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## Oral Interview of Marian Allen by Ann Schonberger and Peggy Danielson for the Feminist Oral History Project (Part #2)

Ann Schonberger

Peggy Danielson

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**University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections Department**

Oral interviews for the Feminist Oral History Project.

Interviewer: Ann Schonberger (AS) and Peggy Danielson (PD)

Interviewee: Marian Allen (MA)

Date: November 5, 1994

Recording number: MF223-MarianA-T1b

Length of recording: 47:21

[Transcript begins]

AS: ...side to the Marian Allen interview.

PD: Marian speaking.

MA: Trying to remember the mean things. A lot of times it would be just the way the sort of tone of voice like, well, did you do your paperwork? or it was so it wasn't major, but I can remember an incident. Where a couple of volunteers were in the kitchen. I don't know what they're doing, and a staff person came in and slammed the tea kettle into the sink and yelled about something or another, and the volunteers felt intimidated by it. I don't remember the details of that incident, I just remembered that there was a tea kettle and a slamming and then they kind of scurried out of the kitchen, and I don't know that it was intentional. I don't think it was directed necessarily at the volunteers, I think, as in sometimes slightly dysfunctional families. You know, one person is having problems of one sort or another and they get taken out on the other people and I think it was more that, than anyone intending to be mean to volunteers. But still, it didn't seem like a good way to conduct business. So that's the kind of thing I was referring to. Which in some ways is kind of different. I mean, there's sort of two different things than the power. I mean, I guess the power imbalance comes in there insofar as a staff person, I guess has more power than a volunteer, and maybe wouldn't even necessarily behave that way around a steering committee member, for instance. So maybe the power part does play a part in it.

AS: You said something earlier about the staff was very powerful at that time because you had been to all these meetings and, how did you, now just enter the steering committee, I was wondering how

did you at the time you were involved, envision the relationship between the staff and the steering committee?

MA: That's kind of interesting. I haven't thought it out a lot, but I sort of have gut feelings and I can remember originally feeling that the steering committee had more power than I did later, and I think maybe things changed again after I left at the steering committee, but I had the feeling for a while, and I can't remember exactly when though, that the staff was really calling the shots and that the steering committee had kind of become a rubber stamp. And that doesn't mean they weren't involved in activities and so forth, but in terms of sort of the direction, I'm not sure that it was even bad because I think you know it was the staff who was going off to these things and it was the staff who was bringing up stuff about power imbalance and so forth and so on. But I thought that the steering committee was in some ways. I'm trying to catch up with the staff or you know, not if we were so involved in every day and you know, thinking about it all the time and it was such a major part of our life's. I think it would have been almost impossible for the steering committee to be, to keep up with the staff at that time.

AS: Another thing that was going on right at that time, uh was a capital funds campaign. Getting this shelter and opening the shelter in capital funds campaign. I mean, do you want to talk about anything you remember about that?

MA: Well, I think that was an area where the steering committee was really strong and we recruited people I don't remember, except that I think that was that's another sort of key to that whole time period. So much was happening, and you know for everybody to be on top of everything was just impossible. I just remember wonderful people being a part of that, but I don't remember specifically, it was just one of those things. Another part of the balancing act. I mean, I think in some ways we're all overworked too. I mean and not because anybody was forcing it on us. Well, we loved the work, and it was we were all so excited and here we were changing the world and getting our shelter and It was very exciting this. I think part of my grieving when I left was just, you know, here had been this ideal and seeming to come so close and feeling that we were so far. I think I've adjusted my thinking about that a little bit, with some time. We're going to change the world.

AS: In what ways have you adjusted your thinking?

