

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: MARY ENGLUND #1
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BRITISH COLUMBIA
INTERVIEW LOCATION: BRITISH COLUMBIA
TRIBE/NATION: CHEHALIS-FRENCH
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 31, 1980
INTERVIEWER: MARGARET WHITEHEAD
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER YAWORSKI
SOURCE: PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA
TAPE NUMBER: #IH-BC.79
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC #182
PAGES: 31
RESTRICTIONS: I HEREBY GIVE THIS TAPE
RECORDED MATERIAL TO THE AURAL HISTORY PROGRAMME OF THE
PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. IT MAY BE USED BY THE
PUBLIC AND FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH
PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE AURAL HISTORY PROGRAMME. IT IS
UNDERSTOOD THAT ANY CONDITIONS SPECIFIED BELOW APPLY DURING MY
LIFETIME ONLY.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The entire interview consists of Mrs. Englund's recollections of her education at the Mission Indian Residential school.
MARY ENGLUND (born 1904): Mrs. Englund was born in Lillooet. Her early years were spent at Bralorne and D'Arcy Indian Reserve but, at the age of eight, she was taken to the Mission Indian Residential School where she remained until she was 16. (Interviewed by Margaret Whitehead, July 31, 1980. PABC No.3868)

Mary: Well, I born in Lillooet, and my father named me Marie Ann.

Margaret: What year was that?

Mary: 1904. I was... And then we moved away from Lillooet here. We moved up to what Bralorne is now, and we lived up there until he was killed. And then we moved from there -- I was about six years old then -- and we moved from there to D'Arcy.

Margaret: Were you an only child?

Mary: No, there was, oh, there was six of us altogether, or maybe seven.

Margaret: Were both your parents from Lillooet?

Mary: My father was French and my mother was Indian. But they were never married, you see.

Margaret: Was he French Canadian?

Mary: Yeah, so therefore we had to move away from there after he was killed and we went back to the reserve, you see.

And then we lived in the reserve at D'Arcy -- there was three of us then, you see. The older ones were in boarding school by this time.

Margaret: Which boarding school?

Mary: Mission. So by this time we were old enough, the two of us -- my brother and myself -- to go to the boarding school. There was no school around so the priest used to come and collect the children to go to school, you know, like from Fountain and Lillooet and Bridge River and all around. And he picked us up when the train first... used to come just to Lillooet then. And then from there we went on the train to Vancouver and then on to Mission.

Mary: How old would you be when you went to school?

Mary: Oh, I was I guess about eight or nine. As long as you were able to dress yourself -- the Sisters didn't want anybody that had to be helped. You had to be able to dress yourself and be on time when the bell rings, although when we first get there there had to be somebody to help us dress and see that we were in time when the next bell went, that we were able to get in line and say our prayers.

Margaret: Was it your first time away from your...?

Mary: It was my first time away from any of the family, and believe me I was homesick. (laughs)

Margaret: Well, were your brothers and sisters still at the school?

Mary: No. My sister had... one sister had died and the older brother he was out and he was at home. And he was married and then the other sister she got married and she was living in North Vancouver then.

Margaret: So you were alone?

Mary: So I was really alone, you know, outside of the girls

I had to get acquainted with at the school.

Margaret: What had your life been like before you went to the school?

Mary: It was sort of... it was tough. It wasn't very nice, you see, because my mother was alone. My grandmother really kind of keep an eye on us, looked after us and kept us together. Because mother had to go out and work, and of course she drank and then it made life very unpleasant for everybody. However, we managed to get along. There was my uncles and then there was my grandmother. You see, we all sort of lived in the village. We each had our own house but everybody took care of one another. So that way my grandmother was able to look after us. If grandmother wasn't around my uncle, who was the chief then, he took care of us. Everybody looked after one another more or less, you see. And, of course, mother was home good part of the time, but those times she had to leave us otherwise we never got anything to eat outside of that, you see.

Margaret: Were you aware that you would have to go the school?

Mary: No, until of course the missionaries came around every so often, you see, maybe once or twice a year.

