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Oral History Number: 164-008, 009

Interviewee: Eleanor Mast

Interviewer: Diane Sands

Date of Interview: 1981

Project: Illegal Abortion in Montana Oral History Project

Diane Sands: 1981, Diane Sands interviewing Eleanor Mast, the Montana Women's History Project, interviews on illegal abortion. All right, first of all, why don't you go ahead and tell me your story in your own words. If you want to tell me something about your background, that would be fine.

Eleanor Mast: Well, let me see. My husband and I were married in 1930 at really the depth of the Depression, and he had saved a thousand dollars, and he wanted to become a rancher. So he leased a small place, and we lived in really, the slums couldn't have more dire property. But because we had plenty to eat, we had venison and fish and chicken and all that, and garden and so forth, milk. But there was almost, cash was almost non-existent. I could tell you stories of how we managed. We managed very well, but the thing is, where it's pertinent is that we just didn't have two nickels to rub together. I can remember the time I had one little blue dress and ten cents until he could sell something, like turkeys. I raised turkeys and he broke horses, and I just didn't know very much because I was what you called a dude girl. That meant that I was born and reared in the city. I went to school in Seattle, went to the University of Washington, and it was during that period of time that I got my first taste of social work because I worked for the Jewish Settlement House down in the slums, and it was a fascinating experience that I wouldn't give up for anything, and determined a later professional career for myself.

But I ran into a social worker by the name of Harriett Gibson, who was dedicated, and she taught me a great deal, and she just thrilled me with what social work could be. So then, as I've said, in the height of the Depression my husband and I married, and we struggled along, and we knew that we could never emerge financially out into the light to educate children or to acquire a ranch, or make a decent life for ourselves if we were handicapped with family before we were ready to have a family. So we tried various forms of birth control, and in those days, when I look back how woefully ignorant we were. Kerosene was one of the things recommended by rural people for killing the sperm, and of course, cold-water douches, which were absolutely no fun. Anyway, so of course, I became pregnant before, and really, later in my life, it was surprising that I didn't become pregnant earlier than I did. It was about, as I remember, oh, I think we were married about eight months when I became pregnant, but I, to be quite personal, had only one functioning ovary, later it was found in an operation. So it's a wonder I did become pregnant.

Anyway, that was disaster. We were just completely horrified, and he agreed with me that we absolutely should not have children. So we sold whatever we could, as I remember, and got about one hundred dollars scraped together, and I went over to Butte to a man whom I knew who was a pharmacist, and he was also the owner of a drug store. His main clientele was with

women of the red-light district, one of the, yes I guess I'd say his main clientele, a huge part of it. Very nice man, but I knew him and I went and explained to him what the problem was, and he realized that this was, that I was speaking practically from desperation. So he gave me the name of a woman whom he said was successful, and his being a pharmacist, I assumed that it would not be a likelihood of real infection, although I don't believe at that time I was too concerned about that. I don't believe I knew enough.

But we went, my husband took me up there to this, it was one of those Butte flats. The woman was obviously part of the, had been at one time a cabbage-patch girl, judging from the make-up and the fancy clothes and so forth. I can say about the abortion itself that it was hideously painful. I believe, I wouldn't be surprised that I might have been, I don't know how far along I was, but I would guess three months. It was done with catheterization, and of course, I was very nervous, that might have been part of it. It was catheterization and packing, and so then we left and went to a Butte hotel and stayed. There was a great deal of hemorrhaging, and I just took care of myself. He and I took care of myself after that. We had driven by car to Butte, and on the way back, I can never tell anybody how, we stayed maybe, well until the hemorrhaging passed, was pretty well over, about I guess five days we stayed. I can remember how painful the ride in the car was. I really stand pain pretty well, but I can remember crying, and I don't cry. I'm not the crying kind, more the kind that gets angry, but I remember how painful that was. And aching, a great deal of aching. So I guess that I must have been fairly far along.

Then some more time passed when I became pregnant again. So I went back to the same woman the second time, but this time I went on the train, and I went alone. I wasn't as fearful or that time I felt very vulnerable emotionally for some reason or another. I suppose that essentially I wanted a child but knew that it was not possible, and that wasn't nearly as difficult, nowhere near, because I just came right back home on the train, and there wasn't as much hemorrhaging then, and I went earlier, I'm sure.

Then there was one other abortion that was performed by a friend and done with slippery elm. The friend received the, or purchased the slippery elm in Livingston from a pharmacist. And that was the history of abortions, and I never became pregnant again until, and I'll have to say, too, that I was thirty years old at that time, until I wanted to have a child, and I was, no, I wasn't thirty, I'll have to correct that. At the time I was married I was twenty-three, and at the time I was thirty, I wanted to have a child, and so there was quite a period of time there after those first three abortions, and there may have been several spontaneous abortions, too, because after you once have three, you're likely to have some. Then I didn't become pregnant again. Then when I was thirty-two, I thought that, I was very much afraid we would not have a family. So I became pregnant again and carried that child very easily, had no problem at all with delivery, three-and-a-half hours. Then two-and-a-half years later I became pregnant with the second child, and can say, in both instances they were daughters, and I can truly say in all sincerity that, two of the most tremendous daughters any mother and father ever had, so they've been a great joy to us. I look back on the whole experience, it was a hard one and a sad

one, but it was worth it, really was worth it because while we didn't become extremely affluent, we did well, and we were able to do well with our children.

Then later, about the time that the youngest daughter was, oh, she was in her, about middle of high school, and the oldest one about ready to go to college, I thought, I will try to see if I can do social work again. So I went and took the exam, also took a, for reasons that they didn't have the right psychological exam in the, well, they left it out, I guess, of the one from the Employment Office, I went over to Helena and had an interview with one of the heads of the Welfare Department. It was a psychological assessment, you know, to see if I had punitive attitudes and so forth, and I guess I did fairly well with that from what I heard later. Anyway, then for fifteen years I worked for, first for the Welfare Department as a social worker, and then I went up into administration and became head of a Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, really Welfare Department, but they'd changed the name by that time. I had a very successful and rewarding experience, and I really worked in many ways to try to help girls get abortions.

