a Florence Nightingale scholar, was in charge of the Preliminary Training School. She had taken up that position when she came back from England in 1949 so that was one position. And then there were two positions for Tutor Sisters for nurses beyond that introductory month that we experience as nurses and the other person who joined me as a Tutor Sister had just undertaken a course at the College of Nursing Australia. She was in the second group of students who did a course in Melbourne - a course which I might have done because it actually began the year I went to England, but luckily the arrangements for me had all been made and I was able to fulfill that arrangement to go to England rather than be very much a guinea pig and go to
the first course in Australia. However, the nurses who came through that first course were very good and one of them, who had been in the second year of that course, was my colleague at the Adelaide Hospital.

Nurses were not given any assistance with their studies and they were required to attend four series of lectures given by doctors during the course of their training. They were not required to attend the lectures given by the Tutor Sisters but we tended to spread the word around that they were expected to. We couldn't keep registers to mark as to who was present or absent, but I think that probably they appreciated the fact that it was worthwhile having some more instruction and they came to lectures in their off-duty time. So we repeated our lectures at least twice a day - once in the morning for those who were off duty and once in the afternoon. And later on we even repeated them at 4.00 in the afternoon after a 2 o'clock lecture so that the night nurses didn't have to get up too early.

So our staff gradually grew, I suppose each year. After several years we were able to take an additional member of the staff and to give more lectures to the students. I became the Senior Tutor in 1955 and had probably first one, then two, and then at least three people working with me - we were gradually able to extend the amount of teaching that we did and the range of teaching. We used to enjoy taking groups of students to the wards and using some opportunities for clinical teaching there, which hadn't been possible when there were so few on the staff. The nurses who came to the Adelaide having spent two years in a country hospital were previously thrust into the hurly burly at the Adelaide, which was pretty difficult for them, and we were able to arrange that they would have their first two weeks as full-time students in the school and we were able to introduce them to the ways of the Adelaide and get them familiar with the programmes more comfortably in that way. So we were gradually able to introduce some additional ways of teaching. I continued in that position until the end of 1964 and amongst the other things that I did during that time was to serve on various committees: I was on the Council of the Nursing Federation; I was on the Florence Nightingale Committee - naturally, raising money for the next lots of scholars; and on the Panel of Examiners for the Nurses Board. So there were lots of interesting ramifications from my role of teaching there.

JB You were clearly highly experienced I should think by the time you finished there.
JD  I suppose I was. Yes. I gained a lot of experience there's no doubt about it, and I was involved in most of the active nursing organisations.

JB  Now I think you told me previously that you also, during that period, did a Diploma of Arts in Education.

JD  Yes, that's quite true. In 1959 I met an English woman who was visiting South Australia - an English nurse - I've forgotten the circumstances of her visit - but anyway, talking to her I discovered that she had just completed a degree at Oxford undertaken over a number of years whilst she was still fully engaged in a nursing career. And that was the first intimation that I had that I might be able to pursue my own studies while still working in a full-time career. So I enrolled in 1961 and did Psychology 1, which I thoroughly enjoyed - and redeemed the situation from my first disastrous entry into psychology, because I got a distinction that year. And the following year I did Philosophy 1, and then in 1963, Educational Psychology and in 1964, the History and Theory of Education.

At that stage I'd been on the staff at the Adelaide Hospital continuously for 11 years and I was due for Long Service Leave - in fact I was a year overdue for Long Service Leave - and I had arranged to take my Long Service Leave on half pay over six months instead of full pay over three and then support myself during the latter part of that year so that I could finish this Diploma in Arts and Education. Perhaps I had anticipated the pleasure of being a full-time student for a change. So I did take that full-time year in 1965, but interestingly, at the end of 1964, during the vacation and at the beginning of my Long Service Leave, I went up to visit a friend who was teaching in the School of Nursing in New Guinea and during the nine or so weeks that I spent up there I became so immersed in the work that was being done, and in the need for more people to be involved in the instruction of nurses in the developing Nursing School there at a Mission Hospital, that I offered to become a member of the staff of that Mission Hospital. I was accepted with the concession that I could complete the work that I was planning to do in 1965, and actually go back to New Guinea in 1966.

Of course it was a nasty shock to my colleagues in Adelaide. I can still remember the shock
expressed in the voice of the Matron at the Hospital at that stage who was a wonderful person - Zelma Huppatz - and who bore with me in my odd behaviour and accepted the fact that I really was going to resign from the hospital instead of simply taking leave. But I did resign so that a new appointment could be made, and so I was completely free during 1965 to just finish off that year at the University and I did Psychology II and History I. I think I was also that year doing, or I began to do, Practice of Education which made a seventh subject, but I did apply for credit for that since I had done ten years of teaching and had the Diploma from the University of London. The University Council accepted that.

JB They granted it. So you would have been awarded the Diploma in Arts and Education in 1966?

JD That's right. It was at the Commemoration in '66. My mother attended the ceremony and heard my name being read *in absentia*, because by that time I was well in New Guinea. I was in New Guinea for six years and that was a considerable extension of my experience in teaching, because my colleague was the Matron of the hospital but was also a qualified Tutor Sister, so that we shared the teaching and I had a certain role to play in the actual nursing at the hospital too - and a lot to learn about living and working in a different culture. So that was a very broadening experience indeed.

JB And perhaps some new experience with tropical medicine?

JD Indeed - I learnt a lot about tropical diseases, and I had to teach the nurses the theory side of it too. They knew more about malaria. There were girls who had at least two years of high school before they commenced their nursing training and in a good educational programme at the 2nd Year High School level they knew much more about malarial parasites than I did. I had to do a lot of homework to get myself ready to give lectures. I learnt an enormous amount from them. At one stage, during my first year there, we took in for a period of a month, six of the older men who had trained as nurses in a Mission Hospital because they were going to have the opportunity to go to Port Moresby and do 12 months to gain a Registration in Nursing which they had not previously had through their simpler form of training and they were men who were about my own age I suppose. I was in my early forties in those days and they might have been in their late thirties or early
forties, but they were as keen as mustard and they had lots of practical experience behind them. That was a very rewarding experience, teaching them. Then, later on, I visited them in Port Moresby when they were in the thick of their studies and I heard about them.

