

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Interviews (audio recordings and transcripts)

Maine Women's History

10-29-1993

Oral Interview of Mary Cathcart by Sharon Jackie and Andrea Hawkes for the Feminist Oral History Project

Sharon Jackie

Andrea Hawkes

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_women_audio



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Oral History Commons](#), and the [Women's History Commons](#)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Interviews (audio recordings and transcripts) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections Department

Oral Interviews for the Feminist Oral History Project.

Interviewer: Sharon Jackie (SJ), Andrea Hawkes (AH)

Interviewee: Mary Cathcart (MC)

Date: 10/29/1993

Recording number: MF223-CathcartM-T1a

Length of recording: 43:40

[Transcript begins]

SJ: This is Sharon Jackie, and this is my tape 93-2. It is Friday October 29th, 1993 and I am with Andrea Hawkes and Mary Cathcart, in the conference room of Women in the Curriculum and Women's Resource Center in Fernald Hall at the University of Maine. And we are here to interview Mary about her experiences with Spruce Run. This interview is part of the work of the Feminist Oral History Project. The tape and a transcription of the tape will be deposited in the Northeast Archives of Folk and Oral History in Fogler at University of Maine and perhaps other depositories interested in women's or regional a history in the New England and Maritimes area. At the conclusion of this interview, we will ask Mary to sign a release form. Now Mary we can stop the tape and go back and start over if you want to do this anonymously, I forgot I was supposed to ask you that.

MC: No, that's fine, I don't care.

SJ: Can you start by telling us how you got involved in Spruce Run? About your experiences, how many years you were with them, what kinds of capacities?

MC: I'll try to remember. I got involved with Spruce Run in the late 70s, I am not sure if it was '76 or '77. I was working with the Parent Teacher School with Mary Snow School; I was the President of it in Bangor where my children were. And met John Rif, and another woman named Dianna Cyr, who were volunteers for Spruce Run, and that's how I heard about it, and there have been a little bit of press because the Bangor City Welfare Department was going to offer some shelter to battered women and Spruce Run had had run ends already at that time, so I knew a little bit about it. I got acquainted with those two and started talking with them individually and realized that was

something I would like to learn more about. So, I called tentatively, and I said I thought I wanted to volunteer, and I was told that there was a training group and I filled out an application saying I really didn't want to do evenings and so on and got there. Of course, that's what you did, you did training in the evening and got in the hotline, but once I got in there it was just exciting to me and I loved it and I got from there being in the second volunteer training group, there were very few people at the time and I volunteered after training to be on the steering committee. And I stayed on the steering committee until '82. I believe it was, when I went away for a year to England and then when I came back in '83. And I was on the hotline and an office volunteer all those years as well, I stayed on the hotline. And then when I came back from England in '83, there was a job open there and I applied, and I became community education coordinator. And I stayed there for five years until I decide to leave to run for the legislature in '88.

SJ: In fact, I became a volunteer at Spruce Run, on the Steering Committee, just about the same time that you were leaving. What made the issue important to you? Domestic violence?

MC: I have wanted to somehow be involved in the women's movement, I have read about it, and have read some of the literature, and I don't know why it was that issue. I think it had been something else that came along that was part of the women's movement, I might have gotten into that. I was ready, I had been staying at home with my two children and my younger one had started school at Mary Snow and I was ready to do something and that just clicked for me.

SJ: Had you had any experience with consciousness of raising groups or with any other feminist organizations in town?

MC: No, not really. I have had friends, because we were in Michigan, who were either involved in those, or we talked about it, but I never been in any of them.

SJ: Did you find that the experience in working with Spruce Run raised your consciousness?

MC: Oh, absolutely. I was just shocked, I mean when I got into the training and heard the statistics, I really didn't know anything that much about the issue. I never have been a battered woman, or known anybody that I knew of then, I'm sure I knew many battered women, but it wasn't something that it was in my family. So, I was just blown away by it, and I think that being the kind of person I am, I got hooked into the women immediately when I, not only in the training I liked that, but when I first started doing hotline and actually meeting women and taking them to that little shelter. It was hard for me not to get involved because, it just seeing those women and children and how much

they needed Spruce Run and feeling like I could be a part of helping them to get away from their abuse was wonderful.