I could tell some grizzly stories if you want to know one. Once there was this girl who was retarded and in a wheelchair and had been impregnated by a, she couldn't talk very well, by a married man, and we thought, the people who were really over her thought that she had a tumor, and finally when they got her to a doctor, found out she was pregnant. I was so furious that the doctor I interviewed refused an abortion, under those circumstances. Then there was one doctor that I could refer girls to, young women to, well, they were girls. Some of them were twelve years old, and fourteen, who had been impregnated by one, several instances by the mother's boyfriend, and quite a few of them gave the children up for adoption in those days, and I would put the children, the babies, in an excellent foster home, and made numerous adoptions. Some instances they decided to keep the children, the baby, but not too often. But because when I worked in Livingston we had such a good foster home for infants, quite a few young women who were pregnant out of wedlock used to come there. I think maybe my experience with abortion was, I was able to help some of those girls without pressure, make up their own minds and not be quite so fearful of abortion. Also I can say another thing about, surrounding the history of abortion in the early days in Montana, is I think there's quite a connection between illegal abortion and prostitution. I had worked with, had reason to do social work with prostitutes on a number of occasions. Sometimes it was child welfare situations, a number of times, and various other things. But don't think that they don't become pregnant. They do. And so some of their, they achieve abortions. Now abortion is used as a means of birth control by, I am satisfied, by prostitutes, and particularly when, in the days when, it always was illegal when I practiced. A doctor could, I can't remember just exactly how it could be, oh, very often doctors would perform abortions and call it a cystic ovary, or, they told me and I can't remember exactly the medical term, but they would practice it even in Catholic hospitals, and be all over and done before the head Sister would even know, and they'd call it by another name. I have known of doctors, a doctor's daughter in one instance, who became pregnant, and an abortion was performed, and it was a cystic ovary, called that at that time. So then also in one of the communities in Montana, which was for many years, was

quite isolated because the roads were so poor, I knew of a woman who, I'm well satisfied, had been a prostitute in Butte in the early days, and she performed abortions, only two instances that I know of, and probably there were more that I didn't know of. But I'm sure this is where she learned her skills, because she also, I was told, used the slippery elm technique.

DS: Well, let's go back and start over and rework this whole thing, because there's a whole lot of information in there, and maybe we could begin by first talking about the three abortions that you had and then talk about information that you gathered through your work as a professional social worker, the different aspects of that. That be okay?

EM: Fine.

DS: Okay. First of all, what year did you get married?

EM: 1930.

DS: 1930. So your abortions were all in the '30's?

EM: In 1930.

DS: They were all in 1930?

EM: Let me see. Well, '30 and '31.

DS: '30 and '31, okay. When you first were married to your husband and all this, did you discuss the number of children that you wanted prior to marriage, or after, and how did that discussion go?

EM: We discussed the number of children we wanted and, not the number, exactly, but we knew we didn't want a big family, and it was two or three children, something like that. We knew we wanted to delay it for financial reasons, because we, and it would have been just a terrific burden financially to, and both of us felt very unjust to bring children into the world under the circumstances, the financial circumstances under which we were living. We thought it was our responsibility, we didn't mind taking that sort of deprivation for ourselves, but we didn't think it would be right to do it for children. So we were married ten years, almost ten years, before we had children.

DS: You talked a little bit about the kinds of early birth control that you used. Can you talk a little bit more about what you tried, and how you felt it worked or didn't work, and what the problems were with it?

EM: Oh, well, I think due to the fact that, what turned up later, that I had a cystic ovary, this might be a little invalid, but it was what was the mores of the time, the folk medicine. One was salt-water douches, one was cold douches, kerosene, some kerosene in the douche.

DS: How did that feel?

EM: I can't remember, except that it was always cold, so it was unpleasant. That, it wasn't unpleasant, I mean, it didn't sting or anything. I think I was probably in pretty good physical condition, and there weren't any raw areas. If there were, I'd have felt it! Anyway, then we tried condoms, and let's see, what else. I heard of the diaphragm, and as I remember, I may have tried to fit myself with a diaphragm; I believe I did, but gave that up in a hurry. I just didn't have any faith in it and didn't feel that I had done it right. (Dean comes in.) Let's see, where were we?

DS: You were talking about use of an early diaphragm.

EM: Yeah. I just had so little faith in it that I gave that up. I don't believe I used it but very little.

DS: Where did you hear about it? Or were these prescribed by doctors, or you got the information from other people? How did you acquire this?

EM: I heard about the diaphragm from my mother, and I...

DS: Had she used one?

EM: She told me about it, but I don't know, because in that generation there was little communication on the subject of sex. In fact, when I was about sixteen, I made the remark that, I saw some yardage material, red satin, beautiful color of red, and I said, my, what a passionate color. And my mother said, you must remember she was a New Englander, she said, I will not have two words mentioned in this house, sex and passion! As you'll find out since I dropped my voice at the word, that I still laugh.

DS: So I assume that she was not the one who told you about sexual activity?

EM: Oh, no, no, you learned that, I didn't know much about that really, prior to marriage, and, no, no, the University of Washington where I went and the particular group of people, young women I mixed with, were the last stronghold of puritanism. I smoked because, as a matter of defiance and exerting my independence, but I didn't drink because I thought drinking would lead me down the Primrose Path, but I didn't think smoking ever would. And now, after fifty years of smoking, I suffer from a little bit of, a small, light case of emphysema. I stopped it, and the emphysema came on after I quit smoking. But we didn't, parents were not free with information to their children.

DS: So where did you acquire this birth control information?

EM: I think largely from young women whom I knew, yeah, that's who it was. One was a doctor's daughter who was a real close friend of mine in college, and I talked to her after I was married. Then the other things I learned from conversation with ranch women, about things like salt-water and cold-water douches and kerosene. You know, they'd use anything they thought, like even sleep with a knife under the pillow or something, you know, anything that would limit the size of the families because, while some of them went on and on, and made a virtue out of what was a necessity, went on about how close they were and how wonderful it was to have a large family, I always was very dubious. It was a case of, "He doth protest too much."

DS: Were those conversations comfortable, or how did they come about?

EM: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Some of the ranch women whom I got to know were really more farm women. In Bridger Canyon here, there was one who was sixty-three when I was twenty-three, who was, I was as comfortable with her as I would have been anyone my own age. She was wonderful. I can say that one of the nice things of the generation in which I grew up was that we were not babysat, and your parents took you, if there were social affairs, you either, if they went out to dinner you didn't go and maybe it was the day the hired girl stayed with you, but you knew a lot more grown-ups and were, well, grew up with grown-ups and grew up with relatives, and as a result, you were far more comfortable with people of an older generation than the youngsters who have always been babysat.

DS: Who was responsible for coming up with all this birth control information? Did your husband come up with any of these ideas?

EM: No, no. Ranchers, unless they're the low-grade, what I call low-grade type, men who talk real prurient, and my husband's not one of them. He refers to it as cheap talk. He doesn't, wouldn't object, but he'd sit back maybe and not say anything. But a great number of them do not exchange that kind of information too much, I don't believe. Their association is likely much more with animals than it is with people. Except as young boys growing up, there was some talk, but not too much. My husband didn't seem to, I don't think he knew any more than I did. I know he didn't, which was very little.

DS: It was seen as an area of women's responsibility?

EM: Yes, definitely. Absolutely, absolutely! Although I can say for my husband that he felt women were equal. He never, and as far as intelligence was concerned, he felt they were entirely equal. He had been brought up in an old-fashioned, extremely narrow, very fundamentalist religion-type background, and he threw out the whole works, and rethought things through for himself, and as a result, came up with very modern ideas and attitudes very early, long before the sexual revolution came along. I can remember the time that he was going

to invite a woman of very dubious moral background, a little town, you know, and everybody knew her and all that, and she was kind of a good-old-Joe-type person, and he was going to invite her out. I was so horrified when I was yelling, and I said, I don't want a woman like that around. He said, oh, my goodness, you're just starting to know life for the first time. They aren't any different than anybody else. I feel satisfied in my mind that he never did patronize prostitutes.

