Sister Jean Francis of the Order of Notre Dame is probably as good and organized a story teller as she is a nurse. She gave her interview one morning in the peaceful, immaculate front room of the brick house behind the hospital where the sisters live. I'd had no idea about talking to people at the hospital because I didn't think any of the original sisters could still be there. I met Jean Francis quite by accident - my accident - as I was in the emergency ward after falling and breaking a foot. While talking it came out that she was among the original sisters sent to Morehead to set up the hospital before it even opened. She readily agreed to talk about the early days. Not only did she have many stories to tell but she also told of her own life and her courage and humor shine through her words. In addition, it was Jean Francis who provided me with the information about the school bus crash that occurred in Morehead shortly after the hospital opened. This rare and remarkable woman probably is another saint and she continues to be the guiding light of the emergency ward - night shift. Her story too is one of inspiration for any reader.
INTERVIEW WITH SISTER JEAN FRANCIS
In Convent of Flemingsburg Road, Morehead, KY
June 11, 1993. With Dr. Shirley Gish

I belong to the Sisters of Notre Dame. The Sisters of Notre Dame cannot turn down any poor patients. We were originally founded in France in the middle of the eighteenth century. See, these two rich girls in Germany refused to go to school because their poor friends couldn't go with them. So, then they decided, when they were finished, they would start a school for the poor. So, they got a home and started a school taking in the poor children, educating them, teaching them everything imaginable; a lot of domestic work in the house-- sewing and cooking and that. And, teaching them how to write-- read and write. Then a priest came along and said, "Hey, you are living the religious life, why don't you think about taking the vows?"

They decided to go ahead and they got three of the French Notre Dames to come over and live with them and tell them more about religious life. By then, three more joined them. And, after several years, the French Notre Dames went back, because they started this school in Germany. We're considered to be for the poor Germans but in the time of Hitler, there was a community over here in the U.S., and Hitler was exiling all the sisters from Germany. And they said, "Why don't you come over here? There's plenty for you to do in America." The Sisters arrived on July 4th. They heard all the firecrackers and thought at first that that was for their coming! Then, they stayed in New York for a little while.

Then they had a priest from Covington say, "Hey, there's a lot of work to be done out here in Covington, Kentucky. Come on down!" That's how we got started down here in Kentucky. Then about 1950, there was a hospital in Lynch, Kentucky that nobody was running. It's down on the borderline, near Martin, Kentucky, in that end. It's right on the Tennessee border, I think. So our sisters-- we had several nurses-- they went down there and took over the Lynch Hospital. But then Danville built a great big new community hospital and the mines were closing in Lynch. It was 1960 and they said, "Well, that will be fine. We can go back to Covington."
At that time Dr. Louise Caudill decided to go around--she was sending letters to just everybody--to start a hospital down here in Morehead. And the equipment in the Lynch hospital, we were just going to move up, or give away or do anything with. But we had a lot of equipment and we were packing up at the time. But Dr. Louise sent a letter to Bishop Towell. He was in charge of the Catholic Hospital Association of Northern Kentucky and the area. And he thought--oh, he got this letter from this little Morehead, KY and the thought, "No way could conditions be like she says they are."

They must have been very poor and she needed a lot of help. She was working day and night and just needed somebody else and she wanted a hospital so that the poor people didn't have to go so far, being so sick. She either had to send them to Lexington and to Ashland and she said that many of the people were so sick that they almost died on the way--or did die on the way--because they didn't make it. There were bad roads and everything. So, he thought, oh, conditions can't be like that. So he came to Morehead, unannounced, with his secretary and just walked into Louise's office. And that morning, the way I understood, and he said he'll never know where she got 4 babies (others say 5 or 6)--but there she had just delivered 4 babies. And he said when he saw those babies reaching up to him--no way could he say no!

So then, he knew our hospital was closing, so then he came back to Sister Mary Borromeo who was our provincial superior. And he said, "Look, I've got a good deal for you!" He said, "You've got nurses, you've got equipment," he said, "and they want to build a hospital." So they decided to come down and see too, and when Sister Borromeo met Dr. Louise--she just fell in love with her too and just thought that we would enjoy working in the area. So that's really how we got to Morehead.

And then with our community and with the community here doing fund raising and that--and they got the Hill Burton money and we were able to start the hospital. And then Sister Mary Edwin, who was administrator in Lynch, came down here and Sister Mary Thomasina--those were the first two who really did the administrative work. Now, I came down with them and opened the hospital. But, I was just a practical nurse at the time and I did, more or less, all the
cleaning and the unpacking and the setting up. Then Thomasina started an aides class-- and then the aides came and helped us make the beds, put up the curtains and the bed curtains and all that. So then it was a real joy.

They said the hospital was finished April 2. Yes, the building was up-- but it was far from being finished. At first we lived in the upstairs-- but we had no food-- no way to cook food. We lived in the upper corner (the corner that you first see as you come to the light) of the hospital and we just had sandwiches. And Dr. Louise found out that the kitchen was far from being ready-- we had a little electric hot plate for coffee and soup. There were four of us. And she arranged, somehow, in the community, that every night they brought us a good hot meal at night. So, for two or three weeks we would go down to the door at 6 o'clock and there was a good hot meal. Yes, because she noticed.

Oh, the first morning we ate breakfast down in her little two by four kitchen. In her Main Street office in the back. See, they slept there, they delivered there and everything. At that time she quit delivery out in the country-- going out-- she built the office and started delivering down there-- so the first morning she invited us down there. We had a really good time. Then, during the week, progressively-- trucks started coming and delivering things but they were all Union people and we didn't know anybody in the town to help. So, I was the youngest and then Thomasina-- I was twenty-eight at that time-- and Thomasina was there and I would get up in the truck and hand all of the things off while the men sat on the wall.

Well, Dr. Louise heard that and she got two men to come and start helping us. And they started helping us clean and we got all that-- like all the initial scrubbing and the washing of the windows. Now, the contractors job was part of it but it wasn't as spic and span as we wanted. And that was my first encounter with Dr. Louise. She was here it seemed like-- day and night delivering babies-- she'd be here in the mornings just as spry as you please. Well, at that time was the time she started building her house-- to move out of the office. Immediately, they started. That's when they moved. It didn't take them too long to move out of the office-- to get some privacy.
Susie was right there too. Anytime. When you call Dr. Louise, you don’t ask for Dr. Louise-- Susie answers the phone and Susie was the one-- she sort of protected Dr. Louise, but I’d take Susie’s orders just the same as I would Louise’s. You know if you are hearing from Susie, you are hearing from Dr. Louise. That’s how closely associated they were.

I was a LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) back then. Now I’m an RN. And my first ten years I worked in surgery. And the Emergency Room... I was working here and went back to UK and got my degree from there. We’d stay over there from Monday until Friday morning and then Friday morning we came back here and worked the weekend. It was Sister Roseanna that was with me. The two of us.

Here, in Morehead, it was really amazing because most of the people had never encountered religious nuns, and, as I say, Sister Claire and I were the two who always went out into the town. And we still wore the full habit then. Oh yes, that’s when we wore the frills all around the face. Oh, yes! Black and white, ruffles. You can see our pictures in the outreach building. And people, we heard-- in fact, we even had to go to the laundry mat and down at the laundry mat the man actually took our money and turned it on both sides. They thought that they weren’t going to be able to trust us. And we went to the stores and we heard, “Be careful-- they are like gypsies-- they have big skirts! They can pick up anything!” We didn’t hear until later-- we heard somebody would follow us through the store.