JB   How big was the Mission Hospital?

JD   The Mission Hospital was capable of accommodating 60-80 patients; often it didn't have as many as that. I think occasionally it had more when there were epidemics, but only for short periods. We had a big staff of nurses. We felt it was our responsibility to prepare as many Papuan men and women for nursing as we could and we had well equipped staff. There was a permanent doctor on the staff too who contributed to the lecturing of nurses and supervising their training and so we had 10-15 first year and 10-15 second year nurses. Quite a good staff for the size of the hospital.

JB   Was the doctor an Australian?

JD   No. She was an English woman when I was there, although the first time I was there the doctor was an Irishman. But by the time I arrived in Papua New Guinea and took up my appointment an English woman had taken the position of the medical officer in charge of the whole region which we were servicing, because we were not merely looking after a hospital of inpatients but had many outpatients clinics at the hospital itself and we conducted medical patrols over a vast area - only on foot. Well, no, the furthest patrol we used to travel to by plane, but most of them were a day's walk or a day and a half's walk from the Mission station. Or we travelled by launch down the coast into little villages and conducted antenatal clinics and welfare clinics and health education programmes for the population generally. It was something that was utterly new to me. Well, those things were certainly being done in Adelaide of course, in different areas, but particularly the health education programme was a step ahead of anything that we were doing in Australia. I think in terms of the promotion of health.

JB   The variety of your earlier training, the different certificates, must have helped.

JD   Yes. I'd done infant welfare, and infectious diseases, children's nursing - so they were
certainly a help, midwifery too.

JB And I think you mentioned earlier that that was an Anglican Mission.

JD Yes, it was. It was the Anglican Mission in Papua New Guinea - it became the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea ultimately, but still supported by the Australian Board of Missions and still has training programmes for nurses and a variety of activities there.

JB Are there any other comments that you'd like to make about New Guinea? That experience?

JD Again, I suppose it did expand my experience, because by that time there were quite a number of nurses both in the Mission Hospitals and in the Government Hospitals who had qualified in Nurse Teaching and there were occasions when we got together for conferences. On two occasions I was able to go to a conference in Port Moresby, at which time we were discussing developments of the curriculum and this was something which I hadn't experienced in South Australia - they were ahead of us in innovative developments most certainly. I must say that that was happening in South Australia while I was away, but before I went away we hadn't really done anything very much in this direction. And so this was again a valuable experience. And then, at one stage, I was seconded from my position to spend a month in Port Moresby working with a small committee to devise a new curriculum for community health nursing. And that was quite a challenging experience. I don't think I acquitted myself quite to the satisfaction of the doctor who was the health officer in charge of the developments in community health at that stage. I wasn't innovative enough. That's not surprising in a way. Although the experience in New Guinea was valuable, I think he was looking for something perhaps that could have been offered by somebody who had had even more experience than I.

JB So you returned then?

JD Yes. My mother by this time was in her 80th year so I felt it was fair enough, as she hadn't been very well just a few months before I came home, so I had no hesitation then deciding that it was time to come home. I'd had six years there. We always used to go for a period

18
of three years, and then renew that if it was possible or suitable. And so I'd been down on
one leave, for a period of three months, and then went back for another three years. So it
was in 1972 that I came back to South Australia.

And I didn't know what I wanted to do. I was like a fish out of water. I didn't realise how
disoriented I was, but I've heard of 'culture shock' and I know I experienced it myself
completely at that time, because there had been a tremendous number of changes in nursing
and in society generally over those six years. And we were very isolated up there. We
used to listen to the news, but we were a self-contained community and I didn't keep
closely in touch with what was going on politically and socially 'down south'.

The Vietnam War was on during that time. The Secretary of the South Australian Nursing
Federation was very good. She used to write to me very often - a lady named Marjorie
Lapkin - and kept me informed of developments in the professional affairs of nursing quite
well too. I remember it was from her that I learnt about the MATS Plan which consumed
Adelaide's interest for quite a while, I gather, because it involved nursing since we owned a
building that was on the path that was going to be cut through to the east. It never did
eventuate. So I remember valuing the contact that she made with me and kept me in touch
with some things. But by and large I was not in touch. The Adelaide Hospital had been
rebuilt by the time I came back so the wards were all different, and technology had
advanced quite considerably. By this time the Matron was Irene Kennedy - she was the
first of the post-war Florence Nightingale Scholars whom I mentioned earlier, but not by
name, to be in charge of the Preliminary Training School when I first started teaching. She
was a very good friend of mine and concerned to find the right job for me, but I said that I
felt I needed to be just in a ward, without much responsibility, to begin with. However, she
though that I could take the responsibility of the Casualty Ward and gave me a week to
work with the Charge Nurse who was about to leave and I still remember some of the
senior sisters who had supervisory roles, appearing at the end of the corridor of this ward to
watch and see how I was coping, feeling perfectly sure that I would fall by the wayside -
which I did, more or less. I made up my own mind that I couldn't do that, and I asked if I
could go to the Refresher Course which was being conducted on a fortnightly basis for
nurses who were newly appointed as staff members at the Hospital. Most of them were
newly graduated nurses, but some of them had come from other fields of work and coming
into the Hospital it was recognised by this time that nurses did need an orientation. I think it rather surprised them that I asked if I could do this course, and I know that I shocked the tutors who were in charge of the course because they were my colleagues. I'd been the senior tutor and now they had to teach me. But we got on quite well and that gave me more confidence to learn about the Hospital so that then I was a little more ready to be in charge of a ward, and I took charge of a ward for some months.