DS: How much older than you is he?

EM: He isn't. We're the same age. I think there largely, the fun and games the young men had, or as boys, was drinking moonshine. Going to dances and drinking moonshine, and taking girls out, some girls, but by and large they were nice girls, what was called nice girls in quotes in those days.

DS: Were you familiar with Margaret Sanger at all, or through your social work?

EM: Oh, yes, yes, and through reading. But I didn't know what methods she used or anything, except that on my mother's side of the family, they've all been feminists back as far as even my grandmother was concerned. She was a woman of, we're all independent women. She wanted to be, my grandmother, now when you stop to think of this, was in Wyoming in the early days, she wanted to be the first woman in the United States to vote. She didn't make it. I think there were five ahead of her, and I don't know just how they did it, but I think they went to the State Capital. Or maybe they timed it, I don't know how they did it, but that's the family story. She was very, very independent. Now, there's just no doubt about that, was an independent woman all her life. When she was eighty years old, well, first she sold the family, she and my grandfather separated, and she sold the family ranch and went down to Hollywood, and she bought property. I remember the address, 5232 Hollywood Boulevard, and it made a mint of money. And so she lived down there till she died. She remarried, and she said, I'm not going to be a little old lady with a piece of lace in my hair, and she'd get a red hat and drive her car right straight down into Mexico herself, when she was eighty. She should not have probably been driving, but she did, and that was her. Her second husband said the only good years of his life that he ever had were with her.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

[Tape 1, Side B]

EM: Then my mother was an ardent suffragette, and she marched with the suffragettes, and my father marched with her.

DS: Where?

EM: In Butte. Butte. I can remember they were friends of a Socialist mayor of Butte, who was a Unitarian clergyman. I forgot his name. And I can remember, I think her name was O'Neal, she was a woman who worked for the Democratic Party in the early days, ardently, in Butte, and she called my father and asked him if he would vote for a certain party, and he said, yes, oh, yes, my wife and I will vote for so-and-so. My mother stepped to the phone and said, don't be too sure I'll vote for him.

DS: What was your mother's name, or your parents' name?

EM: My father was John, and my mother belonged to the, she was Elsie Dana. And the Danas are an old New England family, very independent-minded. And my father was of Scottish descent, Scottish and some Irish. I guess one Presbyterian grandfather of his in Northern Ireland married a very beautiful west-country Irish girl, and the feeling was so high that they left and went for a year to St. Petersburg, Russia, and he was in the textile trade. Then he came to the United States and located at Richmond, Virginia, and then later went north to New York.

DS: Have you obtained, or did your mother write journals or letters, or do you have any material left over?

EM: I don't have any of those things. There were enough moves that some things were stored and then the storage not kept up, particularly during the Depression. No, I don't, but I am about to write the story of the women in my family, because some of those stories are just priceless. I am, I'm going to put it on tape.

DS: Wonderful. Excellent. Great, because that really is invaluable and there's no other way it's going to be recorded.

EM: Oh, yes. One of the stories that I think is precious is that my mother was called the horse-collar baby, and she was born en-route from Shasta, California, to Montana. Not right in a wagon train, but the wagon train started out from Shasta, and then after they'd just crossed the line into Oregon, Lakeview, Oregon, the baby came, who was my mother. And after my grandmother rested for a while, then they resumed the journey. The habit with wagon trains was not to unharness the horses at noon. Well, first they always had hot cakes in the morning for breakfast, and then they put tallow or whatever grease they had, or meat, and then rolled the ones left over up and used those for lunch. And so they didn't have a hot lunch, and they just loosened the harness a little and let the horses rest and breathe for a while, and then went

on, but then they stopped and took the big horse collars off in the evening and had a big meal in the evening and had a fire. She would help prepare the evening meal. Well, she stuck a pillow in the open end of the horse collar and threw a blanket over the whole thing and put the baby in there. It was a pioneer baby pen, play pen. So that's why they called my mother the horse-collar baby. And my grandmother, after they were in, they just visited in Montana for a while, till they went to Salmon, Idaho, and stayed that winter, and the miners there had not seen a little white girl for about five years, and they opened up every package of Arbuckle coffee, which was an old brand, and it had a peppermint stick in it, to give my aunt, who was a beautiful little four-year-old, three or four-year-old, and she really was the most beautiful little child, beautiful woman all her life, to give her the candy because they were so entranced with her. Then they went on up to the Little Blackfoot where my great-uncle lived, and then from there they went on down through the Park, through Yellowstone Park to Wyoming where some of the other family, rest of the family was located, near Parkman, near Sheridan. My grandfather established a ranch down there. But when they went through the Park, soldiers were in the Park. My mother was born in 1875, I believe, yeah, no 1885, and she was not over two years old, so it must have been about 1887. And my grandmother waded into those, she wore a long apron that went clear to her floor, or you know, ankles and tied around the waist, and she'd take the edges, lower edges of that apron and wade in those pools and flip fish enough out, didn't have to fish for fish, she just flipped them out and had enough for the whole, they were always with a wagon train, I don't know who all else was with them. But that was another one of the family stories.

DS: I will really look forward to your writing it. Write it. I'd love to see it. That would be wonderful.

EM: Well, there are quite a few of those stories. I'll try to remember them. They're oral history so far, and I'll get them down.

DS: I think that's the most important part, getting it down. Someone can always transcribe it later. Real important.

EM: Oh, yeah. So we ought to get back to our project. You have some other questions.

DS: Okay, when you first discovered you were pregnant the first time around, how did you know that this pharmacist in Butte might have information to help you?

EM: Because I'd heard about him from my parents. They knew him, you know, they'd lived in Butte, and they knew him. He was a very fine, very respectable man, but he, there was some discussion at home how his clientele largely were these women, and I didn't know who else to turn to. I wouldn't, I was afraid to go to a doctor for fear of a turndown, and so I went to him as a friend.

DS: And you had already known him as a child?

EM: Yeah, he knew me as a child, yes.

DS: What was his name, do you remember?

EM: His name was Montgomery.

DS: What did he say to you? Did he suggest any kind of pills?

EM: Oh, no, no. When I talked to him, and I talked to him very directly, he had complete understanding of the situation I was up against, and he was a kindly man, and he just said, this woman has had a lot of experience, and everything I've heard, it's been all right. So he gave me her name.

DS: And you just walked over to her office?

EM: Yeah, I had the address. He gave me the name and the address, and I went there.

DS: Can you tell me something more about her, like do you remember her name, how old was she?

EM: I don't remember her name. I would guess she was along about fifty, and she had coal-black dyed hair, which was a mark of the, you know, the blue-black dyed hair was one of the things the prostitutes used to do. Their hair was red hennaed or black, one or the other.