Oh, we weren’t used to it but we just took it as a joke and we knew we had to win over their confidence and prove to them that we were here to help them and to start up a hospital. It didn’t take long at all. You know, when the people really started coming in-- you know, like the little neighborhood kids in the back-- in the backyard. The Ravenscraft kids and Skipper Holling and the kids from Allen Drive, they came over. They would come under the window-- they’d see the light at night and they’d call out, “Can you come and play?” And we’d go out and toss a ball with them. So, we’d go out and play with the kids and that. During the day we’d be busy working. But they knew our corner light, like our recreation room, would be there.
Then, well Skipper Holling was our first bad burn case. At the end of Allen Drive there was a sand pile with a light on top. He was sitting there and a kid happened to knock that and then the sand with the gasoline on him. He was burned pretty bad. We got to know that family very well. Jack Carter, Sheriff, it was his nephew. And they were here quite a while. And Skipper gave me a football for Christmas!

And then--well, they knew they weren't supposed to play in the creek, so Barbara Allen. Well, they paged me here one day and I came down and Skipper wanted a needle and thread and a band-aid. I said, "Skipper, now what do you want this for?" Here they were in that creekbed and Barbara Allen had cut her foot. They wanted to sew it up--fix it before they took her home! Four and five year old kids! So we had to call Mrs. Allen to come over so a doctor could sew up this foot.

So we had a good time. I think that's more or less how it was--we won over the children. Won the families over. The people in the town weren't rude or cruel. They were just real skeptical of us, I think. What are they up to? What are they going to do? And we also heard about--oh, we had so many Catholics signing into the hospital--we had heard that there were only a few Catholics here in Morehead. And here we had many--and we heard that people thought they had to be Catholic to get into the hospital! So, they were all saying they were Catholic. Yes, like they say it on the form...RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE...Some have no preference, some say Protestant, some say Church of God. That is on any form anywhere in any hospital. It's so you can get their ministers if you need to. Yes, they thought we would only take care of Catholics. Well, see, they had really not known.

The Catholic population was so small they met in a garage. Yes, it was a little garage in back of Mrs. Ford's house. And there was a priest there and we had Mass every day. We always had it in the chapel (hospital) during the week and then met there on Sunday. But, people come to Mass every day now. We usually have about 15. Some of our doctors and employees. Then the ministers started coming. We started having ministers on call.
Morehead was very different back then. Yes, it was. Coming from Cincinnati and Covington to just one street. See, the shopping centers weren’t there. Now there’s something like between 35 and 40 restaurants. At that time there was one-- down on Main Street-- that was the Eagle’s Nest. We didn’t go there. We didn’t eat out at that time. But every once in a while we’d take a little walk and the people would start-- in the evenings sometimes-- and the people would come out and talk to us. They’d want to know, “... how far along is the hospital? Are you really going to open July 1st?”

We were still in habit then. We only went out of habit in 1968. You really didn’t think of it. Now, I wonder how we scrubbed floors in all that! So, the town people were pretty friendly, and glad to have a hospital.

Oh, yes, and the ministers... I don’t know now what we would do without them. And, you know, we don’t think of them as being another spiritual denomination. You just think of them as all being like one... spiritual help. And sometimes a patient will say-- like in the emergency room-- “Do you have a minister or something?” We’ll say, “Yes.” and they’ll say, “But I’m not Catholic.” We say it doesn’t matter because we call them all here. And, like Harold Tackett-- he is Dr. Louise’s pastor-- in charge of their church. I think you would love that guy to death. He is just tremendous!

See, when he took his pastoral care-- you have to take so many hours and he took two or three semesters toward pastoral care. You don’t have to take them, but you can. Even though he’s a minister, he really wouldn’t have to. But he took that and then he took his volunteer hours in the emergency room. he was there for several evenings, from about 7 to 10. Oh, I missed him so when he wasn’t there. He would make up stretchers and be around to take patients in and out and call relatives. He’d take patients to the floor or go over in x-ray and check them just to see how they’re doing. They were simple things, but still, it was something that I would have had to be doing. Really, like a real upset mother with a real sick kid or someone you see... that the doctor would have to say to, “This is terminal. It won’t get any better.” There was Harold! Right there. That emergency ward gets hard at times!
When I first met Louise I was about 28. So, that was 30 years ago and she would have been 50. I was struck by her right away. Oh, yes, as soon as you see the woman, there is something about her that you fall in love with her. Oh she was very--in fact, I thought she was much younger than she was because of her energy. And you can tell right away--why, every night Susie and she would come through the hospital after they left the office--come to the hospital to see how far it was the men got. And I think that's what got the men going so fast that they really worked harder and got things finished so that we were ready to open by July 1st. Now, we'd come here on April 2nd, and the first baby was born here--I can get it for you here in this book we keep. The first baby was born at--July 2, 3:31 on Tuesday. His name was Phillip Robert Perkins, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Perkins of Morehead. Dr. Billie Jo Caudill was the doctor. The new arrival weighed 8 lbs. and 2 1/2 oz.

This book is what we call our annals. We write down all the interesting things. And the first death was Grace Ford, July 14. Dr. Warren Proudfoot was the first surgeon to arrive--August 1. The auxiliary was started on the 16 by Dr. Louise. She was instrumental in that. Now, the auxiliary are all ladies and volunteers and they come and do all kinds of things. Right now the gift shop is closed, but they run the gift shop and then, every month, no two months, they have what they call a memorial service for the families of everybody who has died. And the families come back and it has really been helpful for some families who have been scared to come back into the hospital since their loved one has died there. And then afterwards they have a little luncheon. Some say, "I never want to see that hospital again." Somehow they say that and when they get the invitation, they just get the feeling to go back.

This book is just our records. It just says about our arrival on the 2nd of April. (Reading from the annals) 'Soon thereafter, Dr. Louise and Susie, her faithful nurse, came to welcome us. The ladies of the parish graciously provided one meal a day in our first days. The also provided transportation to and from church.'

Then, it records about the different times that the other sisters came. Oh, the first Sunday after we arrived, Dr. Louise decided we should do something different. She took us over to
Bellefont Hospital and we met the Sisters there. And we knew we had to be back for our 6 o'clock meal and Dr. Louise put her gloves in front of her speedometer so we couldn't see the rate she was going to get us through those hills to get us back for our 6 o'clock evening meal!

The interstate wouldn't have been here then. Oh, no, it was all curves. And here, on July 23, was our dedication--dedication of the building. Monseigner Towell was here, and he went around and did the blessing of the building and they had a copper box that they put different things in it--for a cornerstone. I don't know if they'll ever open that up. Things concerning construction. Credits to people who spearheaded the hospital drive and the opening up--and the parishes who were responsible for opening up the hospital and getting us here. It also contained pictures of Monseigner Towell, our Reverend Mother Sister Borromeo.

Our Reverend Mother is the one in charge throughout the world--like in different countries. She stays in Rome. Right now Sister Mary Joelle, who was the administrator here for 13 years was elected--6 years ago. She is in Rome. She is a tremendous person. I grew up with her. We were in Covington together. When she went to Rome I said to her, "I'm scared you're not coming back." And she said, "Don't be silly." That was the Sunday before she left and a month later she was elected! The thing of it was--she knew German. And the year before that--oh, see, I spent five years in Indonesia--and the year before that I represented the International Congress for Indonesia. I had just come home on a visit and thought I was going back so I was there and everyone was saying she was here as the administrator of the hospital. And she represented the hospital and had to give a talk. And the people--oh, all the Sisters up there--started just loving her and all said what a tremendous person she was. When she gave her talk and brought out the spirituality of the people here in Morehead and how all the churches joined into one. What we do for the people and everything...what she had done. Everybody knew then that the other Superior in Rome was going out and I had that feeling the whole year that we were going to lose her to Rome. And we did.