And then they asked me to become a Supervisory Sister which was a step up the ladder in administration, but I didn't really enjoy it very much and I was quite glad when I was able to look for a sideways move so to speak, because I saw advertised a position for a systems officer in the Automatic Data Processing Dept - a section of the Hospitals Department. The Hospitals Department was the Government Department which had concern for all the hospitals in South Australia including the Adelaide. It's the forerunner of today's Health Commission, and it had numerous sections, one of which was quite a new one - the Automatic Data Processing Division. They had no computers in hospitals at this time, but they had staff of systems analysts who were looking to the introduction of computerised systems and they wanted someone to look at the processes that nurses adopted in order to place orders relating to patient care. They were the orders that were sent, really on a medical basis, for X-rays or medications or various therapies and also the orders that the charge nurses themselves placed for various things that were needed for the wards and so on. And so I had an interesting job with that Section for about a year and I first of all was asked to go to each of two hospitals - the Royal Adelaide and Modbury - and talk to the charge nurses and find out exactly what steps they took and I wrote down as they described them. Then I transferred that into flow charts which the systems analysts then took up and were working on. But it was a premature process. The model that they were using was not really appropriate for a hospital, the size of the hospitals that they were planning for here, and although I enjoyed it I couldn't really see after a number of months that it was going to have much future for me in it and whilst I was beginning to wonder what I should do next, an entirely different avenue opened up, and that was with the introduction of the Tertiary Nursing Education Programme in South Australia.

JB So you became involved, did you, in the establishment of that Programme?
Yes. It came about really through my involvement with the nursing organisations. When I came back from New Guinea I did, fairly quickly, become a member of the Council of the Australian Nursing Federation South Australian Branch again and got onto numerous subcommittees, as one did, and I linked up again with my teaching colleagues - although I wasn't teaching at that time - and I think I was on several committees. So I was aware that there was talk of a new programme in Nurse Education at what would become the Flinders Medical Centre and that hospital, which was not yet built, was adjacent to Flinders University. But at that time, Flinders University had appointed a Professor of Medicine to develop a Medical School Programme and I was asked with two other nurses from the Council of the South Australian Branch of RANF to go and talk with the Professor of Medicine and ask what might be happening at the Nursing School, because nurses hadn't been involved at that stage with the planning, and we felt that we should make it known that we were interested. And I recall the interview, the time we spent with Professor Fraenkel, during which he asked us a great many questions, but he really wouldn't answer any of ours as to what was going to happen at Flinders. I think, in retrospect, that was probably because he was aware (this was in January of 1974) that Sturt College, which was also in the same little triad of institutions, was putting out feelers regarding conducting a Nursing Education Programme. On the same day that I went with the group to see Professor Fraenkel, I had also been invited to call in and talk with the Director of Sturt College and his administrative colleagues, one of whom, Bronte Bunney, had been my tutor in Psychology I in 1961. But I knew him and his wife, through a variety of connections, and he knew that I was a fairly experienced nurse educator and I think perhaps I was the only nurse that he did know, and he was on the staff at Sturt, so he suggested that I should go and talk to Graeme Speedy and Caroline Steele who was his Deputy - and Bronte who was the other member of the administrative staff there - and they had some questions to ask about nursing which I might be able to help them with.

So I called in at Sturt that afternoon and they quizzed me thoroughly about the people who could help them to devise a nursing course if they decided to go ahead with it. And so I was able to give them names of a number of nurses whom I knew around Australia who were in fairly key positions with regard to nursing education, some of whom were already into tertiary education, and the upshot was that the proposal that they put to the Board of Advanced Education to commence a Nursing Programme was accepted. Well, they
developed their proposal at that stage I think, and at the beginning of March the proposal had been submitted and they decided to conduct a weekend of discussions.

TAPE 2, SIDE 1

JD The Director decided to have a consultation with nurses who could advise on the curriculum for a Tertiary Nursing Programme. He invited six nurses from other States who were all experienced in this field and also the Nursing Administrators, previously called Matrons, from a number of Adelaide Hospitals, people from the Nurses Board, Nurse Educators and staff from Sturt College and Professor Fraenkel and, I think, Mr Popplewell who had been appointed to be an Administrator of the Flinders Medical Centre, which still wasn't open. So there were, I think, perhaps 30 people at the Park Royal Motor Inn on South Terrace for a weekend - mostly spent in group discussion and sharing the outcomes of our discussions. It provided the administration with a basis on which to work to develop a curriculum which the Board of Education required them to present before it could finally accept a programme - although I think it was while we were at that Conference that the Director announced that he had the initial 'go ahead' from the BAE. And by the end of that weekend, I had become so enthusiastic at the prospects of this new programme that I wrote to the Director and said that I was in the position where I didn't feel as though I was fully employed and if he felt that there was any scope for someone to do some work on a part-time basis I thought it would be worth my while - I thought that that might be negotiable.

So my offer was accepted. I think they thought it was an answer to prayer because they didn't know quite where to go to get someone to do some spadework. So I think for the month of April and May, and probably June, I spent one or two days a week going out to Sturt College and working on a variety of things that related to the development of a new curriculum and then continued the other three days a week with the ADP Section of the Hospitals Department.

And then, by the time that they called for applications for two nursing positions, a Senior Lecturer and a Lecturer in Nursing, I made application. I put in the application for both positions, but I hoped that there would be someone else who was more experienced than myself to take the senior position, and indeed there was. So I was appointed as a lecturer
in Nursing. I took up that appointment in July 1974. I had had just over twelve months with the Hospitals Department at that stage. Anne Pickhaver, who was appointed the senior Lecturer, was at that time still in England and she didn't come out to Australia until the end of October, so I had four months, probably, being the only nurse on the staff at Sturt, which had some advantages because I perhaps of all the nurses who ever worked at Sturt had the best opportunity of feeling part of the staff, because it was a Teachers College at that stage. I don't think it had introduced any other courses although it was about to do so - not only nursing, but speech pathology and a variety of other health profession programmes in the long run. But I was there and accepted very kindly by the other staff who were all experienced in teacher education.

I didn't have an office to work in to begin with. I had a corner of a table in the Board Room. It was quite a long time before it was possible to create a bit more space for a lecturer's office, but I had a very satisfying few months. I knew a lot about what went on in the hospital schools of nursing, and in a sense I was probably influenced by that, whilst I talked a lot to other lecturers to find out the ways in which the programme would be modified when it became a tertiary programme at the College. And I visited other States. I think I went to Melbourne certainly - well, Melbourne was the only one at that stage that had a college programme. It had started its programme that year. But I talked with other people who were involved in developments and so it was a very interesting year of moving around amongst people who were much more experienced than I was.