DS: Do you remember her address? What street she was on?

EM: No. I believe it was South Montana Street. I don't remember the address. It was one of those, Butte, you know, was filled with flats, which is, I guess, Butte and Boston and San Francisco are the only towns in the United States that have so large a percentage of the buildings were what you called flats, which were double duplexes. Downstairs duplex and then stairways running up. And she was in, I believe she, I had the impression when I went in, it was ground floor and I went up some steps, that she may have had the whole one side of that. There was a stairway in her side that went up, and I think there were people upstairs, you could hear, because when I would moan or, be evidence that I was in pain, she would hush me. She said, people think I'm killing you. So I knew there were other people up there, so I don't know what it was, what was going on.

DS: What was her place like? Can you describe it? Was it in her home, was it in her office?

EM: Well, yes, it was, no, it was a home. But it was a sort of an office bedroom off to one side on the ground floor that had linoleum, and it was very clean. One of the reasons that, I know now, that I'm sure her background, and maybe it may have been a bordello for all I know, or a

house of prostitution, was that, and she may have been a madam, that the odor that was in there, I have done social work in what you call an old-time parlor house, and the odor is Lysol and sandalwood incense. And also I know that in the cleaning establishments when they get the costumes that the prostitutes, old-time prostitutes of that generation used to, or even later than that there've been some houses where they wore costumes. Some baby doll costumes. You know that some men like little girl types, and so forth. There's that odor of sandalwood incense and Lysol is very apparent on those clothes. And that house reeked of sandalwood incense and Lysol. She had a couch that was a little bit like an operating, an examining table. It was a table.

DS: She examined you, or did she just accept your word that you were pregnant?

EM: Just accept my word that I was pregnant and proceeded to do the catheterization and the packing.

DS: Did she tell you what she was going to do?

EM: No, not a word. Just went right at it, and then I paid her.

DS: Did your husband go with you through this whole process?

EM: No, no. He was outside in the car. I don't think she would have welcomed that. The fewer people knew the better.

DS: What did she pack you with, do you know?

EM: As far as I could tell, it was cotton. And it was a rubber catheter, as I remember. This was quite a long time ago, fifty years ago you know, as my memory of it is. She said when she told me then that when the cramping became severe, to pull it out, the cotton and the catheter, and the implication was that if I could pass a large clot at least the size of the, or I guess I don't remember whether it was she who told me or someone else, a clot the size of the end of your thumb, that I could be sure that the abortion was successful. But it was quite a lot larger than that I'm sure. Also, I do want to tell you that I had never any feeling particularly with the first one, of, I had just a sense of relief, and never have I ever had any feeling of remorse over it, or guilt or shame or anything else. I thought it was the right thing to do. No doubt that came from my background that, it was a hard thing to do, and a hurting thing, and the second one I felt vulnerable and there was a little emotion, but never did I regret it, never.

DS: In dealing with this woman the two different times you went to her for an abortion, did she say anything or give you any indication of why she did abortions? And what was her attitude, do you know?

EM: No, no. There was no conversation much. As I remember, I just told her my name and where I lived and my address, and that was all. She just performed the abortion, and she was cheerful and nice enough about it, but she wasn't solicitous or, she was just very matter-of-fact, and I got the impression that she was totally interested in the money.

DS: How much did it cost the second time versus the 100 dollars the first time?

EM: Both, 100 dollars every time. And in the Depression, 100 dollars was like 500 dollars would be now. It was an enormous amount of money.

DS: So how long were you in her procedure room would you guess?

EM: Total, not more than half an hour, if that long.

DS: So then you went and stayed in a motel, or a hotel?

EM: Hotel. That was the day before motels. They didn't have motels.

DS: And how long before the intense cramping really started, and what happened?

EM: As I remember, it was fairly fast, and it was in the night that the body of cells, mass of cells, was discharged, or fetus, and it wasn't that, I was able to walk and get around and so forth. It was kind of painful, I will say that. The second and the third time not painful.

DS: Was there a bathroom or an outhouse, or what did you do?

EM: Yes, oh yeah, it was a hotel, you see. At home, at the time of the third abortion at home, as I remember, we had what we used what you called the combinettes. You know, well, that's a large receptacle, you know the chamber pots that went under the bed, well there was a big one that had a lid on it and a bale, and it used to tip, the bowl of water, you know, that had the pitcher, well, that was to wash with in the morning, and you would pour that into the, you'd put the chamber pot, the contents of the chamber pot, and the contents of the water you washed in, and if defecation was needed, you used the combinette. It had a crocheted ring that left an imprint! But that was to keep you from sitting on the cold metal, or enamel.

DS: Much appreciated, I'm sure.

EM: Well, I think it was an improvement over the cold enamel.

DS: So the first time you ended up staying in Butte for about five days?

EM: Yes, and then came on, we had driven over in the car, and we came back, and as I remember, we came back via Boulder, and that was a kind of a mean route.

DS: In what ways did the second abortion experience differ from the first, if any?

EM: The fact that I felt so vulnerable, and maybe it was because I was all alone. That might have been the reason that I emotionally felt a little on the weepy side. And it wasn't that I was worried so much about the abortion. I think it was the fact that my husband hadn't been able to go with me, because there was the ticket over and back, and the reason that we decided on the train was we thought, well, it was cheaper than going to a hotel and staying, and not as wearing, not as painful. Thought I could get back home before the whole situation, before the abortion would be accomplished, and that's what happened. It was. But it was the going alone that I didn't like.

DS: Why didn't your husband accompany you?

EM: Financial. Because we couldn't afford the railroad ticket over and back.

DS: And the fee for the abortion on top of it?

EM: Well, the fee, and the fee for the abortion on top of that.

DS: Were you living here at the time, in Bozeman?

EM: Living in Bridger Canyon.

DS: Bridger Canyon. Who did you tell on these first two abortion incidences besides your husband? Who else knew about this experience?

EM: Nobody.

DS: Nobody?

EM: Nobody. Nobody but nobody, except my mother. I told my mother.

DS: And what was her response?

EM: Oh, she felt as I did, that it was a responsible act, that it would be irresponsible to bring children into the world under our circumstances.

DS: Why didn't you discuss it with, say, your other women friends, do you have any idea?

EM: Because it was just not done. And because I was afraid of the repercussions of being considered a complete—

DS: So for all you know, other women at the same time could have been having abortions that—

EM: Oh, I'm sure they did, I'm sure they did. Because the ones that didn't have twelve and thirteen children had something. Now you, for sure you know that.

DS: Well, what was the length of time between your first and second abortions?

EM: Let's see, it must have been about November, the first one, and the second one must have been about April.

DS: What form of contraception were you using in between?

EM: Probably condoms or withdrawal, or all the ones that don't work.

DS: The third time, then, that you got pregnant, what were you using?

EM: Probably nothing, because the third time I was pregnant was probably a year later. I can't remember it exactly.

DS: And why, the third time, did you decide to not go back to this woman?