Margaret: Who was that?

Mary: That was Father Rob and Father Chirouse and all those, you know, Father Bellow(?). They'd come around once or twice a year and then they'd count out the children and take stock, I guess you might as well say. And then they would say when you were ready to go to school, you see, and you had to. Your parents had to supply you with clothes such as shoes, underwears. And before that when my older sisters and brothers went to the school they had to have blankets and sheets and everything, you know. So mother figured well, since she already supplied all that, that would be there so we didn't have to take any. So the priest said we didn't have to take any, just our clothes. But even at that our clothes were pretty skimpy.

Margaret: How did you feel about it, do you recall? Were you scared when you were told you were going?

Mary: No, I was really excited, you see, because we'd never been anywhere outside of... going here and there, going to one reserve and another either in a canoe or boat and on horseback. It was something really exciting to go on the train. It was new and of course we didn't realize. You see, we were left alone so many times that we never had the tendency to say, "Well, I'm sorry I'm going to go away and leave my mother," you know, because we were alone most of the time. And I couldn't understand why they were crying. (laughs) However...

Margaret: So you were the only one who looked as if you were enjoying it then?

Mary: Yeah, we... my brother and I we enjoyed it, you know. We enjoyed the train ride as far as that went. It was fun.

It was something new. It was the old steam engines, you know, and oh it was fun to be able to get on the train. And of course the priest, Father Chirouse, was the one that took us, and he was awfully nice. I remember he talked to us and then he'd go further, you know, and get in the other seats and we'd look over see what he's doing. And we were able to open the windows and look out to see what we were passing. It was really fascinating, really. Until we got to Squamish and then we had to go on the boat, and by this time it was dark. So we didn't know really, we couldn't see where we were going, you see. But anyway after we got to Vancouver and then, of course, we went along and I remember walking along the street what with big buildings were fascinating, you know. We couldn't understand all these big buildings, you know. And finally we got on the train, another train, then we finally got to Mission. And then we had to walk. I thought we'd never get there. (laughs)

Margaret: Well, you must have been pretty tired, I guess?

Mary: Oh, we were by this time, and when we got to the school, of course, and then I had to leave my brother. I couldn't understand why I had to leave him in this other building while I went to the other building. See, there was a big building where the boys lived. And then you went along and there was a big church and then you went along and that's where the girls lived, you see. These were three story buildings. There was the main floor and the second floor and on the third floor we slept, you see; all the girls slept there. And I remember when I got there I couldn't figure out why I had to leave my brother in the other place. And I kept asking, but they said that he had to stay over there with the rest of the boys. And I wanted to know why. (laughs) I guess that was the way it was supposed to be, girls on one side and the boys

on the other. So anyway, this one big girl, she'd been there quite a while, then she took me over to... Way at the back of the convent was another big building where they did all the washing and you did your bath, you know, and there were square wooden tubs. They filled... You heat the water and then you filled it and that's where you had to have your bath. (laughs) Oh it was really...

Margaret: This was as soon as you got there?

Mary: Yeah. Oh yeah. Oh, you didn't go to bed without, without, when you first got there without your bath. Every girl that came in they had to be taken to the laundry and put through the wash. (laughs) And then you had to take all your clothes off and and leave them there and then they gave you other clothes to put on, you see.

Margaret: School uniform?

Mary: Sort of a uniform. We had, there were white blouses. Like they buttoned at the back and then there was sort of a jumper like, you know, with the frills, round sleeves and buttoned at the back. Of course I couldn't button them so I had to have somebody to help me. And underwears and long black stockings, and underwears down to the ankle and then the black stocking over it. Oh my! (laughs)

Margaret: Did it please you to have these things?

Mary: No it didn't. I very seldom had these long -- big long-johns on, I would call them now -- long underwear and then these big black stockings on, because at home we never wore any of those things. We had little panties on, you know, down to

the knees with little frills around, you know. And I couldn't figure out these long things and then these stockings over, you know, and then we had to have garters to hold them up. And then black shoes with little high top laces. In those, the only shoes I had were boys' lucky boots in those days and I thought, "Oh boy, I was dressed up." Because we at home we hardly ever wore any shoes. We wore moccasins. And we run all summer bare-footed.