**JB** Yes. It was a time of considerable change in education in Australia.

**JD** That's right. It was happening widely. People were really challenged to develop courses that would benefit the community.

**JB** It would have been very interesting for you to have been involved right from the beginning.

**JD** Yes. I think I was just very fortunate to be available at that time and to have had sufficient background to enable me to tackle the job with reasonable confidence whilst still ready to learn an enormous amount.
JB: Your experience at Hammersmith must have been valuable.

JD: Yes. That's right, although that was very much according to the hospital programme and although I'd experienced the introduction to nursing that I hadn't had at the Adelaide - no, I think that Hammersmith and the other English hospitals were still on the hospital model of school. We'd call it sometimes the 'medical model' because it was in fact dominated by the input of doctors to the teaching material, even in those days.

JB: Well, what was the model for tertiary nurse education?

JD: We wanted to develop a nursing model. We felt that the model of hospital programmes was based on doctors were the appointed lecturers, those appointed by Nurses Boards to lecture to nurses, even when nurses came into the scene and tried to put more of a nursing focus on what they were teaching, but I think that the way we taught was still very much the way medical students were taught. It was about disease for one thing; it was about illness and not about health; and I think that nurses had begun to realise by this time that there was a lot of scope for nurses to promote health as well as to take part in the cure of disease. Whilst it was all very tentative at this stage, we were beginning to talk of this direction and to see that nursing education properly was directed by nurses and not by professionals from another field. And so we talked with doctors and some doctors were enthusiastic and some were not, quite frankly. We anticipated this, probably, but were encouraged by those who were able to see that this was an appropriate way for nursing to be going. When Ann Pickhaver arrived she had had experience in the University of Edinburgh School of Nursing, as a Lecturer, and so was able to contribute that experience to the development of the programme.

And the Curriculum Committee was formed back in April of that year; very soon after the consultation they formed a Curriculum Committee and what they called a Planning Committee. The Planning Committee included the Director of Nursing of the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Principal Nurse Educator from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and I can't remember now who the other personnel were - I could check. There were several nurses on it plus some educators from Sturt, and they looked into the ancillary factors that were necessary to establish a programme - like arrangements for the supply of uniforms,
arrangements for the clinical experience that would be necessary; arrangements for mere facilities in which the lecturing would take place. Sturt was overcrowded at this stage. It hadn't done the rebuilding which came on later, but initially there was very little room and it was fairly quickly recognised that we would need to make use of space - and there was space - at Flinders Medical Centre, so that committee had a lot of negotiation with the Medical School and with the Medical Centre.

The Curriculum Committee, of which I was a member, included three or four nurse educators from existing hospital schools of nursing and Graeme Speedy, the Director of Sturt, was the Chairman of that Committee because he was a curriculum expert which was most valuable to us, because I'm sure we all had blinkers on regarding the way in which the programme should go. We were very bound by our experience in hospital schools of nursing and so we were challenged to move out of this to the extent that it was possible. When I look at our early efforts … they probably matched up considerably with the latest developments in hospital schools of nursing, because they too were revising their curricula at this stage, in the early 1970's and had moved forward, and so the tutors who were from those schools were making quite an important contribution to ours.

JB You were not following the overseas models, but developing your own.

JD I really think that we were developing our own. We were influenced to a degree. We made enquiries about overseas models and about the one that was being developed at the School of Nursing in Melbourne, but we were largely I believe developing one which was going to be appropriate for South Australia. And in addition to that role as a member of the Curriculum Committee I also had a lot of other activities, particularly in public relations, because we recognised from the outset that whilst the upper hierarchy of nursing was very enthusiastic about the potential for tertiary nursing education, and the need for it, we felt that even though there had been some development, nursing education was still limited and nursing suffered to a degree by the lack of opportunity for the breadth that would come with tertiary studies.

So I did a certain amount of public relations work because we needed to encourage and persuade the nurses in hospitals that this was not going to be a bad thing, but a good thing
for nursing and it was a step that would be developed as the years went by. I went out and visited hospitals and gave a lot of talks to various groups of people about the programme and about our aspirations for it. And in one way and another everything came together. Towards the end of that year we were interviewing applicants for the course and that was an interesting experience - and by February we were ready to receive the first students. We had, I think, 90-odd applications, which was not bad for something that was obviously going to be a first and not an established course, and we selected 57 students to begin the programme in February. By that time we had appointed five more staff members, so we were a staff of seven for 57 students, which was a very liberal staffing ratio, and we recognised that and knew that it couldn't continue for ever. They were giving us every encouragement to do things properly in that first year or two. The selection of staff was interesting because we were able to find some with tertiary qualifications in special fields like the social and behavioural sciences and some with tertiary qualifications in the physical sciences, but the seven staff appointed that year were all nurses, some of whom had those additional qualifications.

JB  I'd just like to check. Was this programme totally funded by the Federal Government?

JD  Yes it was, and still is. It's a completely Federal-funded programme. This was '75 that we started. At the end of '75 of course the Government changed and fairly quickly funding was affected by different Government policies, so I suppose that it was only in those years of '74 and '75 that we were completely buoyant in that we could ask for the world and we would get it; ultimately we had to face reality. However, the programme was established and we had an intake each year - a gradually increasing intake. I wasn't anxious to expand rapidly, not that I had much say in it. I was on various committees. I was a Lecturer in Nursing for '74, '75, '76, '77, and '78. In 1979 I became the Head of the Department of Nursing and I took that position for three years, so by that time I was involved more in the administration and policy making for the development of the nursing programmes. But I think that all the time I was there, our biggest intake would have been 100, or slightly over that. It was only after I left that I realised that in order to meet the need as it was becoming accepted as the way to train nurses, the intakes were increased and I believe now each of the three programmes is taking in something like 250 students a year - which leaves me aghast at the thought!
You certainly can feel that it's been a successful programme.