EM: Probably because I had a cheaper way of doing it.

DS: Would you tell me something about how that happened?

EM: Well, this friend was...that's one I'd just as soon not talk too much about, except to say that it was a friend, and it was done with slippery elm.

DS: How do you use slippery elm?

EM: It is soaked a little bit, to make it real slippery, and sharpened. It's a long, oh, the piece is about ten inches long, at least ten inches long. The membrane, it is inserted through the uterus and penetrates the membrane, then is left in like a catheter. And then the moisture in the body makes it swell, and it swells way up until it, oh, gets to be about like that.

DS: About the size of a quarter, or a dime?

EM: Oh, somewhere around, not quite as big as a quarter. I'd say in between. Then a heavy flow of blood starts coming. Why it's, as I remember, I can't remember whether I took it out or it came out by itself. But it was very successful.

DS: How long did you leave it in, do you remember?

EM: I don't really, but as I, my guess is that it was left in at least twenty-four hours, maybe thirty-six.

DS: Did this other person have some kind of medical background, or how did she know how to do this, do you know?

EM: Well, no, no medical background, but had received the information and knew where to go get the slippery elm, got it in Livingston.

DS: Did you have to have a prescription for it?

EM: No. You just bought it at the drug store.

DS: And so then you had the abortion at home that time?

EM: Yes. It wasn't bad.

DS: In what ways would you describe, say the third abortion being different than the first two?

EM: Much, much more comfortable, much less frightened, and the whole thing was, I think, a more successful experience. And then after that I never could get pregnant.

DS: Did she charge you anything?

EM: No, she was a friend.

DS: Is there anything else you want to say about those first three abortions?

EM: No, I think that's about it. I did want to say that there isn't, you know how there's all the talk about how emotional repercussions and how you wonder all your life and all that, there may have been a few fleeting, stray thoughts since we never had a boy, that maybe some one of those might have been a boy, but so what? It would have been real wrong just for your own emotional needs to have brought the children into the world at that time in our lives.

DS: Maybe we could go on to some of this other material that you have partly because of your involvement in social work. In this area here you said there were, you got involved in social work. How often did you run into cases where women had had abortions or were pregnant and had unwanted pregnancies, and what did they decide to do about them?

EM: So many, many unwanted pregnancies. I could not tell you how many. In fact, about seven, eight years ago, there was a doctor in the Legislature who said that, testified that forty percent of the women who were pregnant, in his estimation, did not want the children. I can say of all

the people who were on relief, you know, what the popular term was, when I retired, I thought to myself, what one factor is the thing that is most conducive to the creation of social problems, and every kind of social problem that you ever wanted to deal with, and I came to the conclusion, in thinking back, that it was unwanted pregnancies. The greatest number of them brought the children into the world and then had trouble with the husbands, or the husbands couldn't stand having that number of children. There was one particular situation there was one woman had fourteen, and it was two husbands. Finally I got the last husband talked into a vasectomy, and she left him anyway. Anyway, oh, I could tell you, in one family there was a young girl, and I traced her record back to the first grade, her school record, and she was very bright, nice, bright, normal girl. And her mother had a boyfriend that she didn't like very well, so she foisted the boyfriend off on this girl when she was only twelve years old. She just encouraged the girl to go riding with him in the afternoon, and of course, she proceeded to become pregnant out of wedlock. The little girl even wrote a letter, knew how unjust this was, and wrote a letter to the Chief of Police, and the Chief of Police told me that he had received it, he didn't show the letter.

DS: In Bozeman, or Livingston?

EM: In Livingston. And so, I have to be careful about identifying where, because there's just an awful lot more to this story. Then the girl started functioning on a retarded level in school. Then finally she took up with a really awful old man, and she had two or three children. Finally the two or three children were being reared by her mother, who was a real deviate in lots of ways, and told me she was. But the worst—that wasn't what bothered me as much—was that she had hired a retarded woman to care for these children, and this horrid old man that was—I don't even know if he was the father of the children, I don't know what—hung around the house a lot. I was very afraid...The children were three and four years old and weren't talking, and I was afraid of sexual abuse of the children. I was real [unintelligible] of that.

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

[Tape 2, Side A]

EM: —and the welfare department was given custody of the children. I placed them out of county, and they were very much afraid of men. One was a little boy and one was a little girl, and finally that was overcome and finally, a very, very fine family adopted them.

DS: Was this in the '30s?

EM: Yeah this was in the early '50s. That was after I was doing social work.

DS: When did you start working and doing social work?

EM: I started doing social work in 1957 after...Then I passed the...Well, I went in on, as I said, psychiatric interview and, of course, did a lot of in service training. Then I decided to go back to college. I went to Goddard [College] in Vermont on the adult degree program and got my degree when I was 60 years of age. I left the door wide open so I could go back to doing...to get a master's, but then I thought I was a little old for a master's so I never did go get the master's.

DS: So much of your social work experience was in the late '50s and '60s?

EM: Yes. Yes, it was. Except for the very early social work experience that was in the slums in Seattle.

DS: Well that would make an interesting comparison—

EM: It was.

DS: —like in both of those two cases, what information did you ever get on women who tried to terminate pregnancies?

EM: In the early—

DS: Yes.

EM: I didn't have any of that. Whatever real sensitive material was procured at that time was done by this girl...Her last name was Gibson, seems to me her first name was Hazel. I can't remember. She was the real qualified social worker at the Jewish settlement house, and it was supported by Hadassah and B'nai Beth (?). I'm well satisfied that there was plenty of money for these Jewish girls that needed abortions, and I'm sure the Jewish people routinely secured abortions. I think that would be another history in itself, because the Jewish people never had huge families, and they educated their children. Of course, that was one of the values in my family was a very high priority put on education. That was considered your responsibility as a parent. That was another reason for the abortions, because if you had too many children you

weren't going to be able to educate them and do what was right for them in this world—get them started out.

DS: And you had two children.

EM: Two children, and one has a master's and the other's working on a master's. [laughs] That was accomplished.

DS: So in the '50s, what kind of experience did you have with women who were pregnant and didn't want to be, either out of wedlock or in wedlock, and what did they decide to do about that?

EM: The greatest number of cases that...because doctors would not perform abortions in extreme cases even—the one that I mentioned, the retarded girl who was in a wheelchair, just terrible cases of abuse—doctors still were so frightened of doing abortions they just wouldn't do it. Now the one of the places that I heard of that was very good was a woman doctor in Miles City in the early days. You probably know of her. She was successful and clean and pretty expensive.

DS: Did you send people to her?

EM: Yes, you bet I did.

DS: How did you know about Doctor Sadie?

EM: There was a professional person's daughter became pregnant out of wedlock and told me about this woman and had been referred by a doctor in Bozeman here. The doctor did not tell me, but I sent quite a few over to her.