Sister Joelle was here for 13 years. She was the Administrator. Sister Edwin was the administrator from '63 to 1969. Joelle came in 1969, from Covington, and stayed to 1983. In
1983 she was elected to Rome. It is remarkable that someone from Morehead, Kentucky goes to Rome. Oh, yes, and she will be here for the dedication of the new wing (insert date)- but we don't know when it's going to be. She has to make visitation, every six years, of all the houses. In fact, she was back here about six months ago for the big opening we had-- the ceremonies for all the people who were donating-- for our fund raising. She happened to be down here visiting. We had a party. In fact, you know the Citizen's Bank, where they have that sign? Well, Mr. Hutchinson, well, Joelle is his God I think. He thinks there is nobody like her. And he put up in those bank lights: "WELCOME HOME SISTER MARY JOELLE". It was flashing all day. You just mention that name.

And Sister Mary Edwin, our first administrator, everyone just loved her. She was very motherly. She was much older than Joelle, but still, she just had that motherly touch. And her office was near the emergency room and she'd hear a kid screaming or a family or something-- she'd come out-- she wasn't nursing, and she'd start helping. She was an RN. She is now 92 years old and she visits the old people at our nursing home in St. Charles. Every day. She is up every day at 6 'clock with the Sisters. If you are going to be here July 1st (93), I will invite you to our 30th anniversary. All the sisters are coming back. Up at the outreach building we are going to have an afternoon party.

The other first sisters were Sister Thomasina and Sister Mary Edwin. Sister Mary Thomasina passed away suddenly. She was here 22 years. She had myasthenia gravis-- a lung disease. To this day people talk fondly about Thomasina. Her energy, her enthusiasm-- she wrote all the policies of the hospital. She started the Morehead Nursing Program and wrote all the initial books and everything for them-- all the nursing care plans and the procedure book. Her big thing was the procedure book. They might have revised it, but I'll bet they're still using that. But the initial one is still up there.

Well, when I came back from Indonesia, Sister Joelle said, "Would you like to go back to Morehead? They need somebody real bad in the emergency room." I said, "Yes, I love the emergency room." If I had by pick between OB GYN, surgery and the emergency room, I'd have
a hard time because the first ten years I worked strictly surgery. But when I wasn't busy there, I'd always help out with OB and the emergency room. But, any time there was surgery I was there.

Louise assisted in surgery a lot, but not surgery itself. She had enough to do with her babies and all. But, at first, Dr. Proudfoot needed somebody so she did quite a bit of assisting. Especially on the c-sections that were her patients. All doctors did at first. Two doctors have to be present, you know, for an operation. She would assist; they would all assist. But Dr. Louise was there I think more than anybody.

Dr. Proudfoot was remarkable also. Yes, he was. He was a very dedicated man. But, Louise Caudill is a very outstanding and dedicated person. She is constantly giving of self to everybody else. It's true that from her own home in her office--well, it wasn't until we got a hospital that she even got her own home--she wanted to be right there for everybody. I have never seen Dr. Louise angry or upset. She always knows how to keep her cool. I don't think she's got any anger in her at all. Maybe she works out her frustrations after she goes home--on the tennis court and in the swimming pool. But always, no matter what situation she would be in--there's just this calm little lady. She is charitable, loving, kind--she has all the virtues you would want. Any virtue there is, you'll find in her. The qualities that Louise has--well, you hope that the people working with her would have picked up some of her qualities, but nobody stayed here long enough to do it, most probably, except Susie.

I think the male doctors look up to her. They respect her a lot because they know she has been here so long and what she doesn't know isn't worth knowing. Or, she admits, she knows where to find it. Like Dr. Proudfoot said once, "An intern saw I was looking up something in a book once and the intern said, 'That's stupid, what are you looking in a book for?'" And Dr. Proudfoot said, "A smart person is not one that knows all the answers, but knows where to find them." I'd rather see you look it up and know it rather than flub up!

I'm in charge of all the nurses on evenings. My first five years, it was six days a week. But then, when I hit fifty-five, they decided I could ease off. But when I came back I asked, "What do you do with a day off?" See, we lived in the hospital and we had our laundry done and we had
our cooking done, so what did you do? Well, now I do cleaning. I do a lot of sewing. I do a lot of needlework, make scarves and sweaters. I wax the car. I do volunteer service with Christian Services. I try to go once a month-- at the Baptist Church I go once a month.

And people have confidence in the hospital now. It makes me feel good when they (the local people) say, "This is our hospital. No way do I want to go down the road for anything. This is my hospital, I worked for it, or my mother worked here." There's too many strings tied to it now. You heard about our National award didn't you? That was won over I forget how many hundreds of hospitals. I forget how many, but up in the hundreds. Maybe close to 700 hospitals were up for this. (Check year and award title)

They say that when I'm 93 they'll be pushing me around the emergency room. Well, let me tell you, in 33 years of nursing, I've coughed one time! I think the secret is just eating proper- - no junk food-- and getting rest. They think I'm there night and day. Like, on my days that I work, (well, last night I was off so I got to bed at 9:00). Usually, I get to bed before 1:00 a.m. and I get up at 6:00 a.m., so I can pray and have Mass with the Sisters, in the hospital. Then I come home here at about 5 minutes to 8:00. Then I pray from 8 to 9 because I don't like to rest on a full stomach. Then from 9:00 until around 11:00 I take a nap, then I get up and do-- like I do the laundry but I don't do any strenuous activity on the day I work. And then after dinner I have an hour's prayer with the Sisters-- they usually pray from 5 to 6. Then after that I have knitting at the hospital. I work on a scarf or a sweater or I teach knitting or sewing. Different ones bring in their things. I lay out a pattern on a table in the cafeteria and show them how to baste and stuff.

Then at 2:30 I go into the emergency room. Or, they call me back too, and I take ambulance rides to Lexington. Like if they've got a bad heart or heart attack, or a bad OB or head trauma, we don't have any trauma here. I will take them. Or, come in for another nurse who is sick or somebody who has to go home early because they have a sick kid. I'll come into work a little early.

I think I have a wonderful life. I feel like I've got a lot to be grateful for to our Lord. I thank Him every night. I thank Him every night coming home. It's unreal sometimes when something
will happen and I'll catch it. And I'll think, why did I catch that? How could that be? Or like a lady came in who seems to have no veins and I'll try it and hit it. They called me, a doctor did, to the nursery the other day and said, "We've got to send this baby down the road if we don't get an IV in her and everybody stuck it." I tried once and got it-- and said, "Thank you Lord."

Yes, it has to be from heaven. And I never, oh, I gave a little talk in chapel to our practical nurses at graduation. And I said, "Now in these days of lawsuits, you can't be doing sloppy nursing." I said that. "When you're getting ready to go to work, tell our Lord, 'C'mon, you have to go with me.' And on the way to work, you say 'Dear Lord, please be at my side, come to my assistance.' When you're there, concentrate, but at times you can call Him to come and help you. There are times I'll say, 'Blessed Mother, if this was your baby, you would want me to help it. Be at my side!'" And I said, "Then on the way home, tell Him those wonderful words we all like to hear, 'Thank you.' Say it!! If you thank somebody, they are more easily coming to your assistance the next time." I say, there He is and if you thank Him, he'll be there again. And that's the way I feel. He's been at my side!

Also, I think the patient having confidence in their doctor causes healing. I think that's 99 percent of it. To me, yes, a lot of it is personal. You can go to a doctor and get pills and don't have any confidence. And like they say, ulcer disease, heart disease, all that-- nerves. The majority of illnesses can be linked back to-- just self control and that. Then you go back to your doctor and have confidence in them and know "I'm going to be healed"-- why, they won't even have to give you medicine. Just getting their confidence and talking to them, and calming them down, like psychiatrists. Even though they give a lot of pills, they do a lot of talking and convincing people.