SJ: Is that the shelter in K Park still?

MC: Yes.

SJ: What kind of a role did you play in the capital funds campaign?

MC: Not much of a role. I was there in the planning stages, but that was the year that I was in England that most of it went on. I made an effort or two by contacting at least one person who gave a large sum of money, so I tried to help but I didn't do any of that real hard work of contacting people.

SJ: And what kind of a role did you play in that pursuit of state funding? Other than lending your clothes, I can remember that part from my father saying.

MC: Well, I actively participated and went to the first hearing before the Appropriations Committee. I don't believe I testified I didn't have that much to say, then beyond that and attending hearings we had sort of a telephone tree of contacting our legislators. Nancy Gentile got us all set up, and Nancy Gentile told me I had to call my state legislators, which I did. And I remember being very nervous about calling him. It seems funny now that I am one. I remember calling state Senator Dana DeVos and trying to convince him that you know there were really battered women and they needed shelter and that was difficult. But that's the kind of thing I did, and calling other people and urging them to call legislators. Just that's sort of how I got into politics in the first place.

SJ: I was just going to ask that.

MC: Yeah, oh absolutely, you know.

SJ: And your work as a Community Education Coordinator also must have led in that direction?

MC: Yes, and I tried as you know in that job to make closer contacts with a lot of the local legislators and succeeded with some. I remember having a gathering where we're going to have the local legislators to tea or something at the office at Spruce Run and I sent out invitations to about 30 of them and got all set up and we got the cookies and everything ready and two of them showed up. Pat Stevens, my friend being one of them. Two women, none of the men came but at least they got the contact, and they were invited and we tried.

SJ: During your years as the Community Education Coordinator. If that was the title. What kinds of groups did you work with our institutions did you work within the Community especially?

MC: Ah, churches, schools, I did whatever education we did in schools then. I remember one law firm that had me to speak, head start groups, residents at Eastern Maine Medical Center, Community health and counseling therapist types. Just a really broad range and a lot of college classes. Professors would invite me to speak about it. I think just about any community group you can think of. Extension women. I probably went there.

SJ: And did you start the newsletter?

MC: I didn't actually start it. I think Marian Allen. No, actually it was going before that even way back to Terry Orlando, I think there was an occasional newsletter. I think I was the one who got it going on a regular basis and got more people contributing to it and expanded it more, that was always the thing of oh, I've gotta have time to do the newsletter and you never have time because you're too busy at Spruce Run caught up in the crisis calls and all the work and it's hard to set aside time and just write a newsletter. But I got it out we were going to do it at the Public Education Committee and Anne Schonberger would always urge me all to do it, but we were going to do it three times a year, but I always did it at least two times a year. So, and most people said, well, nobody has time to read it more than twice a year. Which is probably true, that would make me feel less guilty.

SJ: Did you get this sort of speakers Bureau? I know it's not called that.

MC: Yeah, I think I was the one who got that going and I developed the training for the speakers. And started offering those trainings, at least about once a year to people. That was good.

SJ: Can you tell us about other innovations or achievements that really marked not necessarily your career, but your years with the organization.

MC: No problem.

SJ: Achievements and things that you did or that the organization did that were real highlights in your mind.