MA: Well, I think being able to see my own... When I said that Ann and I had talked about being a little bit of self-righteous, I think maybe that and also maybe understanding that we never going to change the world. One of my favorite cartoons from The New Yorker, is there a bunch of wolves howling at the moon and one turns to the other one and says, "are we having an impact?" And so, I think maybe. I've come to understand that you don't just, it's funny. I see myself in a lot of ways like my father who I said was a minister who you know he was out there preaching the right thing and he got real, disillusioned and I think I went through disillusion, but I think my father kind of became bitter and I decided that was not going to happen to me, that I wouldn't be bitter about it, and actually one of the things I did after I left Spruce run, Mary Lawrence, who was one of the volunteers who left at the same time I did and I, We didn't plan to do this, It sort of evolved, but over about a year we ended up right. Doing a play called The Hen House, which wasn't really about Spruce Run. It was about the woman's movement, but it was just a farce. It was a total farce, but I think we use some of our feelings about Spruce Run in this and it was where all these women had this house and a man who had allegedly been raped came and the women. Woman had conflict about how to treat him, and he got wrapped up in Saran Wrap and just sort of laughed. For quite a while, and then these two women questioned that decision that maybe they shouldn't be wrapping them up in Saran Wrap and so they let the man go and it's real controversial. And, you know, I think it was my way of making my peace with it was to. Just, you know, play with the whole idealism a little and, I don't know. What was the question?

PD: So, I'm curious about where your idealism has gone now or what?

MA: Well, I think one of my favorite things in Spruce Run, I used to have a T shirt and a button that said World Peace begins at home and I think never having been in a domestic violence situation, I nevertheless loved that because I felt like that's right. This in the way we treat each other. And I feel like a lot of, I just think I've sort of downscaled or brought it closer to home. My idealism, and then partly it's been probably working on my own personal relationships but professionally now I do mediation, which is still trying to, you know, share those skills with individuals to help them. Yeah, I think in one way you could even look at domestic violence as people who don't. It's not. It is certainly about power, but power is a way of getting your own way. And maybe if you had other ways to fill your needs. If you knew other skills, you might not have to use power to get your own way. And so, I guess that's kind of where mine is now. Is trying to teach people to respect their own

needs and other people's needs and see if there are some ways that they can meet both of those needs without being abusive in one way or another.

AS: When met before, we were talking about the FLITE theater group, and I wondered if that echoes Spruce Run, if it came out in that? Or is that? Or is that a totally different part of your life?

MA: It, yeah, it really didn't come out in that. I think it came, I think the thing was the Hen House, that's that was the only echoes of spruce Run. They got all channeled into there but FLITE, no, FLITE I mean, I'm still a part of FLITE, in fact, we just had a meeting a couple nights ago.

AS: Tell me again what it stands for. I forgot I was trying to pull forward.

MA: Family Life Improvisational Theater Educators.

AS: I couldn't remember the I.

MA: And I mean we do all sorts of things. Our latest one has been sexual harassment in the library. And of course, I had got to be Marian the librarian, So that's fun. No, I really think it was. And I mean the other thing I did was I got out of social services for a few years, I went to community health and counseling after Spruce Run and I worked on the Committee on Incest and so forth, but when that job ended, I went back to the university and worked on my master's degree in English because out of this whole thing with writing The Hen House, Mary and I ended up writing a couple of other really bad plays. But then I wrote a play on my own, which was still really a bad play, but it won an award at the university in spite of being a bad play. And I thought, well, maybe I should do graduate work in social services, but I hated the courses, I took an English course and a drama course and loved them. So, I ended up doing my masters in English, and in fact it's all done except it was, has been all done for several years except the finishing touches. My thesis, which is a collection of short stories.

PD: So, you did a creative writing one with creative writing concentration. I'm an English teacher in my other life.

MA: Oh, that's right, that's right. So, I think that I mean for me that's also a way that I sort of heal myself is through creativity in writing, but it never came out in FLITE. It was more specifically in the Hen House. We had we had mod Huntington Harrington who was a burned-out housewife who became hoping there would be more to life and just this whole Serena Drinkwater Kaminski who was the picture of diversity or something would make mother, it was so silly it would come out in things like

we had this whole section on food and each one there was karma. Who only believed in certain kinds of food, and then there was candy who only lived in sweets and other fattening things, and it was just very silly, but it was a lot of fun.

PD: Has it ever been performed?

MA: No, in fact when I started working down at WERU, that was one of my times. Especially, it's really so silly, but the second act when the allegedly raped man comes to the house is a lot of fun and I think I still sort of have hopes that maybe we'll do it on there. It's almost perfect for a radio drama. And that that might be fun sometime. In all the conjecture and then they have this doctor come to examine them. Then Miss nice lady and she's, you know, exams and well, just like a woman would puts his feet up in stirrups. Let's see what we got here. Outrageous.