But this one terrible case, I'll go back on that. This girl that functioned...and I had to remove those children. Well, she had had another child, who had been reared with the grandmother, and that child was so full of rage at all women for the way he'd been treated as a child and I'm not sure just all how he'd been treated. He—about four years ago—was the person who raped and killed an 83-year-old woman in a wheelchair in Great Falls. Was from that family. His mother was the one who had been seduced by this awful old man in Livingston.

DS: Do you see any connection between those? You're implying in some way that there is.

EM: Oh, I should say there is. Because don't think that boy didn't know all about that, because that boy came to my office and told me he knew. He said, "They keep me down in the basement." He said, "But I know what's going on upstairs." For one thing he hated being on welfare, just hated it, and he had been taunted by the other students. The very bad reputation

his family had was ground into his soul, and he got so he hated all women and he was just full of rage.

DS: When you were working in this area, you talked routinely to all the doctors in the area. What was their response when you asked them if they would either do abortions or do referrals for abortion? Why did they say they wouldn't do it?

EM: I think just [unintelligible] themselves. They were scared to death of punitive action on the part of, well I think probably, other doctors, of people of certain religious denominations.

DS: You also said earlier that you either had information or thought that some doctors did them for either their regular clients or their daughters, et cetera.

EM: I know they did. They did them for each other. For instance if a doctor's daughter became pregnant out of wedlock, I know of one instance that this was done and called a cystic... [pauses] Well, anyway—

DS: Ovary? Or something?

EM: Ovary, yes. A cystic ovary. A cyst that had to be removed from the ovary.

DS: In that case, was it a young, unmarried woman?

EM: Oh, yes. It was a doctor's daughter, she was unmarried, and she became pregnant. It was a very good thing that it was done, because she ended up marrying a very...made a very fine marriage, and she has led a courageous and fine and good life. That's as much as I can say about it, because you can identify it if I said very much.

DS: Do you know other cases in which that happened?

EM: Where professional men?

DS: Yes. Where doctors did them for women they already knew or families—

EM: I don't know about them doing for women, but it was out of wedlock, youngsters who were out of wedlock, pregnant out of wedlock, yes.

DS: The doctor would do them for them?

EM: Yes. I don't know what doctor did in one case, but I remember the family—mother of one young woman—came to me, and she wanted to get the girl out of town and into a school. I helped her do that.

DS: For unwed mothers?

EM: Oh no. She had had an illegitimate pregnancy that had been terminated and had an abortion. Oh I know of...oh, if I stop to think about it I know of several, three or four or five instances of that. They didn't want it to happen again, in this particular instance that the mother came to me, because she was getting real chummy with another boyfriend. One of the funniest stories that I knew of was that after there had been an abortion...This was fairly recent. This girl became pregnant out of wedlock, and her mother was very prominent in the Right to Life group but right away she wanted to know where you could find abortions. [laughs] She got the information. She did not get it from me, may I say, but. When she, the girl, came back—she went out of state—why, the information was given to the mother that the girl must get on a method of contraception. The mother said, “Oh no, no, no, she's learned her lesson. She's never going to have another thing to do with any of the boys.” Six weeks later, the girl was pregnant again.

DS: What did she do that time?

EM: I don't know what happened that time, but I think—I assume—the same thing happened over again. How absolutely ignorant, naïve parents can be, and parents who are much, much younger generation than I am, and I would think more intelligent than I ever was at that time, but they're not. When Anne Seibel (?) was head of sex education at the Montana State University, I used to lecture, oh, two or three times a year to her combined classes. I would talk about abortion. Because I was a grandmother, I was retired, I had been a social worker, the Right to Lifers or particular religious denominations could not go after...they couldn't hurt me. They couldn't get my job because I wasn't employed. [laughs] So I would be very frank with the youngsters. In fact, I talked to 11 different groups in Bozeman. But my tack was, I always took it from the view of a social worker. What happens to the children who are truly unwanted and unloved? I never had one hostile question, except that there was one young woman who, right at the time just before the bell was to ring at Montana State, got up and tried to explain the Catholic point of view.

DS: Did you also tell them about your experience?

EM: No. No, I never did.

DS: I'm a bit confused at one point here, if we could go back. On one hand you said that many of these doctors in this community were afraid for their jobs, reputations, et cetera.

EM: Their reputation, I'd say, more than anything else.

DS: Okay, and on the other hand, they were in fact doing a fair number of abortions for their own—

EM: I think as far as Bozeman's concerned...Oh yes, they did for each other. But that was so hush hush, they thought. They thought no one would ever know that. But you know, nothing can be kept secret—absolutely nothing. So a certain amount seeps out. In fact, even the way that the youngsters themselves tell. They always tell their best friend, or almost always do. But—

DS: So they did it for each other's families. Do you know if they, or have any information on their having done it, for say, daughters of families that were their regular clients—their regular patients?

EM: Oh yes, I'm sure they did. In talking with nurses was where I got some of my information. That, and ones who assisted in the operating room, thought it was all over and done with.

DS: The nurses that you talked to, was it their view, or had they been told that this was in fact a cystic ovary, or was that...was the word abortion ever used—

EM: No! Abortion was never used!

DS: —or was this just played as something else?

EM: They knew it was an abortion. They were knowledgeable enough to know that this was what was going on, but the records said cystic ovary, or...there's another term. In fact, one doctor, when I rather jokingly said, "Oh, they do it all time," and he told me, yes, they do and they call it such and such and such. But I don't remember the name—the term.

DS: So they didn't discuss it in terms of abortion, but they all knew that was what it was. Well there were two people in Bozeman who were doing abortions at the time. Dr. Levella Petrach (?) and Dr. Balles.

EM: Bayles. [Bae-les]

DS: Bayles.

EM: Is the right way to say his name.

DS: Bayles.

EM: B-a-y-l-e-s, I think is the way to spell his name. Bayles. Yes. Yes, I did know that.

DS: Did you know of either of them, and what is it that you know about—

EM: I didn't, I just knew the reputation, that they were supposed to be doing abortions. I didn't know that...Is Dr. Bayles still alive?

DS: Not to my knowledge.

EM: I knew that he had the penthouse on the...for living quarters on the top of the Bozeman, and that was his office was on the top floor and lord knows where else. I don't know. But I did have some of his clients but not any that had abortions.

DS: So he was also a regular gynecologist? Or family physician?

EM: He was a family physician. I don't believe he was a gynecologist. But I did have some...He owned the Stage Coach Inn in West Yellowstone. I worked quite closely with some of the, with the sheriff's office—the police—and I received information that—well it was common knowledge—that there was prostitution going on. In fact, one of the sheriff's staff took, brought two young girls to Bozeman to get them away from the Stage Coach Inn.

DS: Prostitution was going on in the Stage Coach Inn?

EM: Oh yes, and at the time that Dr. Bayles...Dr. Bayles was up there quite a lot. Yes, his reputation was very unsavory.

DS: Given his reputation being unsavory, why did, or why would these other people like you, who dealt with his clients, go to him? Were they aware of his reputation?