I'm quite sure of it. I think it was a necessary development in nursing. Whilst nurses were working on the 'apprenticeship' system they gained valuable experience in the practice of nursing and towards the end of the time that they were working under that apprenticeship system - well, it's almost finished now - it's phasing out - this year is the last year of the apprenticeship system in all the hospitals. The Adelaide and the Queen Elizabeth are the last to give up their programmes and by next year all nursing education will be in the tertiary system, so we have done it very slowly in South Australia - which I believe has probably been to our advantage. Although some States have moved more quickly, we've survived. We recognise that whilst there were advantages in the continuing 'hands on' experience of nursing that nurses had in the hospital system, the foundations of their nursing theory could not be as extensive as was possible in a tertiary programme in an environment in which - whether it's hospital nursing or community nursing - wherever nursing is practised, there have been vast changes in the thinking about how it's practised and in the technology, particularly in the case of hospital nursing. So I think that's been one of the justifications for the change. Another has been that the tertiary system provides, at least potentially, a breadth of education. It also potentially, but I'm afraid not necessarily actually, provides for some co-educational experiences with other health professionals. That's, in a sense, been a pious hope. We tried to incorporate studies that involve students from other allied disciplines like medicine and physiotherapy and social work, speech pathology and so on, but unfortunately each course as it develops becomes so heavily laden with the things that relate to its own specialty that the opportunities for interdisciplinary studies have been limited. As far as I know Sturt - Flinders as it is now - still attempts to include some interdisciplinary study in some way - but it is a token rather than a reality.

I think that one of the problems that I see with that programme that we didn't bring up - we don't really need to touch on this very much - is that with the inclusion of as much theoretical foundations as are considered necessary for a graduate practitioner, the opportunity for practice is limited, whereas we used to ensure that students had a programme on which there was 50% of theory if you added up the hours and 50% of practice. That has diminished. The percentage has altered and it's not possible to have as
much practical nursing within the programme as we felt in the first instance was desirable. I think there are still problems in ensuring that when students graduate, they move into graduate programmes which provide them with the consolidation of the relatively small amount of practice that they've had.

JB Do you think that there are any problems in the hospitals between older nurses who've not had this tertiary training and the younger ones who have had it?

JD I expect there are some tensions. I've not had personal experience of it because I haven't been working in the hospitals, but what I've seen happen is that so many of the older nurses within the hospital system have taken every opportunity to get tertiary qualifications themselves - in some cases having to work from the bottom, as undergraduate students - to gain a first degree in nursing, and then many of them go on to Masters and finally to do PhDs. The number of nurses who've done that is astonishing, from whichever avenue or field of nursing that they are working. And I think there's just been that recognition that this is the way - preparation for whatever career - it is going. In order to maintain status within a whole range of professions - health professions and otherwise - we've got to take the opportunities for our own tertiary education.

JB Well certainly retraining and upgrading of qualifications is common everywhere, isn't it?

JD Yes, that's right. And I think you would find a very great number of the senior staff in hospitals now have got a tertiary qualification, and those who haven't have chosen deliberately to move sideways from their position rather than move upwards, and are content with their nursing role, but the career structure which has developed places considerable emphasis on tertiary qualifications.

JB You worked at Sturt, then, as a lecturer and then as Head of the Department.

JD Yes, Head of the Department for three years, and at the end of that year I was expecting to retire - or very soon afterwards. It was 1981. That was my last year as Head of the Department of Nursing, and by that time the structure of the Tertiary Institutions had changed. That was the last year that Sturt was known as Sturt College, and the following
year it was to be assimilated into the four Institutions which formed the South Australian College of Advanced Education (Sturt Campus). We fought to retain the name Sturt College as we were terribly partisan - terribly partial to Sturt College and its role.

So there was to be a change. The Director was leaving - he was going to a different position - we were to have a new Director of Education. The other thing that happened concerned the Head of the School of Health Professions - there were at least five departments within the School of Health Professions, five departments which were providing courses related to the health professions. Ruth White had been the Head of that School for about five years and she was leaving to go back to her home in Sydney for family reasons. So they advertised during the latter part of 1981 for a Head of the School of Health Professions and they were unable to make a satisfactory appointment. At the end of that year, Graeme Speedy, the retiring Director, asked me if I would undertake the position of Head of the School of Health Professions for an interim period whilst this new College situation was settling into place, and they would later advertise the position. So I was agreeable to do that on the basis of my association with Sturt and on the understanding that I had thought of retiring at the time of my 60th birthday, which would have been in May of 1982. But I was quite happy to stay on - it was quite feasible to stay on, so in fact I remained until March of 1983, retiring then - I had an interesting year and a frustrating one, because it was a very difficult year. But I had some very interesting experiences in the course of that year trying to provide some sort of encouragement for the various departments which were experiencing difficulties in the new situation and working with a Director and an Assistant Director who were quite new to the College. I was one of two Heads of Schools who could provide a bit of continuity. So it was an interesting year, but I was quite happy at the end of that time to move out. I think it was even a few months later before a new Head of School was appointed, so they had some further interim positions to cope with.

JB You certainly played a major role in the establishment of all that early part.

JD I think I was just very fortunate to be in a position where I had that experience and I was able to contribute from previous experiences and each experience added to what one could offer to the next challenge, so I was very fortunate and I enjoyed it.
JB Are there any other comments that you would like to make about that Sturt experience before we go on to what you did next?

JD No, I think I'm quite comfortable that that covers the major things up to 1983 which is the completion of my contact with Sturt College which has now become of course the School of Nursing of the Flinders University.

JB Well, not satisfied with that lifetime of learning and acquiring different qualifications, you then went on to a new phase.

JD Yes. I think that during my last year at Sturt, perhaps even before that, I had become very aware of the changes in nursing that were happening, and I began to collect material from my experience at Sturt that I felt would be important if anyone in the future ever wrote a history of nursing. And then, as I began to think of my own retirement, and what I would do, I think I began to say to myself: "Why don't you write a history of nursing?" I had already picked up my university studies. I don't think I ever did mention this, but during the time that I was with the ADP Section of the Hospitals Department I went back to evening classes at the University and did two more units to contribute towards an Arts Degree but then I got too busy to go on with that. So at the time I retired I had two units to do in order to complete an Arts Degree, to make the 9th unit, and I thought that would be a wonderful way of filling in the first year of my retirement. So I re-enrolled. I was very fortunate that the University had that continuity process. I'd started my Degree in '61; then in '82, all of those early '60's units still counted. I don't know whether they still do, but anyway, that was all fine. I was able to just add to the units I'd already taken. So I was a full-time student again - my second time at the Adelaide University, and I only had two units to do. I did History. I'd already done a History III unit and I was able to enrol in another History III unit which gave me a Double Major in History. I had one First Year unit in order to get the required number of units and I chose Politics I. And so by the end of 1983 I had my Arts Degree and the following year, having become quite convinced by this time that I wanted to write some history, I did an Honours year in History and completed that at the end of 1984.
JB  You would have seen some differences in the University.