AS: Do you remember any other things about how people relieve stress at Spruce Run? I mean, you're talking about this, and it seems like it's a really fruitful and humorous way to take some feelings you had afterwards. I mean to take afterwards what you to do afterwards? What you have is something. Do you remember anything else about how people relieve stress or about humor, or in the agency?

MA: I think humor was major and just sort of the parties. I mean sort of like the whole thing at the belly dancing party here and Nancy was just very good at having things be fun, but I think everybody had a great sense of humor and we would just laugh. And sometimes I mean of course the actual work was sometimes really depressing. I mean it could be or really stressful and sometimes it wasn't laughable at all, but I can remember things like. I mean, this is a horrible story, but this woman, whose husband would only let her have cheese. And we called her the cheese lady. It was like. He would determine what her diet was and then he told her she couldn't have cheese anymore and all she could eat with peanut butter or something. It was just awful the way he was controlling her life, but. Sort of being able to talk about her as the cheese lady. And some of the things I mean. I can remember some of the clients. Would I remember this one client I was on the phone with who she was talking about her husband. And some of her expressions were just great. She said something that well, lady. I put his socks right, you'd think he'd be happy with him, but he opened up the drawer. He just mumbled off and I said what? She said, he just mumbled off. So we'd always kind of share, you know, when so you know just a funny expression or something. Actually I have this great. This is a scrapbook. I think Mary Lawrence made for me.

AS: Is Mary Lawrence, is Lawrence, her last name, or is it like Mary Morris, like Mary Ellen or something like that?

MA: Oh OK, these are pictures of when we were in Milwaukee. Mary Lawrence is her last name. Lovely pictures? Who is Olin? What was her name she was like on the staff or the seated position or a student internship or something?

AS: Yeah, I think that's Lynn Greenleaf.

MA: Yes, that's his address. Look at this.

AS: Yeah. Do you remember any of the fundraisers in particular? You showed us the copy of the Zucchini Cookbook? Do you remember any other fundraisers?

MA: There were the piggy nose warmers, which were always. I mean, I think the humor just probably there are lots of ways that the humor, it was volunteers' humor, and I think even in the newsletter, if you look through it, you'll see that they're just. It's just funny. Piggy nose warmers were a riot. Susan Tom Nichols knitted those, and they looked like little pigs, and you could supposedly tie them around your face and, what else? Well, of course the yard sales. Those were great. Oh, this is interesting. We kept a journal there. For a while, and somehow somebody made photocopies. I guess of this. I wonder if that is there still a journal?

AS: I don't know.

MA: Well, we were just. It was just a journal where we would just write anything in it and this is somebody who must have cut out things that I had written into it. Like "I'm all alone here today, the day before we leave for the conference I'm working on my workshop, which really isn't ready but at least, but at least Carl's Copy cooperated by staying open till 2:00 o'clock instead of 12. So now I have handouts. Oh what security there is in having handouts. I wonder if anyone ever reads them. It's nice here today all along, so quiet. I must have really needed this alone. This not something I get my stuff 'cause I sort of feel like spending the night. Wouldn't that be odd? Well, I'm really glad that we're not tiptoeing around it anymore either, so I don't know what we've been tiptoeing around."

AS: Is this written by you?

MA: Yeah, this was written by me in the journal, though a journal that we kept there. "I'm glad somebody got angry about the food meeting. Now it feels OK. And then we were about to go to." This must have been right before we went to Milwaukee. "I'll miss Jonas I. Heather went with us, my daughter, but my I'll miss Jonas on this trip. It's hard for me to leave him. He's going camping in the Northwoods where there's no phone. I can't even call. I get scared, conjure up all the worst possibilities. And scare myself, wonder why I do that? I think this book is a wonderful idea. I like knowing the aftereffects of what goes on here. I love our volunteers. Sometimes it feels like we're turning into a big snowball that started rolling, gathering more and more snow, moving faster and faster. How much control do we have over where we're going? Or does sheer volume and momentum determine that? right now seems like such a crucial time? Taking on in many ways. At least I'd like to slow down and take the time to look at what's happening." So, let's. It is a training group. Picture.