I think touching has got a lot to do with healing. Look at the babies that they tested. There was a study; there were about 5 babies that they didn't pick up, didn't do anything to but fed them and diapered them. The others they picked up and talked to and loved and everything. And these babies, over here in the orphanage were retarded-- well, not exactly retarded but
slow learners. They were not progressing the same as the other babies. So, I think touching
has a great deal to do with it.

One thing I got from Louise, mostly, was her cool and collected way about doing things.
Like I say to the nurses, if someone is scared and looks up and sees you are scared-- but her
calm, no matter what went on-- Dr. Louise was always calm and kept her composure.

And I always thought, when my first auto wreck that came in, I thought-- oh, I was almost
up on the ceiling. And she would come in so calm and just start doing things. And I often
thought, oh, I'd like to be like her. Apparently it has rubbed off because our nurses will say to
me, "How do you stay so calm and cool and collected?" And I'll say, "Hey, if I'm a sick person
and I see a frightened person-- well it's going to make things all worse." Especially children. So
you have to stay calm and collected and I think that's one great virtue-- or tribute. I've really
copied that off of Dr. Louise. Mostly I observed it but I did say it to her, way in the beginning
when we'd had a couple of bad things and she was here.

I remember, especially the day of our bus wreck, when we had 64 people come in. That
was May 7. May 7, 1940. School bus tragedy. Near 8:30 a.m. on Ascension day, the sound of
horns came close to our medical center as cars and trucks drove to our emergency entrance.
These vehicles brought the victims of a near tragic school bus accident. The bus had been side­
swiped by a truck, a coal truck, and the driver lost control of the bus and it fell over a 40 foot
embankment.

Do you know that hill as you go out on 32? Just after the shopping center and there's a
lumber yard. It went over sideways down there. (reading from annals) 'There were 62 students
on the bus. The following article from the Morehead News tells how St. Claire Medical Center
responded quickly in the emergency room. 'St. Claire reacted to what could have been a major
disaster in the Morehead area which is described this week by Sister Mary Edwin, the
administrator of the one year old institute.' This is her report-- a whole page long.

Yes, yes, I was there. We were ready to start surgery at 8:00 a.m. when the police called
and said, "They are calling out everybody to help because there is a school bus overturned." Dr.
Proudfoot told me to go to the emergency room and start seeing what I could get ready. Then he woke his patient up and told her she would not have surgery because of this. And the lady was very nice.

(Reading) 'Dr. Louise Caudill and Dr. Proudfoot examined patients in the emergency room entrance hall as to the extent of the injury. Those with minor cuts and injuries were taken to the consultation clinic where four surgical teams were set up for the injured students who could move more quickly. Those that were more serious were treated in the emergency room, the operating room and six children were sent to Lexington. They had open fractures--the bones were sticking out of their legs and their arms. Mrs. Laughlin got the auxiliary over here. She blocked the doors and only called parents in one at a time. Because the lobby and the halls were filled with 62 children lying all over. By noon, everybody was taken care of, initially. The initial things and then all small lacerations were sutured.'

Some went to Lexington by private cars and some by what we called "black ambulance service" (the hearse). It would be just about a two hour ride. The auxiliary did a tremendous job in trying to keep everybody down and calm. All the children survived. The most striking thing was the bus driver sat out there hurting--you could just see he was in pain--but he would not let us touch him until every child was taken care of. The doctors all closed their offices in town and came out with their nurses. It was Dr. Louise, Dr. Billie Jo Caudill, Dr. Barber, and Dr. Hudnut was probably here at that time. We had about 6 or 7 doctors. And Dr. Porter by that time.

We've had nothing like that since then.

Oh, I'm going to keep on nursing now! As long as I feel as great as I do--I'll be in that emergency room!
INTERVIEW WITH SISTER JEAN FRANCIS.
Morehead, Kentucky
June 11, 1993. With Shirley Gish in the Convent on Flemingsburg Road.

1. Would you tell me that story again?

Sr. We cannot turn down any poor patients because we were originally founded in the middle of the eighteenth century. These two rich girls were refused to go to school because their poor friends couldn't go with them. So, then they decided that they would go ahead and go so that they could be educated. But when they were finished, they would start a school for the poor. So, they got a home and started a school taking in the poor children, educating them, teaching them everything imaginable; a lot of domestic work in the house—sewing and cooking and that—. And, teaching them how to write—read and write—. Then a priest came along and said, "Hey, you are living the religious life, why don't you think about taking the vows?" They decided to go ahead and they got three of the French Notre Dames to come over and live with them and tell them more about religious life. By that, three more joined them. And, after several years, the French Notre Dames went back because they started this school in Germany. We're considered for the poor Germans but in the time of Hitler—there was a community over here—and Hitler was exiling all the sisters from Germany. And they said, why don't you come over here. There's plenty for you to do in America. They arrived on July 4. They heard all the firecrackers and thought at first that that was for their coming! Then, they stayed in New York for a little while. Then they had a priest from Covington say, "Hey, there's a lot of work to be done out here in Covington. Come on down."

That's how we got started down here. Then about 1950 there was a hospital in Lynch Kentucky that nobody was running. It's down on the borderline, near Martin, KY, in that end. It's right on the Tennessee border I think. So our sisters, we had several nurses, they went down there and took over the Lynch Hospital. But then Danville built a great big new community hospital and the mines were closing in Lynch. And it was 1960 and they said, well, that will be fine, we can go back.

At that time Dr. Louise Caudill decided to go around—she was sending letters to just everybody— to start a hospital down here. And the equipment in the hospital we were just going to move up to give away or do anything with—from Lynch. But we had a lot of it and we were packing up at the time. But Dr. Louise sent a letter to Bishop Towell. He was in charge of the Catholic Hospital Association of Northern Kentucky and the area. And he thought—oh, he got this letter from this little Morehead Kentucky and thought, "No way could conditions be like she says they are." So, unannounced...

1. Excuse me— but what did she say the conditions were?

Sr. They must have been very poor and she needed a lot of help. She was working day and night and just needed somebody else and she wanted a hospital so that the poor people didn't have to go so far. Being so sick, she either had to send them to Lexington and to Ashland and she said that many of the people were so sick that they...
almost died on the way—or did die on the way because they didn't make it. There were bad roads and everything. So, he thought, oh, conditions can't be like that. So he came to Morehead unannounced with his secretary and just walked into her office. And that morning, the way I understood, and he said he'll never know where she got 4 babies (others say 5) but there she had just delivered 4 babies. And he said when he saw those babies reaching up to him—no way could he say no. So then he knew our hospital was closing so then he came back to Sister Mary Borromeo who was our provincial superior. And he said look, I've got a good deal for you. He said, you've got nurses, you've got equipment. He said, and they want to build a hospital. So they decided to come down and see too. and when Sister Borromeo met Dr. Louise—she just fell in love with her too and just thought that we would enjoy working in the area. So that's really how we got to Morehead. And then with our community and with the community here doing fund raising and that—and they got the Hill Burton money and we were able to start the hospital. And then Sister Mary Edwin who was administrator in Lynch, came down here and Sister Mary Thomasina—those were the first two who really did the administrative work. Now, I came down with them and opened the hospital. But, I was just a practical nurse at the time and I did, more or less, all the cleaning and the unpacking and the setting up. Then Thomasina started an aides class—and then the aides came and helped us make the beds, put up the curtains and the bed curtains and all that. So then it was a real joy. And then like, Dr. Louise—well, we didn't know her too well, but the day we came. They said the hospital was finished April 2.