Margaret: It must have felt a bit uncomfortable.

Mary: Oh I did. I did. I really was uncomfortable. But it took time to get used to, but they were handy when it come cold. (laughs) But oh my, was I ever homesick. You know, home wasn't much. In fact the nuns didn't call it home they called it our camp. And that used to hurt me -- it still does when I think about it. When we'd talk about going home they'd say, "Well, you're not going home, you're going back to your camp."

Margaret: I guess that was their impression of...

Mary: That was their impression of the reserves, yeah. Well in a way they were right, because the homes we had in those days were made out of... I remember great big log houses, you know. And the house we got into we didn't even have a floor on it. It was just dirt floor. And then we used to have to every so often go out and chop boughs and put on the floor to keep the dust down until mother was able to get some lumber and put the floor down. That was our... Oh I would... You know, we were raised in a hard way so going to school and going in the convent was very unusual. And then of course by the time... The first year we didn't come out of school, we just went as far as Squamish with my sister. We were here for

the summer and mother went and stayed with us and then the following year she said she'd have a home for us when we come out. By this time the people had got together, you see, and built a little log house and it was floor, and it was nice, windows. We had a lean-to kitchen, which was very nice

compared to what we had before we went to school. Although it was quite a little distance away from the reserve but it was nice. So that was... Then we... I lived in the school until... We used to have to come home once a year. Like we'd go home the first of August.

Margaret: Did you know when you went to the school that you were going to have to stay there that long?

Mary: Yes. Oh yeah. They told us that we had to stay there for a whole year. Well, I didn't know what a year was. (laughs) That was the other problem, "When's the year going to end?" And these... You see I had never seen a nun in my life, you see. So these people with their covered-up heads and white around and then their black robes and black veil, you see -- how the sisters of St. Ann dressed -- couldn't figure out why they had to wear such clothes. And I used to ask the girls, "Why's she dressed like that?" "Because she is a Sister." "Well, what's a Sister?" (laughs)

Margaret: How did they explain that one?

Mary: Well, I don't remember just what the girl said. This one girl she was very good to me -- she's dead now. Apparently she had come from the same reserve I did, her mother did, but I don't ever remember her, you see. So anyway, she was awfully good with me, you know, she helped me in the mornings to dress. We were given a basin and a towel, tooth powder and toothbrush and a comb. That was ours, we had little squares in the

washroom and the washroom was a quite a length and all window in front, so the Sister could look in from the dormitory. And this great big trough, it was aluminum, it was tin anyway, galvanized, with the cold water, cold taps and in there were the basins, you see. You filled up your basin and then you went over to the counter, washed, you see. No hot water, all cold water. And then you had to scrub your teeth in the sink and it was one long sink anyway. And then you had to wash your basin and put it underneath the counter. And you had to fold up your towel and take it with you and put it at the head of your bed. And your comb, there was squares for your combs and your toothbrush and tooth powder. So that was our gadget.

Margaret: So an older girl was chosen to look after you?

Mary: To keep an eye on you, you know, or older girl saw to it that you were dressed. Then of course it took us time to put on these long stockings and high-top boots. (laughs) And laces and they had to be laced and tied. And your hair had to be braided from here (pointing) and braided at the back and put up in a knob sort of, you know.

Margaret: Everybody the same?

Mary: Everybody. You couldn't have one little hair hanging on your face. It had to be smoothed back. So she used to come and help me comb my hair. She'd wet my hair and comb it and

braid it here and braid it there, then she'd braid it at the back and roll it up and pin it up. That was the way we were supposed to have our hair.

Margaret: All this happening on your first day must have been a very puzzling thing for you.

Mary: It was. It was. Because at home we got up, washed our face and we didn't think of combing our hair. We just took it and tied it up here, you see. (demonstrates) And that was it, you see.

Margaret: Simple.