JD  Yes, that's very true. Although I think that the thing that would have been the greatest difference would have been the extension of the tutorial programme at the University. In the 1960's - in the early units that I did - I suppose that we had lectures and in the case of psychology certainly, practical classes - but for the other units we had no tutorials, as I remember. I'm sure I'd remember if we did. By 1973 and 1974 when I was doing History II, Australian History - no, History II was Material Foundations of the Modern World, and then History III, the following year, was Australian History - I'm sure we had tutorials for those two units.

**TAPE 2, SIDE 2**

JD  You were asking about the differences in the university experience, with the gap of 20 years between my first experience in the 1960s and then my second experience. There was probably a considerable difference, perhaps partly because of the nature of the course I was doing. With Honours studies it was quite different from the undergraduate level and I appreciated, particularly in my Honours year, the degree of encouragement and supervision that we had from our tutors. I was fortunate that it was Hugh Stretton who was my tutor for that year and he had taken the Final Year History unit that I did too - History of Social & Political Ideas which I thought was a very appropriate one to be able to do in preparation for the sort of writing that I wanted to do. So I just thoroughly enjoyed being a full-time student and would be quite happy to go back and do some more, but I felt that I'd got what I needed to at that stage.

JB  What topic was your Honours thesis?

JD  I chose to do a nursing topic and the title of the thesis was: "Learning to be a nurse 1880-1920" - so I was really looking into the history of nursing in South Australia by this time. It was really a study of the growth of professionalism, or the early steps in the professionalisation of nursing. I had a good supervisor for my thesis in Sandra Holton, who was actually a tutor in the Department, but it was agreed that she could be my supervisor because she had a particular interest in Florence Nightingale - as a feminist I think she was
interested in Florence Nightingale and I had heard her give a paper on that subject and so we had some interesting discussions and I expanded my understanding of feminism, I think, and I certainly learnt a lot more about Florence Nightingale.

**JB** Having graduated, what activities have you engaged in since?

**JD** Well, really, for the first six years I think, after I graduated, well shall we say from '65 to the beginning of '91, I was pretty fully occupied in writing - doing research and writing a history of nursing in South Australia. I didn't push myself. I guess I could have written it in a shorter time, but I was involved in other things. I belonged to various groups and societies - history oriented and others - and was still with some nursing ones I have mentioned. So I did a lot of other things during those five years, but the main focus was on the research of history of nursing. I didn't set myself a very strict timetable. I could have done it for a Masters Thesis, and then I would have had to keep to a timetable. But I was fortunate in that Jubilee 150 was being planned back in 1984, or earlier even, and the Wakefield Press had appointed Brian Dickey, who was on leave from Flinders, to be a consultant to people who were writing for Jubilee 150; I was introduced to him, and I decided within a number of months, I think, that writing during 1985 no way was I going to have a history ready to publish in 1986. So I sort of disconnected myself from the Wakefield Press, but Brian Dickey agreed to continue to read my writing and to act as an informal supervisor, for which I was very grateful, and he continued to do that throughout the whole of the time that I was finishing the history. So, as I say, I didn't keep to a strict timetable, I think because I wanted to do it at my own pace. I did, on a couple of occasions, pretty well do a tour of South Australia - to talk with nurses in various places away from Adelaide. I interviewed more than 90 nurses and recorded those interviews, beginning with nurses who were so old that I couldn't afford to leave them any longer before I interviewed them, and gradually being able to extend that to nurses who were making a contemporary contribution to nursing. And I felt that was a valuable resource for the book which used a lot of oral history to illustrate things that I wanted to say. And so it was a very satisfying time. The book was published in May of 1991, which is only just over a year ago, and since then I've just become more and more involved in projects that relate to history as well as perhaps having more time to give to various church-related activities that I'm interested in. So I rather feel that since I finished writing that history, I'm busier
than I ever was before.

JB  Do you have another book in mind?

JD  I have actually. I've started it, but it's for the family. It's a family history which is really to bring to my growing tribe of great nieces and nephews something of the family history that's come down to me by word of mouth and that I'm probably, from my generation, the only one left to hand it on - well, the main one.

JB  Perhaps we can talk about some of that family history because I feel that your own strong motivation towards education is grounded, at least to some extent, in that of your mother and some of her ancestors also - as well as the support that you did have from your father who was interested also to increase his own education.

JD  Yes. That's true. He would describe himself as a self-educated man, because he directed his latter education but he did get a good sound education.

JB  Yes, but as this is a women graduates' project, I'd be glad if you'd now give me some details about your mother - and her full name, to begin with.

JD  Caroline Margaret Williams. She was born on the 31st of July, 1892. She was born at Moorak in Mt Gambier. Moorak was the name of a large station property owned by a Dr Browne, after whom one of the lakes at Mt Gambier is named, and it's very close to Browne's Lake - his property. My mother's father was Thomas Williams and he was the Manager at Moorak. His wife, my grandmother, was in fact his third wife. The two previous wives had died and he had a grown up family by his first wife, and no children by his second wife, and my grandmother who married him when she was nearly 40, then gave him four daughters in fairly rapid succession, of whom my mother was the second.

JB  Can I just clarify the name of that grandmother?

JD  I'm sorry. Her name had been Sarah Jacob - yes, that's true, and she had spent a number of years with her family in Mt Gambier, although by the time she married Thomas the family...
had in fact fairly recently moved back to Adelaide.