EM: Oh, they don't care. He didn't charge them much, and he had a bedside manner though you couldn't believe it. I think he was probably a very good, pretty good doctor otherwise. Elderly people loved him! He had a lot of older people who would come from...He originally came from Townsend. I guess originally he was married to a woman doctor, his first marriage, in Townsend. I don't know what all happened. But there was quite a history with Dr. Bayles that I knew of.

DS: What was he like as a person, the times that you met him?

EM: Tall, very blond, very fair skinned, blue eyed. My first contact with Dr. Bayles was when our youngest daughter was born in Townsend in the hospital there. Dr. Nash, who was eminently respectable—eminent and had a great deal of integrity—was his partner.

DS: He delivered your daughter?

EM: He delivered the daughter. McElway (?) and Nash together and then Bayles had a...that was about the time...Bayles was there at the time that daughter was born, and he came in and visited with me in there in the room. Oh, you know, little towns, you learn a lot, and I had boarded and roomed in Townsend for a while before she was born and heard a lot of the stories about Dr. Bayles. But he really was a very kindly man, and I think he really had the

welfare of his patients at heart. I think had I had a daughter pregnant out of wedlock I wouldn't have been afraid to go to him.

DS: When was your daughter born? This was '40—

EM: In 1940. One born in '40, and one born in '42.

DS: And Dr. Bayles was still in Townsend—

EM: In 1940.

DS: And you said he had a reputation at that time. A reputation that he was doing abortions in Townsend?

EM: No, I didn't know that he was doing abortions in Townsend, no, I don't believe so. If he did, it was certainly not in that hospital. I feel sure of that, because of Dr. Nash. I don't think Nash would have tolerated it one minute. Nash was Roman Catholic, a devout Roman Catholic. I talked to him before this first child was born about, if there were real complications where you'd have to make a decision between the death of the mother and the death of the child in case of, say, a hydrocephalic, he said he'd step out of the case in a case like that and call in Dr. McElway if there had to be something done, like take the life of the child to spare the life of the mother or something. I cleared that with him before I ever had him as a doctor.

DS: Did you tell him about your previous abortions?

EM: No. Never told anybody. Except my mother.

DS: Did you know anyone who went to Dr. Bayles?

EM: For an abortion, no. No, I can't say that I did.

DS: Or Dr. Petrach?

EM: No. Just, had heard about them. Dr. Petrach, I think, left Bozeman for a while, or was gone for quite a while. I'm not sure why.

DS: She died only recently too.

You said you also felt that there was a strong connection between prostitution and abortion. What's your basis for thinking that?

EM: Because those women get pregnant. Because the women who had an association...two whom I was pretty well sure had been prostitutes were skilled. One was a woman in the country who gave...who had done two abortions that I knew of.

DS: These are women that you worked with?

EM: No. Now, the one in the country I knew as a friend. I just knew her enough to know that that probably was her background. Her husband treated her with the greatest amount of disdain. Terrible! In fact, she was a walked on doormat. This other one was the one that I went to in Butte for my own abortions. I'm satisfied she came out of the, what they in Butte call the cabbage patch. Then I had worked at—

DS: How did you know that this first woman was involved with abortion in any way?

EM: Because I knew the two young women who received abortions at her hands, who told me.

DS: Young unmarried women?

EM: Yes.

Later in their lives they told me, not at the time that it occurred.

DS: About when was she practicing then?

EM: Oh, about the '30s. No, maybe...Yeah, between 1930 and 1940.

DS: Do you know what techniques she used?

EM: Have no idea. No idea at all. Just knew that she had done this as a neighborly, kind act for two girls.

DS: How did these women happen to tell you this?

EM: I think it was because I was a social worker. In both instances, there were problems in their lives, and one came down real late at night to talk to me. Called me and asked me if I'd just listen to her, and I said sure. So she came and talked to me. Then the other one...oh, it's been so long ago that she told me, but just told me every briefly. This one recapped her whole life, so I...and I've really, well, had my suspicions before that time.

DS: Why had she sought an abortion, do you remember?

EM: Oh, unwed mothers. The disgrace of it all, you know, it was way back in the '30s.

DS: What would happen to a woman who was, say in the '30s, pregnant and had a child out of wedlock?

EM: Well, it depended a lot on the family. Now, some families would have kept her, and she'd have gone out to work and the mother would have reared the child. In one case, I knew of a college girl whose parents put her clothes out on the porch and said, "Never darken our door again." Beautiful and lovely girl.

DS: Middle class family?

EM: Oh yes, absolutely. Then another instance I knew of was...This was a girl that I met through social work practices, and she belonged to a religious denomination, and if she—I knew two of these—if she stood up in church and testified, confessed that—she didn't need to say who the father was—but confessed to her sin, she was absolved of all blame. Then they, one of them married and was, seemed to have status in the community. In her church, at least, they really seem to accept her. The other one was on a training program to be a dental technician, and she was the one most seductive girl I ever ran into in my life. [laughs] I went to the dentist yesterday to have a tooth fixed, and I thought of her again and thought, she's not here in this town—another town in the state, large town. I thought, I pitied the dentist that hired her. I'll bet she's wrecked a whole bunch of marriages.

DS: So some families would have kept the daughter at home and kept the child within the family.

EM: Yes.

DS: What about in other families? Some would kick them out—

EM: Yes. Yes.

DS: Which was most common around here?

EM: I think most often they kept the child and reared the child within the family.

DS: How did they explain the child?

EM: And then, little later, they all went on welfare.

DS: So they were often poorer people?

EM: Well, they didn't have to be too poor. Welfare rules at the time were that if the child was out of...if she was pregnant out of wedlock they had to put her on the rolls. I still think that may still be the case. She was considered emancipated. When I was working for the welfare

department, had middle class families come in and I would say, "Well, why don't you rear the child?"

"Well, my husband has heart trouble," or this or that. Or first, one of the cases I remember, they wanted the real young ones, oh, 16 and 17, to get married, because she was pregnant out of wedlock and would I try to influence the judge, which I didn't do, but the judge did let them get married. They had to have a judge's permission. They promised up one street and down the other that they would take care of this child. I said, "Well, now, he's not going to be able to earn a living," and this and that and this and that. Oh, that would never happen. Well, minute that that baby was born, they were in the welfare department, applying for welfare, and I had to put the young girl on. "My husband's had a heart attack," I'm not sure he did. All the rest of it, you know. No, that's why the welfare department got into such a mess is because of the out of wedlock pregnancies just zoomed, as you know, throughout the state. They learned that they could get on welfare. I used to tell the county commissioners, they have us over a barrel. You can't let a little baby starve. If you punish the mother by cutting her rations, that baby's going to suffer. So where are you? You have no other alternative. Then I would try to get them into training programs and so forth and so forth.

DS: Did you ever have women who came to you who had self-induced abortions, or who in the process of getting pregnant and not wanting the child had tried to self-abort?