1. You didn't come 'til the building was up?

Sr. Yes, the building was up—but it was far from being finished. At first we lived in the upstairs—but we had no food—no way to cook food. We lived in the upper corner of the hospital and we had sandwiches—the corner that you first see as you come to the light. And Dr. Louise found out that the kitchen was far from being ready—we had a little electric hot plate for coffee and soup. There were four of us. And she arranged, somehow, in the community, that every night they brought us a good hot meal at night. So, for two or three weeks we would go down to the door at 6 o'clock and there was a good hot meal. Yes, because she noticed. Oh, the first morning we ate breakfast down in her little two by four kitchen. In her Main Street office in the back. See, they slept there, they delivered there and everything. At that time she quit delivery out in the country—going out—she built the office and started delivering down there—so the first morning she invited us down there. We had a really good time. Then, during the week, progressively—trucks started coming and delivering things but they were all Union people and we didn't know anybody in the town to help. So, I was the youngest and then Thomasina—I was twenty-eight at that time—and Thomasina was there and I would get up in the truck and hand all of the things off while the men sat on the wall. Well, Dr. Louise heard that and she got two men (Beamis...? I think was one) to come and start helping us. And then started helping us clean and we got all that—like all the initial scrubbing and the washing of the windows. Now the contractors job was part of it but it wasn't as spic and span as we wanted. And that was my first encounter with Dr. Louise. She was here it seemed like—day and night delivering babies—she'd be here in the mornings just as spry as you please. Well, at that time was the time she started
Building her house—to move out of the office. Immediately, they started. That’s when they moved. It didn’t take them too long to move out of the office—to get some privacy.

Susie was right there. Anytime. When you call Dr. Louise you don’t ask for Dr. Louise—Susie answers the phone and Susie was the one—she sort of protected Dr. Louise, but I’d take Susie’s orders just the same. You know if you are hearing from Susie, you are hearing from Dr. Louise. That’s how closely associated they were.

1. Just before you came here, then, you were a nurses aide?

Sr. No, I was a LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse). Now I’m an RN. And my first 10 years I worked in surgery. And the Emergency Room… I was working here and went back to UK and got my degree from there. We’d stay over there from Monday until Friday morning and then Friday morning we came back here and worked the weekend. It was Sister Roseanna that was with me. The two of us.

1. What did you think when you first saw Morehead?

Sr. Here, it was really amazing because most of the people had never encountered religious—and as I say, Sister Claire and I were the two who always went out.

1. Was that when you still wore the habit?

Sr. Oh yes. That’s when we wore the frills all around (the face)... Oh, yes. Black and white. ruffles. You can see our pictures in the outreach building. And people, we heard, in fact we even had to go to the laundry mat and down at the laundry mat the man actually took our money and turned it on both sides. They thought that they weren’t going to be able to trust us. And we went to the stores and we heard, “Be careful—they are like gypsies—they have big skirts!” “They can pick up anything.” We didn’t hear until later—we heard somebody following us through the store.

1. How did that make you feel? Or, were you used to it?

Sr. Oh, we weren’t used to it but we just took it as a joke and we knew we had to win over their confidence and prove to them that we were here to help and to start up a hospital. It didn’t take long at all. You know, when the people really started coming in—You know, like the little neighborhood kids in the back—in the backyard, the Ravenscraft kids and Skipper Holling and the kids from Allen Drive, they came over. They would come under the window—they’d see a light at night and they’d call out “Can you come and play?” And we’d go out and toss a ball with them. So, we’d go out and play with the kids and that. During the day we’d be busy working. But they knew our corner light, like our recreation room, would be there. Then, like Skipper Holly (name?) was our first bad burn case.

1. What happened?
Sr. At the end of Allen Drive, there was a sand pile with a light on top. He was sitting there and a kid happened to knock that and then the sand with the gasoline on him. He was burned pretty bad. We got to know that family very well. Jack Carter, sheriff, it was his nephew. And they were here quite a while. And Skipper gave me a football for Christmas! And then—well, they knew they weren't supposed to play in the creek, so Barbara Allen... Well, they paged me here one day and I came down and Skipper wanted a needle and thread and a band-aid. I said, Skipper, now what do you want this for? Here they were in that creek played and Barbara Allen had cut her foot. They wanted to sew it up—fix it before they took her home. Four and five year old kids! So we had to call Mrs. Allen to come over so doctor could sew up this foot. So we had a good time. I think that's more or less how it was—we won over the children, won the families over. The people in the town weren't rude or cruel. They were just real skeptical of us, I think. What are they up to? What are they going to do? And we also heard about—oh, we had so many Catholics signing into the hospital—we had heard that there were only a few here (in Morehead). And here we heard many—and we heard that people thought that they had to be Catholic to get in (into the hospital). So, they were all saying they were Catholic.

I. You mean, there was a form to fill out?

Sr. Yes, like they say in the form—religious preference... Some have no preference, some say Protestant, some say Church of God—that is on any form anywhere in any hospital. It's so you can get their ministers.

I. But they thought it was for Catholics.

Sr. Yes, they thought we would only take care of Catholics. Well, see, they had really not known.

I. Yes, Susie said that the Catholic population was so small they met in a garage.

Sr. Yes, it was a little garage in back of Mrs. Ford's house. And there was a priest there and we had mass every day. We always had it in the chapel (hospital) during the week and then met there on Sunday. But, people come to Mass every day now. We usually have about 15. Some of our doctors and employees.

I. So, a Catholic hospital in a Protestant town was not a huge problem?

Sr. Then the ministers started coming. We started having ministers on call.

I. So, what about Morehead itself? What did you think of Morehead? It must have been very very different back then.

Sr. Yes, it was. Coming from Cincinnati and Covington to just one street. See, the shopping centers weren't there. Now there's something like between 35 and 40 restaurants. At that time there was one—down on Main Street—that was the Eagle's
Nest. We didn't go there. We didn't eat out at that time. But every once in a while we'd take a little walk and the people would start— in the evenings sometimes— and the people would come out and talk to us. They'd want to know how far it is (the hospital). Are you really going to open on July first?

I. Were you still in habit then?

Sr. Oh yes. We only went out of habit in 1968.

I. It must have been hard to nurse in all of that.

Sr. You really didn't think of it. Now you wonder how you scrubbed floors in that.

I. I've wondered about that since trying to get around in those dresses in Cinderella.

Sr. They didn't have as much material as that but they were quite full.

I. So the town people were pretty friendly? Glad to have a hospital?

Sr. Oh, yes. And the ministers... I don't know now what we would do without them. And, you know, we don't think of them as being another spiritual denomination. You just think of them as all being like one... spiritual help. And sometimes a patient will say— like in the emergency room— do you have a minister or something. We'll say yes and they'll say but I'm not Catholic. We say it doesn't matter because we call them all here. And, like Harold Tackett— he is Dr. Louise's pastor— in charge of their church. I think you would love that guy to death. He is just tremendous. See, when he took his pastoral care— you have to take so many hours and he took two or three semesters toward pastoral care. You don't have to take them, but you can. Even though he's a minister, he really wouldn't have to. But he took that and then he took his volunteer hours in the emergency room. He was there for several evenings, from about 7 to 10. Oh, I missed him so when he wasn't there. He would make up stretchers and be around to take patients in and out and call relatives. He'd take patients to the floor or go over in x-ray and check them just to see how they're doing. They were simple things, but still, it was something that I would have had to be doing. Really, like a real upset mother with a real sick kid or someone you see... that the doctor would have to say, this is terminal, it won't get any better. There was Harold, right there. That emergency ward gets hard at times. Years ago, Shirley, everything you did people were grateful for. But now, you'd be surprised how many people— like the drug seekers— years ago you didn't have as many drug seekers, you didn't have as many drunks. You can tell. They run out of drugs and want more. They complain of back pain and kidney pain— those are the two things... think will get them. You can see them when they walk in and oh, oh, this is a seeker. And we've got a couple of names we've gotten from other hospitals— we usually call the outlying hospitals around here and get names if it's a drug seeker. And the drunks, oh, occasionally we'd get them on a weekend, now they are every day, all through the day. You can get drunk at 10 in the morning, 9 in the morning. It's just unreal.
I. Why do they land in the emergency room?