MC: Well, I worked hard with the press and to develop a relationship with the local Press I think harder than people had done before. And tried to do regular public service announcements. Keep those going. Training volunteers to speak, the education in the schools. I really was interested in that and I

was, I think, responsible for getting the video on teenage dating violence, which we used extensively to educate school children. High school and junior high school age. Those things I'd say. I worked with the Community response program. Oh, I did police trainings too. Thus, it's coming back to me. In 1979 or '80 I wrote a grant to The Maine Humanities Council to do a police training that was to be developed by scholars and the humanities, and that was a long, long experience trying to get this thing developed because obviously first we had to get the scholars in the humanities, together with the police, and that took many meetings and a lot of tearing out of hair. But I think that what we developed was quite good in the end, and we conducted a training for police in the Bangor Police Department and we had Penobscot County there and then we did one the following year in Hancock County in Ellsworth, and I think even in the Ellsworth one we had close to 30 Police officers, that was when I was a volunteer. Obviously, I was interested in the Community response and education as a volunteer and then later, Sue Bradford and I did some police training in Bangor and even after I got in the legislature, I did one with Ronald in Ellsworth. That is a very good one and I really enjoyed working with law enforcement and I think that has informed the work that I do in the bills that I sponsor in the legislature. I never would dare put in a bill on domestic violence without at least consulting a few police officers and prosecutors because they're their frontline people that have to use the laws and their insight can be really good.

SJ: Tell us a little bit about the relevant legislation that you've sponsored so that we have that for the record.

MC: Well, I sponsored a bill to increase protection for victims of domestic abuse. And it was addressed at putting more teeth into the protection from abuse orders. It came partially out of my reaction to the murder of Pat Crowley at Bangor Travel Agency. I knew Pat fairly well, and I realized that she had gone for an emergency protection order and Judge Cox had denied her based on the fact that the information she gave him in her complaint for protection was not sufficient for him to believe she was in danger. And yet he did not even bother to speak with her and, summons for the hearing for protection from abuse was served on the husband and he went and killed her and himself and so my new law requires that a judge before dismissing an emergency order, before denying an emergency order must speak in person with the plaintiff because often the woman is just too intimidated to write these things down. But I think that any judge with any sensitivity, if he talks to the woman herself would be able to realize that she really is terrified. We made mutual Protection Orders illegal because some judges were actually ordering, the guy would turn around in file and say

well, she's or even not file a complaint but say to the judge well she's abusing me just as much as I am her and the judge would order them both not to contact the others. If the woman were equally responsible. We made illegal to require mediation in cases of domestic abuse. Which some judges were because of the children and the requirement to have mediation when their minor children involved, they were requiring these people to mediate with their abusers. So, I think that was very positive. I got put into the list of factors that a judge must consider when determining parental rights and responsibilities, custody and visitation that the judge must consider a history of domestic abuse in making the determination. Also, then this past year we put in that a judge must consider a history of child abuse that wasn't even in there and some judges ignore that. The other one that I think is working really well that I got was the increased penalties for repeated offenders. It made the third conviction for a domestic violence related crime, including the Class D violation of a protection from abuse order. The third conviction is a felony and I just read a case in the paper the other day. It was one of my constituents whose son broke her hip, beat her up and denied it, and they only, the jury found him guilty, only of simple assault, not aggravated, but the DA was going to ask for a felony penalty from the judge because he had a prior record of convictions for assault and family members. And I said, oh, good, you know. This time this year we did the stalking legislation which was based on my bill and instead of drawing from one of the bills from another state, making a whole new crime of stalking, our committee decided what I decided that I thought was best was to go with making it absolutely clear by adding language into protection from abuse, protection from harassment, and the criminal harassment statutes that are already in effect in this state, and I'm just eager to hear how it works. I hope it will work. We passed that. That's about the list of them, but I think in five years I've gotten some very good changes in our Maine laws.

SJ: Wonderful, I am glad we have it on our record.

MC: Oh yeah, that's great to remember it.

SJ: Can you looking back over this history with Spruce Run, can you think about particular satisfactions that you got out of working?

MC: Oh the people. Both the workers and the women, the clients or whatever. I think I've gained so much strength to be myself as a woman and do the work that I do then I never would have had that without the people I worked with. It's Bruce run. It's such an empowering thing to be with those people who are so positive and so supportive of what I have done. And you know, you just could not

take away the value of that experience. And I don't know where else I ever would have gotten what I got from them.

SJ: And the satisfaction of making a difference. Changing things.