**JB** So your mother grew up in Mt Gambier?

**JD** Yes. Her father died when she was only six, and so her mother had a lot of adjustments to make in order to consider the education of her daughters. They already had a governess, a Miss Goodhart who had lived with the little girls from the time they were tiny, and she remained with them. They moved from Moorak to a house called Lakeside, which is up on the hill very close to the existing hospital at Mt Gambier, and Miss Goodhart - whom they always called "Goodie" - continued to give them their lessons. And it wasn't until 1902, when my mother was 10, that they moved to Adelaide - or in her tenth year, I think she was 10 that year but she was still 9 when they actually moved to Adelaide - where her mother decided to bring the four little girls up. And they lived in Archer Street, North Adelaide in a house that my mother's grandfather John Jacob had owned. Not far from Archer Street was the school, which was conducted by my mother's aunt, Caroline Jacob - Tormore House - and so the little Williams girls then aged 11, 10, 9 and 8 immediately went to Tormore House and continued to have all their schooling there.

**JB** Miss Jacob is well known to have had a strong influence on a number of - many women who subsequently went to the university, so presumably your mother was similarly influenced by her?

**JD** Yes, I'm sure she was. Surely she was with other schoolgirls who had aspirations to the university, encouraged by Miss Jacob. Also I have a feeling that Miss Jacob had hopes, at one point anyway, that my mother might succeed her as the Headmistress of the school. Miss Jacob was actually born in 1861, so by 1902 she was only just over forty, but as the years passed and my mother went up through the school, and moved onto the university, I think at that time, as Miss Jacob was getting older, she certainly had hopes that my mother might succeed her. But at the same time the school had passed its prime. It was founded in 1898 - so at the time my mother went there it was only four years old, the school, but very well established and it thrived during the coming years. But by the mid-1910-1920 period there was some evidence of its decline, with the commencement of other girls schools which I think probably provided a degree of competition for numbers. St Peter's Girls
School was certainly well established by then, and Woodlands started shortly afterwards, and Girton was established too - just to mention some - and Walford - so I guess that was a factor. In any case, as you say, it was the influence of a school which had encouraged education for girls along academic lines that certainly set my mother off in that direction too. And she was fortunate because - although I guess at that time her mother, her own mother, believed herself to be reasonably comfortably off and could have probably afforded university education - I've always understood that Miss Jacob paid for Caroline Williams' university course, but I'm not absolutely sure of that. My grandmother's money was ultimately lost, but through no fault of her own, but at that time I still think that even though she was not impecunious, it was the aunt who sent her niece through university.

JB Before we say anything else about your own mother, I'd just like to ask - Miss Jacob of Tormore and Sarah Jacob, your grandmother, were sisters?

JD Yes, they were indeed.

JB And they were both strongly motivated, themselves, towards teaching - they were both teachers?

JD Yes. I haven't actually mentioned my grandmother's teaching, but I could mention a bit about their family background.

JB If we could just go back, then, perhaps.

JD True. Yes, well that takes us back to their parents. Almost all the family - the Jacobs that we are speaking of - were born in Clare, or Seven Hill near Clare. Their father and their mother were both pioneer settlers. The father, John Jacob, had arrived in South Australia in 1839 from Hampshire and his brother William was already in South Australia. William was a surveyor and working with Colonel Light until Colonel Light died. In 1849 John Jacob married Mary Cowles whose sister and brother in law lived at Auburn - so they obviously met socially, I presume, through one being at Seven Hill and the other at Auburn. Mary Cowles, before she came to South Australia, had been a governess in France so she had that sort of teaching experience and a very fluent knowledge and facility with the
French language. Later when the family fortunes failed, they moved from Clare where all the children had grown up, to Mt Gambier. My grandfather had been a pastoralist with pastoral leases up in the Far North, but his fortunes failed with the droughts of the mid-1860's. They didn't actually leave the North until 1867, came to Adelaide for a year, and then went to Mt Gambier, and he became the Clerk of the Court on probably a very low salary. His wife, who then had teenage daughters, started a school and I think the two elder daughters would certainly have helped her in conducting the small school which was called Winold House, which I haven't been able to find anything else about in Mt Gambier records. As far as I know it was spelt Winold. But it was a little private school for children in Mt Gambier, perhaps largely for people who were connected with the Church in Mt Gambier, Christ Church to which they belonged.

Caroline Jacob was able to pursue her education, where her sisters didn't. I have a document from the Education Office, signed by Mr Hartley who was the Inspector General dated December 26, 1878, when Caroline would have been 17 years of age, and it reads:

"I have the honour to inform you that your application for permission to enter the Training School is approved conditionally on your passing the usual entrance examination which is to be held at the above Institution on January 20th, 1879."

This was addressed to her at Mt Gambier, so the family was still at Mt Gambier at the beginning of - well, yes, they were certainly at Mt Gambier - that was the middle of their Mt Gambier period - and oh yes, prior to that, actually, I have a Certificate of the South Australian Institute which is signed by the Chairman of the Board of Governors which states that:

"The Examination held at the Institute on 25th to 30th May 1877 (that's the previous year), pursuant to the South Australian Institute Act 1863 and traditional statutes issued thereunder, Caroline Jacob passed in the following subjects: Reading, Writing from Dictation, English Grammar, English Essay, Arithmetic, Geography, English History, Euclid, Algebra, French and German."

Quite a range of subjects! Wonderful copperplate writing. And that was May 1877 when
she was 16. So at 17 she went to what was known as the Training School for preparation for teaching, and the other Certificate I have is the Teacher's Certificate from the Education Department of South Australia:

"Caroline Jacob, having passed the examination specified in the Education Regulations 1879-1880 and having given satisfactory proof of competency as a teacher is classified in the Second Class "A" Division from the 1st of January 1884."

JB It's quite something, to see those certificates...

JD It's lovely to see them isn't it? They're all ready to go into the archives at the Mortlock, but I've held them back because I thought it would be useful to be able to refer to them. And most of her teaching I understand was at the Advanced School for Girls - certainly towards the end of her time she was there, and I happened to read in a Report of the Advanced School for Girls in 1897: "We regret that we are losing the services of Miss Caroline Jacob who is going to open a school of her own." So that's the sort of family background for teaching.

JB Yes. And it must have had quite a strong influence on your mother.