EM: I think, as I remember, there was a very few who mentioned that. One instance in particular was that they got...I don't remember what the...I just remember a knitting needle or something, but ended up in the hospital. I don't think...I know that in that instance, the abortion was not successful and the baby was carried to term and was disliked by the mother and the father, developed eczema, asthma. I had occasion to...I lived with social work long enough to follow some of those cases. She finally got away from home and happened...The grandmother and grandfather loved her dearly and gave her the parenting. So she developed into a pretty nice little girl. But I can remember when she was little, I was just sick because here she was cross-eyed, she had asthma, and she had eczema. The mother and father were coming in, talking to me, and the mother telling me about their terrible family fights and so forth and so forth. Finally, that girl turned out all right. She's had a, I think, developed into a normal sort of person and has a happy life, as far as I know.

DS: Sounds like she had a rough time.

EM: Oh, it was sad. [telephone rings]

[End of Tape 2, Side A]

[Tape 2, Side B]

DS: You made some mention at one point about spontaneous abortions, and perhaps there was a connection. You want to say anything about that?

EM: Oh, yeah. Well, when our first daughter was born in Great Falls, I talked to a doctor there who delivered her and told him that I had had these...I believe I told him I had two. He said, at the time, that it would...I believe that he's the one...Yeah, I'm sure he must be...that there was, a person who had had abortions had a tendency to have spontaneous abortions, and between the first and second child, I might have had a spontaneous abortion I don't know. I may have had others that I didn't know about, you know, didn't recognize, just a very heavy menstrual flow.

DS: They're very common anyway.

EM: Yeah.

DS: Okay. Another question on the issue of prostitution is you said that you had some clients in your social work practice that you felt were prostitutes.

EM: Oh, absolutely.

DS: That you knew?

EM: Had a history of prostitution, yes.

DS: Where were they working in—

EM: Well, largely in Livingston. One of them had, I think, had an arrested case of syphilis and just had very little mentality left. Well, she was delusional. She felt that she was a faith healer, and she'd gone to doctors and they encouraged her to go ahead and be a faith healer. She was a very sweet, very pretty woman. When prostitutes get old, they go on welfare.

DS: Is that the way that you were seeing these people?

EM: Well, some of them. Now another one, I had to go out and interview because I had received a complaint that she was foster homing a child. She was a Mexican girl. In Livingston at that time, ten years ago, they mug shot and fingerprinted prostitutes. I think, in that instance, everything was all right. Another instance was one who was a big-time prostitute and, I think, on the route that the Mafia...you know, they keep them for a time in one place, and then they move them to another and to another. I have been told—I don't know how true it is—that the madams have a convention once a year at Lake Tahoe and sort of pick girls that they want, to

start out at least, for a certain length of time. Some of this I have learned from other social workers.

One instance, the one that I had most personal contact with for the longest length of time, she had three children that she was leaving without supervision. There was a stream of boys running to the house, and she gave the 15-year-old daughter, who was a very lovely, very pretty girl, a car, and she was gone with it all the time. Then there was the little 12-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl, something like that, left at home, and neighbors were complaining. The children, she had tried to leave people—housekeepers—and the children run them off, get mean. You know how your teenagers, they're very independent and we can do it ourselves. So I had to have them in, the mother in and this older daughter in, and really talk to them—that they could all be taken away and put in foster homes unless these youngsters shaped up and treated a housekeeper right. I received information from the county attorney, from various sources, about this woman. She was really a sketch! She wanted to show her disdain for me, so she would never wear one bit of make-up, and she really was a very homely woman without all her make-up and false eyelashes and so forth. She'd always have her...shampoo her hair or have her hair in a towel when she'd come, just to show me that I was establishment and she didn't care what I saw her looking like, see.

Then I had quite a little bit of occasion to have to do with a house of prostitution in Three Forks, because an old man, who is now dead, was the...he did the cleaning for them, and he received welfare. I would have to take whatever earnings he had from cleaning away from his welfare grant. He didn't get hardly anything. But one time the public health nurse, who was young and feisty, went with me. She was practicing on my case load. She got into a fight with the procurer, who was the boss down there. Of course, I being older, knew we'd never get anywhere if we got into a fight with him. [laughs] We were looking for, also doing venereal disease tests, and so I said to him, Mr. So-and-So...Incidentally, he's related to one of the very eminent Bozeman families, and they just laugh and say, "Oh, he's such an eccentric!" He is that! Anyway, I said, "Mr. So-and-So, would you excuse me. If we could, even I could go into the..." We were out in the foyer of sort of the, it was like a hotel, and then the ground floor was the house of prostitution, and the upstairs the old man lived up there. Anyway, this old man was interesting, too. He was so afraid that he would be thrown out of the United States because he was a seaman and had entered illegally, but nobody was going to do that at 80 years of age. Anyway, I went into the house of prostitution with this procurer, and we got our business settled, what we had to find out and know. He was very full of chat and he'd come up to...He liked me and he decided he'd come up to the office, and they referred to him around the office as my boyfriend because he came up fairly often and would want to come in and talk! [laughs] He told me all about parlor houses, and of course, I was interested to learn that this one down in Three Forks was an old-fashioned parlor house and so forth and so forth and so forth.

DS: How long have the houses been closed?

EM: Here in—

DS: Did that happen during your time as—

EM: Well, the parlor house wasn't closed. It's been closed here in Bozeman itself since about [pauses] I would say about, 1960.

DS: That's what I hear. Were you working then?

EM: Yes, yes, I was here.

DS: And you spent a fair amount of time with law enforcement people, the sheriffs, and—

EM: Yes, yeah.

DS: Did they ever discuss with you the abortionists in town?

EM: Only Dr. Bayles, and only to say that they didn't think any young...There were these two young girls that took jobs as waitresses, and they wanted to get them out of West Yellowstone. One took one of them into his own home, and another one, I think we found a home for her somewhere, and then we got them back to their families—sort of runaways type. There was discussion of Dr. Bayles as an abortionist and as having...well, abetting prostitution. Not that he was a procurer or anything like that, but that he just was the landlord, you see. He raked money off of them. I don't know just what his connection was, except that he was...they didn't have much respect for him. Then I had, as I said, some clients that went to him as a doctor, and he was good to them.

DS: Well, let's see, is there anything else on this far-reaching topic that has come to mind that we maybe haven't covered?

EM: I could tell you, if you turn off your machine, something that I think is kind of interesting.

DS: Okay. Is there anything further you want to say on legality and illegality of abortion?

EM: Except that it always has been pretty much...The doctors who do it even legally are not very kind. The ones in my experience do moral judgments, unless it is done through a women's clinic of some sort or another. Then there are other women—nurses who manage the clinic or something—who will not have that type of doctor around.

DS: Why do you think that's so?

EM: Well, for one thing, I think the doctors who do abortion—and one of them who does routinely the greatest number of abortions—feel that it is the lowest rung of medical practice, and that they do it for the money. I think they kind of hate it, that they have to do it, and

therefore, they take it out on the young woman. Now, that's just a subjective viewpoint, but I think it's pretty well-informed.

DS: Okay. We will turn this off.

[End of Interview]