Mary: Simple. We lived a simple life, you know, and then to go into these places, you know, where you have to be... And we didn't know that we didn't have to talk. That was another big thing. Everything was silent. You lived by the bell. The bell rang, you shut up. Not another word. And here we'd keep on talking, you know, us that were new and we had to be shushed and everything else, you know, and shaken and what not. Then we had to go in lines, you see, one behind the other. Go upstairs, no matter where you went you were in line. You never moved until the bell rang. See, there was a little bell always, no matter where you were. On one of those desk push bells. I never forget that night when we first went there. We were outside in the yard and this bell rang inside. I said, "What's that for?" "Oh, come on, come on. We've gotta go for supper." So anyway we went and had supper. We got in there, "Don't talk, don't talk. No, don't talk. Just get in line. No, not one word." And then we went into the dining room and everybody and they put us in a certain places, you know, and then the Grace was said. Then the bell rang then you sat down. Great big long tables -- there must be twenty on each table -- and then benches and galvanized plates, or tin plates as we called them, the same with saucers, you know. And we had a fork and a spoon. There was no, never much of knives because you didn't get no butter and you didn't get no meat to cut up, everything was grounded up. And green tea. We never got no milk except

skim milk to put in your tea. And of course we... Of course me, I was not knowing the rules. I was talking to this girl who was with me who kind of looked after me. She told me what to do, "You don't talk before the bell rings and you don't talk when we are supposed to shut up, and you don't talk after the bell rings either." So we kept on talking -- the bell was ringing and we were still talking and she'd come over and shush me up, you know. (laughs) Course the Sisters were pretty good in a way too, you know. If they knew you were new and didn't know the rules they'd say, "Now you remember now, you're not supposed to talk after the bell goes." I remember this one sister, her name was Sister Veronica -- she'd great big eyes you know. She was a French nun. My, she was miserable! She'd roll her eyes upward, you know. (laughs) Gosh, we had to watch for her. (laughs) Oh, she was still in the convent by the time I left. She was getting pretty old -- least we thought old was forty. (laughs) Oh boy, those were the... when you

stop and think they were. And then the second year I began to like it a little more, although when you think you begin to learn things and learn how to spell that was something else, you know. It took the monotony away from life.

Margaret: How was your day broken down?

Mary: You got up around 5:30 a.m. in the morning. The bell rings and you had to get up. And you had to go and wash and dress and get your hair combed and make your little -- we had little cots. And the mattresses were full of straw and you had to make your bed, make it really neat. You can't just slip slop, everything had to be tight. And if you didn't make your bed right the nun would come along and pull all the sheets and blankets off and you had to go make it over.

Margaret: Like being in the army.

Mary: Oh yeah. Yeah, it reminds me later on when I see the army's... So we had to make the beds just so. You had to fold up your nightgown and put it under your pillow, fold up your towel and put it at the head of your bed so it wouldn't be in the way. And you had each a little closet to hang your clothes in. If those weren't neat in there you'd either have to kneel down somewhere in some corner or keep silent at the dining room meal time. So that was my first year, you see. It was quite an exciting year to a certain extent. But the next year was a monotonous one.

Margaret: What did you do after breakfast?

Mary: After breakfast the bell rang again, the bell rang and we all kept silent. And then we said our after meal Grace and then we were told each one had their offices to go to -- they called them offices, that was joke. A certain amount of girls went to the dormitory, they had to put white spreads on the beds. So a certain amount of girls went to the kitchen, a certain amount of girls stayed in the dining room and washed the dishes. And, see there was fifty-one girls and there was certain ones that swept the halls and cleaned the halls. And my first job was in the classroom. I went with these two big girls to go to the classrooms; they were to clean the classrooms out. There was a classroom... there was one classrom and we just had shift like. The middle ones went to school in the morning, the big girls went to the sewing room. So that was my first job was in the classroom. We had to clean the boards, clean the brushes, and dust everything. Dust the desks and swept the floors.