JD I'm sure it did. She was obviously a good student who enjoyed school and was quite happy at the prospect of going to university and preparing to be a teacher herself. One of the units that she did at university was called Education, and she knew that she should do that, but she said that she didn't feel that she learnt anything about how to teach in doing that unit, as it happened! So I suppose you want to hear a bit about the subjects that she did study at the university?

JB Yes, I'd like to know - I know that she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1915, so she was there for ...?

JD She was there for four years; '12, '13, '14, '15. I think that she would probably say that some of her colleagues did it in three years, but she was quite content with the fact that she would take a little longer.
JB    Well, she began in 1912. What subjects did she do that year?

JD    I haven't a record of the subjects that she did year by year. I've heard her talk of the different subjects that she studied and they included certainly English, and history, and French and mathematics - she went quite a long way with mathematics and was apparently quite interested in that. She did psychology, as I've mentioned, using the same textbooks still in vogue 20 years later - and logic, and geology - she would have done geology and enjoyed that as a science subject. I think that's probably the range. She said that in those days they weren't organised into 1st Year, 2nd Year, 3rd Year subjects as they are now. You probably did additional years in some of those studies but I have a strange feeling that I have seen her University Certificate - Degree Certificate - but I haven't been able to trace it and I think it may mention... but those would be, as I recall it, the subjects that she particularly referred to. Professor Henderson* was the Professor of English, I believe at that time and he was one of whom she spoke of always appreciatively, and I've just forgotten the name of the Professor of History* at that time, but that was another subject that she enjoyed. And she certainly enjoyed maths. I think when she finished at University at one stage she was contemplating taking a job, or was offered a job perhaps, but didn't take it, at the Bureau of Meteorology based on her mathematics background. But she instead went straight back to Tormore because I have records of Tormore School Magazines which refer to her being the Class Teacher for the 6th Form in 1916.

JB    Do you remember other recollections that she may have had about the University?

JD    I think she enjoyed every aspect of her university life. She used to speak about the Women's Common Room and the companionship that women students had amongst each other - as amongst the men students too. She was active in the Student Christian Movement and we've got a lovely photograph of her somewhere with a large group of students, some of whom were from Adelaide, at a conference in Tasmania and she enjoyed those sort of activities. She was in the rowing team and in one account that I've read more

* Ed. Note: Professor G.C. Henderson was Professor of Modern History from 1902-1924. The professor of English language and Literature and Mental and Moral Philosophy between 1894-1922 was Professor W. Mitchell.
recently - I've mislaid that copy but it would be in university records - Mabel Hardy in her latter years was writing recollections of university life in the period that we're speaking about and she referred to the fact that Carrie Williams was the Cox - I didn't know what position Mother rowed in, but she was a very small slight person and probably the Cox would have been one of the smaller members of the team and that may have been why she was chosen, but she certainly did a fair bit of rowing as such too - and thoroughly enjoyed it.

JB I seem to recall that you told me on another occasion that she also rowed at school.

JD No, no, I wouldn't have said that. She wasn't a sportswoman ordinarily, because she was very shortsighted and rowing was probably something where that didn't matter. She said that she first got glasses when she was 12 and was astonished to find that the moon had a clear border, not a cloudy one - she had always seen it as something very fuzzy. She never played tennis or cricket, which was in vogue at school at that time, and there were probably other games - hockey - but she didn't play those sorts of sports because they would have required better eyesight. She couldn't cope with them, so rowing was great and she thoroughly enjoyed that.

Yes, I can recall that she had of course lots of friends in North Adelaide - she seemed often to talk about calling into this family or that family on the way, for she would have walked to and from university always, I'm quite sure, perhaps sometimes cycled, but I think she mainly walked because she still lived at Archer Street all her life until ....

JB So the family kept that house?

JD They mainly stayed in Archer Street, yes, they lived there some years until she married. That was still the family home - her widowed mother and several elderly relatives who seemed to make their home with them as well as the four girls.

A few other things that I've made a note of: I recall her saying that she didn't ever think that she had a very good handwriting but it was probably ruined by trying to keep notes at university, because that was the way that you received the information - the lecturer
DOROTHY JOAN DURDIN

...lectured from notes and you wrote furiously and accumulated vast notebooks - and I think that many university students would probably claim that they lost any semblance of copperplate by the time they'd finished their courses.

Those are particular memories. Subsequently of course she was able to keep up some of her academic interests by membership of the University Women Graduates' Association and of the Lyceum Club - she valued that very much. But as she married in 1920, she had four years of teaching - she didn't teach at all during 1920 - and she taught for three years at Tormore, and the final year when Tormore was really folding up, she taught at Stott College which was a Business College, I presume in the city, but I'm not sure where it was. She taught English and general subjects to students at the Business College. And then she married.

JB Did she ever teach after marriage?

JD No, I think her subsequent teaching was with her family, and I rather think that either we didn't think she was a good teacher or she didn't think she was a good teacher! I think she probably was a very good teacher but the teaching she enjoyed most was teaching her Sixth Form girls at Tormore - she was only a few years older than they were and they were a bright crowd. I've always understood that they really were a very comfortable group to be with and many of her close friends later on were those girls who were five years younger than she was and she may have had more difficulty in teaching little-ies. I can remember in the room that we called the breakfast room at home - it was a livingroom in a sense: we ate there and we did our homework there and Mother did the ironing in there - she had the wall covered with a washable linoleum and each of us had a section of it for our own. When we were little we used to do all sorts of scribbles but later on we often did bits of our homework while we were talking to Mother who was doing the ironing and she would try to help us to sort out our maths problems. We were dismal at maths and she was quite brilliant at it, and really couldn't quite see what our difficulties were, I think. She taught us the elements of music in the very early days, too, so I think she had a flair for teaching and was able to use it a little, in later years, in that way.

JB Do you think that there was a general perception in society then that women didn't go on
with a career after marriage, that might have influenced your mother?

JD  I think so. I don't think it would ever have entered her mind to enter the workforce. She had a husband who was earning a moderate income and was able to keep the family and her generation didn't think of careers other than bringing up families. I don't think she had any regrets or any feeling of being deprived of an alternative activity.

Tape ends.