MC: Oh yeah, of changing the law of seeing a change in the attitude of police and prosecutors and lots of others. You know now, and somebody was so surprised that this said to me a year or two ago. Oh, I know when it was when Mary McPherson, I think came to be the lobbyists for the women's lobby and of course I knew her in my first days at Spruce Run, and she said, I couldn't believe the Judiciary Committee and the legislature. They seem so informed about this and I said, what do you think I've been doing here all those years that we work to educate all these people, all the public and I think it is. It's certainly the problem is not going away but the attitude has gotten much better, and I think people, even you know men as well as women when they know that I'm running and they I tell him some of the kinds of things I've done. They say, oh, that's great. We need to do more about domestic violence and in the old days when I started and they said well, why do those women stay and put up with that? So it is. It's very satisfying to know that.

SJ: Can you pick out a couple of particularly vivid memories?

MC: David memories?

SJ: We've been collecting them. Sue for example, told us about the acquisition of the famous yellow plastic binders.

MC: They still have some of those. Well, I think the getting the anonymous donation was one of the big things, the first one that came in and I was a volunteer then. But an anonymous donor gave Spruce Run. Oh, I know what it was. It was stock in Continental insurance or something, and we just couldn't believe this. We, I mean, we were so naive we didn't know what this stuff is worth or what we should do with it. But it was given for the purpose of helping us to get a shelter. And I mean that started the whole thing to let's buy we always wanted a shelter, but there was no way we would ever come up with the money and I can't remember what it was worth. I think it was worth 20 something, I think 20 thousand dollars and the question then was, you know we have to have an investment committee or something. And I mean, who knows anything about investments? So they decided that I looked like the kind that could get dressed up and visit the stockbroker. We had little committees and we had talked to stockbrokers and trust officers at banks and getting ideas of what we should do with this money. And then we started the Shelter Committee, which went on forever

and ever to decide, not only you know if we could buy a shelter because at Spruce Run process is very important, and so we had to decide what we were looking for and have meeting after meeting of the Shelter Committee to decide what we were looking for in the shelter and how much money we could pay and how much we could put for the down payment before we ever were even allowed to go out and start looking. And Susan Don Nichols was a Vista at the time and she started looking at buildings and then I started, I don't know if I was chairing the Shelter committee, but I was the one that was sort of charged with finding the house and then we, I remember one terrible disappointment finding the house there where it still is and going to the steering committee that week and saying, well, this is the house. This is how much it costs. The Shelter Committee is happy with it and because of the consensus decision making process, there were a couple of people who were too afraid to do it who just weren't comfortable with it yet. And I had to go away, not having the approval of the steering committee to buy this house and being scared to death that we found the right house and that we would lose it by the next month Steering Committee meeting that was that was an awful time, but no, it did indeed work out. The house was still there and the next month, I think we had answered the questions and looking back, you know you can, or I can always see that it was probably good to wait, but at the time I was gung-ho I wanted to buy this house and sit up quick, but consensus would not, if we could have taken a majority vote that night we would have.

SJ: Well, you know, Spruce Run is right now. It's just bought a second house. They just applied for a mortgage. They've made an offer and it's been accepted.

MC: Well, I read that, yeah!

SJ: This time the decision was not difficult to reach, but finding a property that everybody could agree on and it was appropriately zoned and had enough parking spots and so forth has taken two years.

MC: Yeah, well, it's really hard and you have to go through the zoning board of appeals and all of that process and get the fire inspectors, I remember cause I did a lot of those things.

SJ: So, did that part of that take a long time for you to search for a building.

MC: I can't remember it took a long time. I'd say not two years though. Betty Bennett was our realtor and she really was good at figuring out what it is we wanted.

SJ: Well, it was a two years of ups and downs. We kept finding places that we liked a lot. Then they couldn't do it. Never because of money, but because of some regulation we...

MC: Yeah it was really hard and all the renovations that we had to do on that building. That we didn't know.

SJ: Well, the one they're buying now is going to take a lot of renovations too.

MC: It's exciting they're doing it though.