Sr. They either fall or get cut or they have automobile wreck—broken arms and things that need to be fixed. So, neighbors or the police pick them up or the families send them in to be fixed up. If they are too drunk and obnoxious we send them to the jail until they sober up because we're not going to get hurt with them sling at us and kicking us.

I. Well, when you first met Louise you said you were 28...

Sr. So, that was 30 years ago and she would have been 50.

I. Were struck by her right away?

Sr. Oh, yes, as soon as you see the woman, there is something about her that you fall in love with her.

I. She would have looked different then...

Sr. Oh she was very—in fact. I thought she was much younger than she was because of her energy. And you can tell right away—why, every night Susie and she would come through the hospital after they left the office—come to the hospital to see how far it was the men got. And I think that's what got the men going so fast that they really worked harder and got things finished so that we were ready to open by July 1. We'd come there on April 2.

I. When they opened what happened?

Sr. See, they wanted—well, Mrs. Ford was the one who donated the property—she was the one where the church was in her garage and she was Catholic. They wanted to admit her and have her as the first patient. But she was going down so fast that they didn't want her to be the first patient and then have the first patient die. So they put somebody in ahead of her. And then Mrs. Ford did die on July 14, in the hospital. She didn't exactly realize that she wasn't the first patient—we didn't exactly tell her she wasn't. She came in later that afternoon and our other patient came at 10 or 11 o'clock. She had pneumonia. She was alert at first but was going down rapidly.

I. Do you know when the first baby was born?

Sr. I can get it for you here. The first baby was born at—July 2, 3:31 on Tuesday. His name was Phillip Robert Perkins, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Perkins of Morehead. Dr. Billie Jo Caudill was the doctor. The new arrival weighed 8 pounds and 2 1/2 oz.

I. What is that book?

Sr. This is what we call our annals. We write down all the interesting things. And the first death was Grace Ford, July 14. Dr. Warren Proudfoot was the first surgeon to
arrive—August 1. The auxiliary was started on the 16 (Aug. 16?) by Dr. Louise. She was instrumental in that. Now they are all ladies and all volunteers and they come and do all kinds of things. Right now the gift shop is closed, but they run the gift shop and then, every month, no two months, they have what they call a memorial service for the families of everybody who has died. And the families come back and it has really been helpful for some families who have been scared to come back into the hospital since their loved one has died there. And then afterwards they have a little luncheon.

1. Yes, I've been to one of those. My friend's husband had died and she said just that— I never want to see that hospital again.

Sr. Somehow they say that when they get the invitation, they just get the feeling to go back. This is just our records. It just says about our arrival on the 2nd. (Reading from the annals) Soon thereafter Dr. Louise and Susie, her faithful nurse came to welcome us. The ladies of the parish graciously provided one meal a day in our first days. They also provided transportation to and from church.

Then it's about the different times that the other sisters came. Oh, the first Sunday after we arrived, Dr. Louise decided we should do something different. She took us to Bellefont Hospital and we met the Sisters there. And we knew we had to be back for our 6 o'clock meal and Dr. Louise put her glasses in front of her speedometer so we couldn't see the rate she was going to get us through those hills to get us back for our 6 o'clock evening meal.

1. Oh, right, the interstate wouldn't have been there then.

Sr. Oh, no, it was all curves. And here, on July 23 was our dedication—dedication of the building. Monseigneur Towell was he—who initiated—and he went around and did the blessing of the building and they had a copper box that they put different things in it—for a cornerstone. I don't know if they'll ever open that up.

1. Do you know what was in it?

Sr. Things concerning construction. Credits to people who spearheaded and the opening up—and the parishes who were responsible for opening up the hospital and getting us here. It also contained pictures of Monseigneur Towell, our Reverend Mother Sister Borromeo. Our Reverend Mother is the one in charge throughout the world—like in different countries. She stays in Rome. Right now Sister Mary Joelle, who was the administrator here for 13 years was elected—6 years ago. She is in Rome. She is a tremendous person. I grew up with her.

1. Grew up with—like from childhood?

Sr. Yes. We were in Covington together. When she went to Rome I said to her, "I'm scared you're not coming back." And she said, "Don't be silly." That was the Sunday before she left and a month later she was elected. The thing of it was—she knew
Gerr
And the year before that—oh, see. I spent five years in Indonesia. And the year before that I represented the International Congree for Indonesia. I had just come home on a visit and thought I was going back so I was there and everyone was saying she was here as the administrator of the hospital. And she represented the hospital and had to give a talk. And the people—oh, all the Sisters up there—started just loving her and all said what a tremendous person she was. When she gave her talk and brought out the spirituality of the people here and how all the churches joined into one. What we do for the people and everything... What she had done. Everybody knew then that the other Superior was going out and I had that feeling the whole year that we were going to lose her. And we did.

1. And how long again was she at this hospital?

Sr. For 13 years. She was the Administrator. Sister Edwin was the administrator from 63 to 1969. Joelle came in 1969—from Covington—and stayed to 1983. In 1983 she was elected to Rome.

1. It is remarkable that someone from Morehead, Kentucky goes to Rome!

Sr. Well, she did.

1. Does she write—still keep tabs on this hospital?

Sr. Oh, yes, she would be here for dedication of the new wing—but we don’t know when it’s going to be. She has to make visitation every six years of all the houses. In fact, she was back here about six months big opening we had—the ceremonies for all the people who were donating—for our fund raising. She happened to be down here visiting. We had a party. In fact, you know the Citizen’s Bank—where they have that thing? Well, Mr. Hutchinson, well, Joelle is his God! He thinks there is nobody like her. And he put in those bank lights. “WELCOME HOME SISTER MARY JOELLE” it was flashing all day. You just mention that name. And Sister Mary Edwin, our first administrator. Everyone just loved her. She was very motherly. She was much older than Joelle, but still, she just had that motherly touch. And her office was near the emergency room and she’d hear a kid screaming or a family or something—she’d come out—she wasn’t nursing, and she’d start helping. She was an RN. She is now 92 years old and she visits the old people at our nursing home in St. Charles. Every day. She is up every day at 6 o’clock with the Sisters. Are you going to be here July 1st?

1. I’ll be in New Mexico.

Sr. I would invite you to our 30th anniversary. All the sisters are coming back. Up at the outreach building we are going to have an afternoon party.

1. Thank you, it’s nice to be invited.

Sr. Yes. I spent two days last week going through all our employees. Picking out all the
ones who aren't working now— from the beginning of the hospital and we're inviting all of them back.

1. Oh, what were the names of the other two— who were the first?

Sr. Sister Thomasina and Sister Mary Edwin. Sister Mary Thomasina passed away suddenly. She was here 22 years. She had myasthenia gravis– a lung disease. To this day people talk fondly about Thomasina. Her energy, her enthusiasm– she wrote all the policies of the hospital. She started the Morehead Nursing Program and wrote all the initial books and everything for them— all the nursing care plans and the procedure book. Her big thing was the procedure book. They might have revised it, but I'll bet they're still using that. But the initial one is still up there.

1. So, when you are sent somewhere— I mean, you were sent here, you didn't choose to come here.

Sr. Yes, at that time. But now you more or less have a dialog with your superior.

1. What if you don't want to be here— can you ask to go?

Sr. Oh, yes. I can say that I feel I have expended my time here— or, I feel like I just can't do anymore. And then she'll say— what do you think you can do? Or, do you want to go part time, or anything like that. Superiors nowadays do dialog with you for your job.