PD: Was that a group that you trained?

MA: Yeah, that was, I mean there were so many funny things that, one of the women in that training group who I, this is triggered by a seeing a picture. I remember one night came in and said, "I think I've been graped". I said what? She said, "I think I have been graped". And I said, could you tell us more about that? She said this new man in my life is really into fruit. So, I don't know. This is funny, "Spruce Run Kingpin flees." This is when I left, "...despite increased security in recent months. Marian Allen well known mouthpiece for a local clandestine organization, Spruce Run whose members are known only by their first names and often wear choir robes at their private midnight meetings has escaped, her disappearance occurred under mysterious circumstances." "Fashion show cancelled." I remember we've been talking about a funny fashion show. I don't know. Do we ever have a fashion show?

AS: Not that I can recall, but it doesn't mean it didn't happen.

MA: I don't think we did, but I remember us talking about having sort of a mock fashion show where we would wear like all the most outrageous things, "disappear, pointed, trendsetters wondered what they would do in the wake of the announcement, canceling the important haute couture event planned for this Ball."

PD: Was that in the newsletter? What was happening?

MA: No, this was just Mary Lawrence and just kind of wrote this out. There was just a fun thing sort of a goodbye present. I think other people had a lot of input into this, but at one point it, I mean, this is very esoteric, but at one point we had one of the discussions that must have been that we were having, we must have decided that we should all document behavior. And I mean this was an open discussion and this supposedly is documentation of mean behavior. Anyway, it was, here's that, and we were so, here's a fake newsletter or a fake letter that we wrote one time. I think a lot of the, I mean your question about how we coped. I think a lot of it was by doing really silly things and like this was like this must have been a fake letter for getting money. You know, as if we were soliciting money, but you know, this was certainly not one we'd have ever written, really written but "Dear suckers, a little update on this Spruce Run poop and scoop before we try to grab your bucks after a couple of anonymous chumps championed the way by donating large sums, Cash, money, stocks, moolah a down payment on a nicely struck structured by tackily decorated older building in Bangor was made. Why? because we wanted a bigger and better office. Of course, we also wanted to look as if all as if we are all young professionals going somewhere. The obvious place to go, Shelter for battered women. Now providing a pad is not enough. We've got to provide a program too, which is course of what we're supposedly doing all along..."and we site, I mean, it's just silly, but it's the kind of thing that I think, from supposedly from the men. This is all of, yeah, this is all about the capital funds. "...If after all that you still got more dough than you know what to do with it, donate your dough to the Capital Funds campaign. Sincerely, the membership." Oh, here's the paragraph. "In the past I was Slimin order adoration we've so truly loved and appreciated your every dollar. It's only you would do who would have been the very spirit and support of these selfless services. Hold praise and elevation. Your membership is monumental to maintaining and magnifying our ministries, so once again we grovel and beg you to renew your membership" and...

AS: It sounds like that was expressing a way of working through some antagonism about the capital funds campaign or some stress.

MA: I think it was mostly centered about, It was probably more just a stress level and feeling like Oh my gosh, we have to keep asking for money and you know. And it was just silly. And everybody laughed and.

AS: Did you feel or do you remember feeling like you didn't want to relate to the people we had to relate to, around the campaign or?

MA: No, really. I mean, I think it was just that was just sort of like the everyday stress and just kind of being silly about. You know, right? Probably I had to write a real letter, and I felt like I didn't know what to say so I wrote it. And then kind of got down to the business of finding a real one. I think I had some input from other people on that, and I think we were sort of making fun of ourselves. I mean it was. Yeah, there may have been some stress around it, but it was more like you know, here we are, you know, up and coming in the world we're going to look like young professionals going into our new shelter instead of just hanging her out down and, so this kind of just making light up, but I think we needed to do that a lot, but sometimes there was just so much happening and so much, it felt like I think in that journal part you know we just. It feels like we're so big and it's a snowball and can we slow down and look at where we're going? I think that kind of letter is sort of a reaction to that kind of feeling. It's like Oh my God, what are we doing? OK, just give us more money. I will do it. But it was all. And I have no regrets I'm really glad I had the opportunity to work there, and I still think it's so, absolutely needed an important service. I'm sorry that I don't have time or energy. I guess my just other priorities that I never get back and sort of know how it's doing these days, but.