SJ: Yes, I think so. I think so. When you were with Spruce Run as a volunteer, there was a hotline and there was shelter, but not Spruce Run operated shelter.

MC: Right. The city welfare shelter

SJ: And there was, were there support groups?

MC: Off and on. Yeah, there was a way back even when there's the office on Central St. There was a support group that met there one morning a week and sometimes people would come and sometimes it was just more a drop in. You know, for volunteers and support group people, but there was usually. There was some kind of support group going I think.

SJ: Is there a kids group ever? Do you remember? Do you know where they started?

MC: No, I don't think those are real kids do it, but they're, you know, we always had, there were three rooms there, and there was always one that we tried to keep and have a big box of toys and people always brought their kids, including steering committee members. Kids always came to Spruce Run.

SJ: But there was no really programmatic attempt to work with those kinds on the issue.

MC: No, there was. They hired, at the same time our training group ended because one of the people from my training group became the children's worker. A young man, and he was great with kids and he used to go out to the city welfare shelter. They allowed that and work with the kids some. But I don't think there was an actual structured kids group.

SJ: Do you remember his name?

MC: Oh Tony Spotten and he was here later and he was a dancer. He was a dancer with the University of, I think it was SPOTTEN yeah.

SJ: I've heard rumors about this one time.

MC: Yeah, and I don't think he stayed with it too long. And then after that was Wendy. I think she was the next children worker. Wendy Hall and she's still around teaching school, do you know her?

AH: I know Wendy very well, Wendy Hall Down. She's married to one of our close friends.

MC: Oh great, yeah I see her every now and then.

AH: I didn't know that.

MC: I think she was probably the second children's worker. Because, well, you know the story about the sea depositions that lasted for six months, and sometimes you could get them extended for a year, but then you had to name it something else. We had a lot of changes in those days.

SJ: Uh, yeah, they fluctuated a lot too in terms of the number of positions because of CEDA. Going from two people to seven people.

MC: The CEDA position, what we would have done without the CEDA.

SJ: I started asking you. I said the other shelter hotline, some support groups. And you've talked about your public community education activities. Were there other programmatic activities, services that Spruce Run was involved in during your years?

MC: Well during my years, the Community response program got started and talked about the police training, but on a more, there was actually a bill that was put through the legislature to provide funding for Community response programs. So it was more of a formal effort to work with people in the Community, police and the District Attorney, I mean the real reason we got the second Victim Witness, coordinator and the district Attorney's office was that, community response program and I was working. I had worked pretty closely with the DA, who still the same Chris Amy. And he called me up one day and he said, I got this woman here. And if she doesn't she goes back to him again. She's going to get killed and I can't get her to come and testify when you talked to her and he put her on this book, crying woman on the other end of the phone there. Then I said, boy, it must be awful to have the DA yelling at you. He was, he would get so frustrated. So that's when we talked about what we ought to the victim witness advocate that they had gotten was so busy with child abuse and sexual abuse cases that she really didn't have any money to work with the battering the

women. And so we said, well, why don't we try to get money. And we were going to, I think Sue Bradford and I developed that idea. We were going to somehow use volunteers to work with the DA's office and try to help women give them support to get them through the whole judicial process. And then Chris and Julie Morris, who is the victim witness advocate, then came up with this idea because there was BOCA money, the victims of Crime Act federal money, and they thought maybe they could put in a grant and get at least a half time position to work with the battered women. And they did that. So we worked together on that. That was new for Spruce Run, you know, in the old days we were sort of adversaries with the others, and while it is true that sometimes they are the enemy, they are also the people that you have to work with to get your things done.

SJ: I have a question that had to do, when did the coalition begin, the state coalition?