1. You seem so young and happy and yet you must see the worst side of life. Are you always in the emergency room?

Sr. Well, when I came back, Sister Joell said would you like to go back to Morehead, they need somebody real bad in the emergency room. I said yes. I love the emergency room. If I had my pick between OB GYN, surgery, and the emergency room I'd have a hard time because the first ten years I worked strictly surgery. But when I wasn't busy there, I'd always help out with OB and the emergency room. But, any time there was surgery I was there.

1. Did Louise do surgery?

Sr. She assisted in surgery a lot, but not surgery itself, no. She had enough to do with her babies and all. But, at first, Dr. Proudfoot needed somebody so she did quite a bit of assisting. Especially on the c-sections that were her patients. All doctors did at first. Two doctors have to be present you know, for an operation. She would, they would all assist. But Dr. Louise was there I think more than anybody.

1. I understand that Dr. Proudfoot was remarkable also.

Sr. Yes, he was. He was a very dedicated man.
I. If you were explaining to someone far away from here—how would you explain Louise Caudill?

Sr. A very outstanding and dedicated person. She is constantly giving of self to everybody else. It's true that from her own office—well, it wasn't until we got a hospital that she even got her own home. She wanted to be right there for everybody. I have never seen Dr. Louise angry or upset. She always knows how to keep her cool. I don't think she's got any anger in her at all. Maybe she works out her frustrations after she goes home—on the tennis court and in the swimming pool. But always, no matter what situation she would be in—there's just this calm little lady. She is charitable, loving, kind—she has all the virtues you would want. Any virtue there is, you'll find in her.

I. How did the male doctors treat her?

Sr. I think they look up to her. They respect her a lot because they know she has been here so long and what she doesn't know isn't worth knowing. Or, she admits, she knows where to find it. Like Dr. Proudfoot said once, an intern was looking in a book once, I was looking up in a book once and an intern said, "That's stupid, what are you looking in a book for?" And Dr. Proudfoot said, "A smart person is not one that knows all the answers, but knows where to find them." I'd rather see you look it up and know it rather than flub up.

I. Are you director of all the nurses?

Sr. I'm in charge of all the nurses on evenings, yes.

I. Does that mean everyone comes to you if they have a problem or don't know what to do?

Sr. Yes. I'm on evenings.

I. But you were there when I was and that was afternoon.

Sr. I come in at 3:00—2:30 and usually around 12:30 when I leave. Five days a week. My first five years, it was six days a week. But then, when I hit fifty-five, they decided I could ease off. But when I came back I said, what do you do with a day off?

I. You probably don't know.

Sr. See, we lived in the hospital and we had our laundry done and we had our cooking done, so what did you do?

I. I don't know, what did you do?

Sr. Well, now I do cleaning. I do a lot of sewing, I do a lot of needle, make scarves and sweaters. I wax the car. I do volunteer service, Christian Services I try to go once a
month— at the Baptist Church I go once a month.

1. What do you think will happen to people when Louise retires?

Sr. Well, someone might take over her practice or we'll get another doctor but— just the same— it still won't be her. And people have confidence in the hospital now. It makes me feel good when they (the local people) say, this is our hospital— no way do I want to go down the road for anything. This is my hospital; I worked for it, or my mother worked here. There's too many strings tied to it now.

1. And it IS a good hospital.

Sr. Yes. You heard about our National award didn't you? That was won over I forget how many hundreds of hospitals. I forget how many, but up in the hundreds. Maybe close to 700 hospitals were up for this.

1. So you are really proud to be where you are.

Sr. They say that when I'm 93 they'll be pushing me around the emergency room.

1. Oh, who do you go to as a doctor? Or, don't you get sick.

Sr. Well, let me tell you, in 33 years of nursing, I've coughed one time.

1. What is your secret?

Sr. I think it's just eating proper— no junk food— and getting rest. They think I'm there night and day. Like, on my days that I work, (well, last night I was off so I got to bed at 9:00) Usually I get to bed before 1:00 and I get up at 6:00 a.m. so I can pray and have Mass with the Sisters, in the hospital. Then I come home here at about 5 minutes to 8:00. Then I pray from 8 to 9 because I don't like to rest on a full stomach. Then from 9:00 until around 11:00 I take a nap, then I get up and do— like I do the laundry but I don't do any strenuous activity on the day I work.

1. You must need all your energy because you are confronted with— either nothing or it could be just awful.

Sr. Yes. And then after dinner I have an hour's prayer with the Sisters— they usually pray from 5 to 6. Then after that I have knitting at the hospital. I work on a scarf or a sweater or I teach knitting or sewing. Different ones bring in their things. I lay out a pattern on the table in the cafeteria and show them how to baste and stuff. Then at 2:30... or, I read. Then at 2:30 I go into the emergency room.

Or, they call me back and I take ambulance rides to Lexington— like if they've got a bad heart or heart attack or a bad OB or a head trauma— we don't have any trauma here.
will take them. Or, come in for another nurse who is sick or somebody who has to go home early because they have a sick kid. I'll come into work a little early.

I. So, you have a wonderful life.

Sr. I think I have. I feel like I've got a lot to be grateful for to our Lord. I thank him every night. I thank him every night coming home. It's unreal sometimes when something will happen and I'll catch it. And I'll think, why did I catch that? How could that be? Or like a lady came in who seems to have no veins and I'll try it and hit it. They called me a doctor to the nursery the other day and said, we've got to send this baby down the road if we don't get an IV in her and everybody stuck it. I tried once and got it-- and said, thank you Lord.

I. Is that a feeling like, I'm not really doing this...?

Sr. Yes, it has to be from heaven. And I never, oh, I gave a little talk in chapel to our practical nurses at graduation. And I said, now in these days of lawsuits, you can't be sloppy nursing. I said that. when you're getting ready to go to work, tell our Lord, c'mon, you have to go with me. And on the way to work you say, Dear Lord, please be at my side, come to my assistance. When you're there, concentrate, but at times you can call Him to come and help you. There are times I'll say, blessed Mother, if this was your baby, you would want me to help it. Be at my side! And I said, then on the way home, tell Him those wonderful words we all like to hear-- thank you. Say it!! If you thank somebody, they are more easily coming to your assistance the next time. I say, there. He is and if you thank Him, He'll be there again. And that's the way I feel. He's been at my side.

I. Do you ever pray for plays? Why me? I don't live here. I'm a Yankee.

Sr. Let me tell you about a Yankee. We had these people come from New York-- they are Yankees, aren't they? OK. They had no children and they were married almost 10 years. And they were transferred here and they lived next to Dr. Louise out there. They were told, go to Kentucky, everybody gets pregnant down there! They were here a couple of months and she got pregnant. She delivered twin girls-- Elizabeth and Ann. They were preemies. She delivered those on February 9 and a year later she had one big boy on February 10. Her parents came from California and they were both violinists and brought them little violins to start them out. They brought them back about 7 or 8 years ago to show them where they were born and to meet Dr. Louise. Now, if you could bring that in... Glory Hill... the house is right out there someplace because they lived right next to Louise.

I. Finally, do you think that the qualities that Louise has-- if these are so rare, and they shouldn't be so rare, how can we get more people like her?

Sr. Well, you hope that the people working with her would have picked up some of her qualities. But nobody stayed around long enough to do it. Most probably, except Susie.
And who knows what's going to happen with Susie.

I. You can't imagine one without the other. I just have a few final questions. You have seen many other doctors, how does she fit in— but I guess you've told me that.

What do you think causes healing?

Sr. The patient having confidence in your doctor. I think that's 99 percent of it.

I. So, it's really personal?

Sr. To me, yes. A lot of it is personal. You can go to a doctor and get pills and don't have any confidence. And like they say, ulcer disease, heart disease, all that— nerves. The majority of illnesses can be linked back to— just self control and that. Then you go back to your doctor and have confidence in them and know— I'm going to be healed— why, they won't even have to give you medicine. Just getting their confidence and talking to them, and calming them down like psychiatrists— even thought they get a lot of pills, they do a lot of talking and convincing people.