AS: Would you like to say anything more about Nancy?

MA: well, I know when I also when I was looking at the videotape, somebody said, well, well, so how did she die? Is it in a car accident and there was some question about if she was on going to a Spruce Run meeting or on her way home or anything like that. And in case it's not, in case anybody doesn't know how she died. Was a Saturday morning and she was on her way to a parents anonymous meeting, which is who she was working for. Then she was on her way to the Saint Michael. Wasn't to Spruce Run and wasn't on her way home? I don't know what to say about Nancy. Nancy was obviously a real important piece in my life, I think. I mean, we were we lived together for five years and, I think I learned a lot from Nancy, and I think Nancy would say that she learned a lot from me, but in some ways, I feel like the whole family dynamic there. There was a lot of, I mean, in some ways Nancy and I were a team, but in some ways we both had real strong personalities and I can't help but think that that must have had an impact on the rest of the staff and must have impacted everything. Just I mean, I think that that happens in all families and all agencies anyway. But maybe the nature of our relationship. I don't know how to how to look at it. I don't know what kind of impact it had. I hope it wasn't terrible. I don't think it was overall. And I think the very fact that we had the kind of relationship in some ways really enabled Nancy to listen to points of view that were

really different from hers, because I think she respected me a lot and vice versa. And sometimes it might have been kind of tumultuous, but overall, I don't think it really was. She was an interesting person. It's I mean, I think that people a lot of times after somebody dies, they you know, try to make them into goddesses or something and she was very human. I think maybe we both had troubles practicing what we preached at times. Her death is certainly a real loss, I think to the whole community. I don't know what else to say about it. If you have any, you know specific questions or any thoughts about you know I'd be happy to respond?

AS: Well, you mentioned like you didn't know how that felt to the rest of the people on the staff. You know that the two of you saw each other 24 Hours a day more or less, and that certainly was a feature of the women's movement in other agencies and other times in other places. People who worked so closely together in the, in the movement, so to speak. You know, found that they wanted to spend even more time with each other, and then sometimes, when those relationships stopped being good relationships, then it was difficult to keep on working with each other. I don't know how much of that you know is your experience or whether you want to say anything more about that or?

MA: I mean I don't think ours stopped being a good relationship. We ended up eventually not living together, but that was after we both left Spruce Run and that wasn't even. Because I mean, I think it wasn't because it was necessarily a bad relationship. I think we felt that probably I felt that we needed to live apart in order to sort of grow and be who we really needed to be. But it wasn't because it was a bad relationship ever and like till the day she died, and we certainly loved each other, and we saw each other. And I think in terms of the relationship affecting Spruce Run, and probably Sue and Connie could speak to that as well. There are a lot of things that I think affected the dynamics there, but one thing was Nancy was a very possessive kind of person and sometimes she was really jealous of my relationships with other people, and I can remember at one point Sue, and I run the Bylaws Committee and we were having some meeting down at La Cucina. This is when we were still on Exchange St and Nancy told me afterwards, she said I was so mad at you for meeting down there with you I saw your car parked on the on the hill and hers was down below it and I even thought about going and taking off the emergency brake and just letting it roll back into her car. And she, ever when I was training with Nancy first. So, we're doing a training session and one night I've stayed at Nancy's house, and I think Nancy had gained a little perspective by then, but she was. So, I don't like the idea of you staying over at Nancy Fiches, she says if you even

bump into each other accidentally in the night you need to call me immediately. So, I think, maybe like just the fact that we were kind of focused on each other, might have made other people feel excluded, and I guess that would be the part that would concern me most of all, or that necessarily another staff member might just figure that I would have get better audience with Nancy because of her feelings for me so that I might have more pull or more that kind of thing.

AS: Do you think that staff or steering committee or volunteers felt you would always say necessarily have the same point of view on an issue?

MA: Oh no, I don't think anybody. I don't think anybody who worked with us at all would have thought that do you?