MC: Around the same time I volunteered, I mean it must have been within the next year. Because, well, when was the state the first funding? When did Joe Brennan come in as Governor '78? Because Longley, Longley was sworn in in January '75, I'm trying to just, yeah so Joe Brennan would have gotten elected in '78. It was the spring of '78 then when Longley vetoed the first funding bill, so the coalition had been going for at least a year or two by that time. So it started '76 or '77 and then the override vote failed by one vote, partially due to the efforts of Olympia Snowe. As what I understand from reading a newspaper from then that she was, she didn't want Barbara. She was going to run for the Congress and she didn't want Barbara Trafton from Lewiston to get her Senate seat and Barbara Trafton was sponsoring our funding bill for the shelters. So, there was some. They cut a deal. But anyhow, the bill failed, but Olympia was able to vote for it, but she worked against it behind the scenes. So, the newspaper said. Interesting, so I would say that the coalition got going then and then in those that next year or all the time their first working on the funding bill they were writing the protection from Abuse Act and as a volunteer I was, Terry Lewis and I, the two volunteers who attended coalition meetings with Nancy Gentile in those days, so I went to a lot of them and I hung out a lot with the attorneys from Pine Tree legal who were writing the protection from Abuse Act and learned a lot from doing that with Deb Rice and Nancy Gentle and Marshall Cohen. Who were working on drafting that law.

SJ: Do you remember how many projects were in the coalition when it first started?

MC: Well, I guess Portland was there and I'd say Womancare came in pretty soon there, and Augusta, Jackie Clark was involved pretty much from the beginning. Family violence project.

SJ: Is Woman care, the one that's on Dover Foxcroft?

MC: yeah.

SJ: Wasn't Machias kind of early on too?

MC: I can't remember somebody was there from, I remember Severen Tall from Women care from Dover. I can't remember if there was somebody from Machias in those first days.

SJ: So four or five, and now it's 9 going on 10.

MC: Yeah.

SJ: Uh, do you think that that sort of spinning off of smaller local groups is that has been a good plan for the for the provision of these kinds of supports?

MC: I think so, I think it's hard to let it go, but I think basically it should be a grassroots movement and the women in the local areas probably know the best how to provide the services to their own women. And I think you know, having worked within the state government now, I would not wish to see Spruce Run or family violence project or any of them become too large. And we were very careful not to let Spruce Run grow too much. I think that way and have too many staff because you don't want to turn it into just another branch of the Department of Human Services where the, you know its own reason for being is to be a bureaucracy and get money. And you know, run all of these little projects. I think the outreach is important, but I think as apparently has happened in Ellsworth, as much they become strong enough and there are enough of the local women to really form an organization, I think that that's great and we should let them do it.

SJ: Do you think it'll happen elsewhere here in Penobscot County?

MC: Well, I hope it will happen in northern Penobscot. I'm not in touch right now without the Millinocket outreach project is going. But I would hope that eventually there'd be enough people there to break off and get it going, it's too hard, but I mean that's what I found even when we had somebody in Hancock County and you know this. It was so hard for the person doing the work in Hancock County to spend enough time there and still spend enough time in the Bangor office to get the support that she needs to really, you know, work on the outreach. And I think it's important that we do that and continue to reach out to other areas, but that's a really hard thing for somebody to do. I don't know that I'd want to be the one to do it.

SJ: I think it's not only good that it should be local grassroots, but I also think that Spruce Run's organizational structure and its governance processes, I really strained at the size it is now. They are the kinds of things this fully participatory democracy about governance is one that you just can't really push to a very large size.

MC: That's right, you know, for really to have consensus and everybody to be close, you gotta keep it small. And so for the organization, I'd like to see Spruce Ron survive the way it's always been and continue and not try to grow into sort of a larger organization.

SJ: When during your time, I think that, it sounds to me as if you came to Spruce Run as a volunteer very shortly after uhm, the organization had had made a move from, uh, sort of hierarchical and traditional board and staff executive director and lesser positions and so forth, to its present structure. Is that right? When you came on?

MC: Well, I don't. I don't know that it ever had a real structure.

SJ: My understanding talking to the founding moms was that it was at first totally unstructured and completely consensual. Then chaos came and it structured itself with a board of directors and an executive director who was in fact Nancy.

MC: Oh, really? I didn't even know that.