I. What about touching? Like the church healers who actually touch you— put hands on. Do you think touching has got a lot to do with healing?

Sr. I think it does. Look at the babies that they tested. There was a study; there were about 5 babies that they didn't pick up, didn't do anything to but fed them and diapered them. The others they picked up and talked to and loved and everything. And these babies, over here in the orphanage were retarded— well, not exactly retarded but slow learners. They were not progressing the same as the other babies. So, I think touching has a great deal to do with it.

I. Aren't you in sort of a bind now, and I've talked to Louise about it. that people are so quick to jump with law suits?

Well, what are the big changes that you've seen in medicine since this hospital started? Advances? Changes? You've said people have gotten meaner or more demanding.

Sr. Yes, I would say that people are more demanding. And the thing of it is that I think we're teaching our younger generation to run to the hospital for everything— to the doctor for everything. When we were growing up— well, my first doctor that I'd ever seen, I was 18 years old. We had a doctor friend, their kids went to our school and they were at our farm, so I knew doctors existed. But what they were really for and what they really did, I exactly didn't have much idea. One time I remember, my brother hurt his knee and he came and two boys held him down and they opened that knee. I went running out and said, I'll never be a nurse. But I guess that that is part of it. The younger generation they think that— well, you have to have immunization shots and everything so they get so accustomed to constantly going to the doctor— they think you run to the doctor with everything.
I. Do you think that that's what's pushing medical services to high, into such a bad spot?

Sr. Yes, it could be. And I hate to say this, but our younger doctors... well, Dr. Louise could look at a patient, take a history and say, OK, it's your gall bladder. Nowadays they can't do anything until they have all their lab work. They have to do an acute abdominal series, they have to do ultrasound and then, oh, you've got gall bladder disease. Now, when a kid walks in the door bent over holding his right side, I say, he's got acute appendicitis-- you know, if you put them on the scale, they draw up their leg. You turn them over they pull up their legs. Years ago we went by that. Maybe we got a CBC, yes, then the white count is down. Nowadays they do two and a half hours of lab work.

I. ... which costs 8 or nine thousand dollars.

Sr. Yes, you can do a whole series on a little kid like this and he's still got appendicitis. Where Dr. Louise knew-- now I wonder why they have to study all those years when they've got machines doing all their work for them.

I. And aren't those very machines pulling the costs way up?

Sr. Sure it is. And a lot of people now don't go to any doctor because they can't afford it. I know I shouldn't say these things because it is my own profession but here we have been training these doctors for years and years and then they have to raise their cost to pay off all their medical bills and everything-- all their schooling and then they sit there and let the machines do their work for them.

Our doctors here aren't really as bad as all those students coming over from UK are. And the students from UK-- they have to and that's what they are being taught-- to do all this.

But then, on the other hand, you can't blame them, Shirley, because of all the law suits. You know, if you don't do everything, it's like-- well, I hate to say this but you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. And that's why, sometimes, somebody comes in with a bad foot and you know the leg or foot isn't broken, we have to get x-rays of it because they came into the emergency room. We have to have proof that we did it. Later on if something happens they can say, well, I had a broken leg but they didn't x-ray it. Years ago your arm could be hurt, you have two bones in your arm so wrap it. If it's not swollen, we'll not x-ray and keep your bill down and people were happy with it. Now, you can't do that.

I. Well, I wondered why they x-rayed me so much that time-- everything but my eyelashes and I told them I was fine.

Sr. 90 percent of that is because of law suits. And most law suits are from the emergency room.

I. What are the worst things you see there?
Sr. Well, gunshot wounds are pretty bad— they'll come in with an open chest or belly. Stabings, automobile wrecks with limbs hanging off. The girl who was electrocuted. Her daddy came running in... kids with seizures are real scary to parents. Heart attacks when they are about to code and hemorrhaging— like ladies who come in from abortions— either they had it at home or somewhere else. Motorcycle wrecks— burns, they can be very traumatic— because no matter what you give the pain is not relieved. I worked at the Shrine Burn Center for three months to get extra experience before I came down here— and in case I did go back to Indonesia because we had so many burns over there. All those nerve endings— there's little to do unless you knock them completely out.

I. I guess people come in with really silly things too.

Sr. Like kids who swallow pennies and dimes. I always say, don't ever swallow a penny that's worse than a dime because you can't wait for change.

I. So, what do you think is Louise's legacy to this town?

Sr. One thing I got from Louise, mostly, was her cool and collected way about doing things. Like I say to the nurses, if someone is scared and looks up and sees you are scared— but her calm, no matter what went on. Dr. Louise was always calm and kept her composure. And I always thought, my first auto wreck that came in. I thought— oh, I was almost up on the ceiling. And she would come in so calm and just start doing things. And I often thought, oh, I'd like to be like her. Apparently it has rubbed off because our nurses will say, how do you stay so calm and cool and collected? And I'll say, hey, if I'm a sick person and I see a frightened person— well it's going to make things all worse. Especially children. So you have to stay calm and collected and I think that's one great virtue— or tribute. I've really copied that off of Dr. Louise. Mostly I observed it but I did say it to her— way in the beginning when we'd had a couple of bad things and she was here. Especially the day of our bus wreck when we had 57 people come in. That was May 7— May 7, 1940(?). School bus tragedy. Near 8:30 a.m. on Ascension day the sound of sirens came close to our medical center as ambulances drove to our emergency entrance. These ambulances brought the victims of a near tragic bus accident. The bus had been side-swiped by a truck— a coal truck— and the driver lost control of the bus and it fell over a 40 foot embankment.

Do you know that hill as you go out on 32? Just after the shopping center and there's a lumber yard. It went over sideways down there.

(Reading) There were 62 students on the bus. The following article from the Morehead News tells how St. Claire Medical Center responded quickly in the emergency room. St. Claire reacted to what could have been a major disaster in the Morehead area which is described this week by Sister Mary Edwin, the administrator of the one year old institute.

This is her report— a whole page long.
You remember it? You were there?

Sr. Yes, yes. I was there. We were ready to start surgery at 8:00 when the police called and said they were calling out everybody to help because there is a bus overturned. Dr. Proudfoot told me to go to the emergency room and start seeing what I could get ready. Then he woke his patient up and told her she would not have surgery because of this—and the lady was very nice, and the relatives.

(Reading) Dr. Louise Caudill and Dr. Proudfoot examined patients in the emergency room entrance hall as to the extent of the injury. Those with minor cuts and injuries were taken to the consultation clinic where four surgical teams were set up for the injured students who could move more quickly. Those that were more serious were treated in the emergency room, the operating room and six were sent to Lexington. They had open fractures—the bones were sticking out of their legs or their arms. Mrs. Laughlin got the auxiliary here. She closed the doors and only called parents in one at a time. Because the lobby and the halls were filled with 62 children lying all over.

By noon, everybody was taken care of. Initially, The initial things and then all small lacerations were sutured.

I. Now, how did you get that many to Lexington at that time?

Sr. Some went by private car and some by black ambulance service—the hearse. It would be just about a two hour ride. The auxiliary did a tremendous job in trying to keep everybody down and calm. All the children survived. The most striking thing was the bus driver sat out there hurting—you just could see he was in pain—but he would not let us touch him until every child was taken care of. The doctors all closed their offices in town and came out with their nurses. It was Dr. Louise, Dr. Billie Jo Caudill, Dr. Barber, and Dr. Hudnut was probably here at that time. We had about 6 or 7 doctors. And Dr. Porter by that time.

We've had nothing like that since then.

I. Are you going to keep on nursing now?

Sr. As long as I feel as great as I do—I'll be in that emergency room.