AS: Not my recollection, but I wondered if you had any other feedback from anyone else that you sort of always were a power block or something?

MA: No, no 'cause I think we...

AS: That you always thought the same.

MA: ...we were clearly two distinctive personalities and I think it would be more just our focus on each other that you know, that might have been gotten in the way sometimes of other people, feeling that they had as much opportunity to have their point of view, heard or their input. I think I guess; I don't know if this is. I think there were some other dynamics with this staff during that period, which I'm I think in some ways kind of like an alcoholic family and that there were, Uhm, some roles there that in some ways were like alcoholic families and I can't, I don't want to be specific but it's pretty easy to figure it out. And I think maybe if we would, we had maybe had some help. Kind of just looking at all of our roles and sort of the kinds of dynamics because it was such an intense grouping and such intense work that maybe that could have helped us sort out some things. So, I think all of that was at play. I mean, there was Nancy's in my relationship and then these other things and maybe just personality differences too. Who knows? Styles of communication. And certainly, we talked some about class differences. That I can remember. I just loved the shelter because I thought the hardwood floors were so pretty and the fireplace in the front room where my office was, and I really liked that, and I can remember other staff members are like, you know, being kind of disgusted that that was important to me that that that kind of aesthetic consideration and I don't know if that has to do with class or just values or what. But you know there would be. Sometimes, you know, just little things like that that would, and I think also our jobs in some ways I

think there were times when there was a perception that that the community edge of was the most fun job. And of course, I liked it a lot because that was what I was hired to do, and I had fun with the newsletter, and I think in some ways I had a little bit more control over. You know I could schedule meetings and so forth out of the I was sort of out in the world more. And I felt like everybody should try to make their jobs be as fun as they could. But then in some ways, just by the job. I mean, it's sort of like just by the job of Executive Director, you have more power, just by the job of Community Education, you're out and about more. You know, I, I sometimes felt that there was some resentment about that.

AS: That you weren't there on the front lines doing the hard stuff, or?

MA: Or just that I got to do more fun things because I mean we were all there on the lines doing the hard stuff so you couldn't really say that no one, none of us were not doing that, but it was just that I seemed to get to go out to these speaking engagements and eat refreshments and in some ways, I think that was more of a perception than a reality because a lot of times it's speaking engagements meant dealing with pretty hostile reactions and really having to, you know, if you didn't want to, I mean, it would be easy enough to say, well, you don't know what you're talking about, buddy, but you're going to lose your audience. So, the whole, I think I learned a lot in that job about and remember you in the office one day and I was talking to a client about something or another and afterwards you said that was really diplomatic. And I thought, wow, I've never thought of myself as having diplomacy before, but I think I've learned it. Because I don't want to lose people, I want them to be able to hear me. And in order to do that I have to somehow acknowledge where they're coming from. That was a real, I think that was a real game in my life that I did learn to do that.

PD: Yeah, along those same lines on what kinds of things do you think you took from Spruce Run that carried over? Into your life after you left, certainly that.

MA: Yeah, I think that may have been one of the biggest things on. And I think I had to do some real soul searching when I left first run, and I think that that whole process I talked about writing the play and kind of getting some perspective on it, helped me see what my role was because I think when I actually left I probably wasn't totally aware of that, and certainly just my knowledge about battered women. Before I went to Spruce Run, and I sort of had this vision of I kind of knew where Spruce Run it was and I remember kind of driving by when it was on. When it was on Central Street, I imagined, the you know those buildings look sort of dark and I sort of imagined these women

hanging out the windows with bruises and, I just learned a lot about that, and that's helpful now. I mean, one of my jobs now is a court mediator and of course one of the kinds of cases you're always dealing with or not always but sometimes dealing with these cases where there's been some kind of abuse and it's the very first thing we do, and screaming is talk to the woman alone and find I mean where we talk to both parties. In fact, often I'll talk to the man first because I want to give him the opportunity to tell me, is that we feel that that's safer for the woman is that he's told then she doesn't have to worry. That he's going to get mad at her for telling, but I think that's really helpful, and this job is sort of knowing the patterns, understanding the dynamics and, so I think there's been personal growth, but also professionally. This is really helpful.