SJ: And the staff. And then, the present-day organization and governance

MC: Well, no, that was during my time as a volunteer that Nancy became executive director. I do remember that and that didn't work out for too long staff are unhappy. I was not on the staff then but I was calling to see yeah. So now when I came there were there were two-seater workers Terry Orlando and Mary Thompson. And then I guess it did evolve into that. And there was one time when we had the admin on the Steering Committee and we tried to, you know, do like most organizations. So, we need some prominent local citizens, and so let's pick some and we expanded the steering committee and they never could find out what they were supposed to do, that was. I think they were willing. There are couple of nice men. But then we did that, and then I don't know when in there Nancy was executive director. I'd forgotten all about that. It didn't have any effect on me because I wasn't on the staff and I never saw as far as being on the steering committee that she behaved any differently or really did other things. But they decided, yeah, we, I remember a

meeting we had over in the Union too at some point, I don't know whether that was when we went back to the.

SJ: A meeting of steering committee and staff?

MC: Yeah, and we always called it a consensus decision making organization and always said we were nonhierarchical, and I think that's why it came up then. Why is there an executive director? Most of the projects in the coalition had that sort of hierarchy.

SJ: Most of them still do.

MC: And you know, it's yeah they still doing it. It just so it became clear to Spruce Run that we didn't want that and that if we wanted to really be a consensus group. Then we had to remove that hierarchical structure. So, but the staff did most of that working out. I mean, it's as if you know. Then they brought this to the steering committee who said, sure, fine. That's what you've worked out.

SJ: It goes on. I understand that when the staff worked that out, for example, Nancy's salary was a substantial one in comparison to the earnings of anybody else on the staff. And it's just been within the last four years that they have finally reached their goal of a kind of two-year training period for new staff members with somewhat lower salaries and other than that everyone is paid the same. The salary structure is, yeah.

MC: Yeah, we were working towards that when I was there. And I think, I mean from my memory of its Spruce Run never had just much of a discrepancy as the other projects had.

SJ: That could be.

MC: And I don't remember that Nancy was paid very much. Not much more at all, and I remember that we were all shocked that other executive directors were really, I mean they were paid 20 something thousand when they had people there working for 4.50 an hour, and that didn't seem right.

SJ: Can you remember any conflicts that really stand out for you?

MC: Isn't that nice that I can't write off? Well, the big conflict that I remember was over the one staff member Norma. That was a terrible time.

SJ: I don't know that staff.

MC: I was just, well, much anguish. And she was a person who was, you know, a good person. She was the children's coordinator and I wouldn't want a list made public 'cause I wouldn't want to, you know, to say anything bad about her or anyone. You know there were real problems there. As far as being able to work effectively and it was a terrible time for the staff.

SJ: So that was conflict within the staff?

MC: Yes. Over one person, and I wasn't involved. I was a volunteer when there was the previous real conflict within the staff that resulted in some people leaving. That was just before I was hired there to be the Community Education Coordinator.

SJ: How you got your child huh?

MC: At least partially.

SJ: How about within steering committee or within the organization as a whole? Just to steer your memory a little bit with telling you briefly about some other conflicts we've heard. There were there was conflict about taking certain forms of money, thinking about strings attached to certain forms of money, there was conflict about the nature of the shelter. The degree of luxury or simplicity it should provide and all of its appointments, and...

MC: Yeah, I remember some of that.

SJ: That very early on, long before your time there was conflict that resulted in the uhm, self-help and empowerment orientation of the of the activities. You know, the programs.

MC: Yeah, one of the ongoing ones that you didn't mention, we struggled with was the violence in the shelter and whether to have a rule, a policy that mothers were not allowed to hit their children. And then you know you could go either way because here you've got a maximum of 30 days and you're not going to undo someone pattern of disciplining their child in that time and it's, I mean, this was the argument on one side and it's not enough time to really teach them new methods that are going to be more effective and be nonviolent. And other people said, how can we if we're trying to break the pattern of domestic violence, allow these women to go on slapping their children around. And you know, we went back and forth for years over that.

[End of transcript]