AS: One of the things that Spruce Run has always been considered a feminist organization, and I was wondering what you learned at Spruce Run that would probably, that's what seemed feminist about it when you were there.? Did that change your?

MA: Well, I would say that I was a feminist before I came to Spruce Run that I was a pretty strong feminist. I think again in the process, maybe just coming down, I think what changed was maybe a shift from being out there on the front and demonstrating to sort of thinking about my own personal life. That sort of World Peace begins at home business, sort of like feminism, begins at home too, and so maybe that I mean certainly things like when I mentioned the whole thing about recognizing, having been sexually abused, I just hadn't been aware of that until that came up at Spruce Run. So I think it probably heightened my awareness of a number of things, but also, uhm, you know this is this is an interesting thing that I've thought of, and I think being at Spruce Run as a part of my thought process here and I've thought a lot about movements and oppressed people and what I think happens progressively and it seems to me that a lot of times initially really, the oppressed sort of see two alternatives and one is to be oppressed and one is to be the oppressor and you see that even with child abusers, sometimes they were abused as children and the only alternative they sort of latch onto is for that not to happen then I have to be abusive, which of course that's not the only alternative, but I think that's kind of a progress. A part of the progress of part of the progression and that in feminism, I think initially sort of women were saying wait a minute. We can have all the same things men do, and you know, we want to not necessarily be just like them, but we certainly want to have all the same things and then. It was all about rights and equality and so forth, and then I think women started to question and I think this is where I was at the Spruce Run level was kind of saying wait a minute, why do we want to be like them? I mean,

yeah, we want might want to have equal rights and so forth, but what about what's inherently good in women? Why do we want to try to, you know, mold ourselves into the male model? What what's the female model? What might that be? And then kind of looking to that and see what what's the strength in that and what we have to offer. And how that might be different than the male model and how we can reverse that rather than look at it in sometimes a negative way, like even the woman who chooses to be a housewife or who chooses to stay home when raise her children. Is that really so bad? So I think if Spruce Run played some part in my development as a feminist kind of evolution.

AS: When you were there, did you think specifically about certain things that you'd say, oh, that's a feminist believer. That's a feminist way of operating. Or was that?

MA: I don't know, maybe some?

AS: Which is sort of intuitive or sort of Right, unspoken sort of so much there no one thought about it.

MA: I think it was funny. I could remember Nancy and myself having a fight one time and of course Nancy was always saying terrible things about men. And I think when you have that kind of close relationship, you know, sort of the worst thing you can say to the other person she in-fact, she called me a pathological mother. Which of course there was some truth in all the attached to my children, and so but I told her that she acted more like a man than any woman I've ever met, which I knew would just be the supreme insult. So I mean, there was certainly an awareness there that you know we wanted to do things differently, and whether we labeled them feminist all the time or not. I don't remember, but, yeah, I think it was kind of an assumption that yes, we were feminists and would were always trying to find an alternative to the male hierarchy where we talked about this. So probably I talk about that a lot less now. So, it's hard to remember exactly.

AS: If you had to pick your one most vivid memory about Spruce Run, what would it be? Do you think?

MA: Oh my God. Well, I mean a lot of them have to do with the battered women themselves. I mean the memory of, I mean, one of the hardest clients was the one where the man had just broken all her fingers and he'd killed her dog, and me and I just, I Remember me at the table and my kids needing to be put to bed and feeling like I couldn't leave this woman, and I mean, as far as I know, she never left and we talked about leaving and how she was scared to death. She lived out in the country and scared of the city as she was of him. I mean which was Ellsworth or something or Bangor would have just been terrifying to her. And things like when, I mean I, I remember the hard

parts I remember when the woman died that her husband shot her down in this area and I remember going to her funeral and having the memorial service and just I remember a lot of client stuff, I guess that's pretty vivid and then I remember just fun things like the party here with everybody belly dancing and that was a really great party. Some of the volunteer meetings with lots of potluck stuff and things like that. I guess there's no one, but probably the ones that, you know, really strike me or the ones with the actual women we were working with, I remember driving a woman...

[End of transcript]