So this was where I had my first experience that you were not to touch a nun. This one girl, she was an older girl, course

I most of the time I didn't know what to do so I just stood around and helped move the desks once in a while. They'd say "Come on and move that desk," and I'd help move them. She took this brush and she laid them alongside the windowsill. And you

could see down to the street from where our classroom was. I didn't put them there, she must have. Anyway we swept the classroom and then I helped straighten up the desks and dusted them and when the teacher -- she was a nun -- came in and saw these brushes on the window ledge, you see, she wanted to know who put them there. And of course she, one of the girls, didn't want to get into trouble so she said I did. And I said "I didn't." Oh, I was determined I wasn't going to be told that I did it. So she, the nun, came up to me and she kind of tapped me on the face, you see. She said, "Did you put the brushes on the windowsill?" I said, "No, I didn't," and I pushed her. She pretty near went over the desk. She could have hurt herself very badly. But how was I to know I wasn't to touch her? She was supposed to be something precious that you can't lay your hand on. So anyway she left me alone and I cried all morning, didn't do my work and that was another thing, you see. I couldn't talk at dinner time.

Margaret: That was your punishment?

Mary: That was my punishment. You were to keep silent at table at lunch time. So however, this girl she told me we were not to touch the sisters. Well I said, "She slapped me." (laughs) Oh, I wasn't going to be slapped. (laughs) But however, that smoothed over. After that I remembered and I told her too, "I did not put..." I was determined I was going to let my... let her know that I did not put those brushes on the window ledge. But you see when you're new they take advantage of you.

Margaret: Oh of course.

Mary: And they thought I wasn't going to defend myself, but I let them know differently. (laughs)

Margaret: I guess they thought that you wouldn't get a punishment that they might get.

Mary: Yeah. Well, you see being an older girl she's supposed to know better. And she's more or less responsible for what goes on in that classroom when she's cleaning. Which I didn't know, you see, that was different afterwards. Then we, you now, the following year got different. Then we were a bit... like promoted, like you'd say. If you were good in one job you went to a nice easier job, you see. Towards the end after I was there two or three years I used to get the sacristy all the time. I'd help Sister in there with the, with all the... And I used to clean the chapel and I liked that very much. The only thing we had every day, like in the summertime you had to change the flowers to keep the water freshened in the... change the water in the chapel. You had to put fresh flowers in and I used to enjoy putting, arranging the flowers so they'd look nice, you know. I was always handy at that. I liked that. That was my really... I was really happy. And then you had to put all the priest's wear during mass. We had to lay them out, certain ones on the bottom, certain ones on the top. And you had to fold them just a certain way, you

know. It got so I really enjoyed that. I was there for three years looking after everything until I left the school.

Margaret: So that was by way of a promotion?

Mary: Yes.

Margaret: If you misbehaved were you likely to be sent back to doing something else?

Mary: Oh no. Oh no. No. You were reprimanded. You more or less told what you had done wrong and why and then you were told that you were to... Well, you either kept silent or went to bed early. You had no place, you had no time to play, you know. After supper we played for a while but we were in bed at 7:30 p.m. in the evening. And on a holiday if we were good we stayed up till nine, which was a big holiday for us. But the little ones had to go to bed at 7:30 p.m. because we were up early.

Margaret: That's right, 5:30 a.m.?

Mary: 5:30 a.m. you had to be dressed and down in the chapel at 6:30 a.m. and down to breakfast at seven o'clock and eight o'clock you had to be on the job, whatever you were doing. And at 8:30 a.m. you had to be finished, least when the bell rang and go to Catechism.

Margaret: Everybody went to Catechism?

Mary: Everybody went to Catechism 8:30 in the morning until 9:00 a.m. and then there was school, you see. The older girls went to the sewing room and they mended socks and underwear and whatever there had to be mended. And there's where I made my first encounter with a nun too. She would give us these long black stockings -- sometimes they wore off on the heel or the toe and you'd stick your hand in there and they'd give you a darning needle and you'd mend them and darn them in other

words. And I didn't want to darn in one place because it was thin so I just mended the hole and that was it. So I went over -- we had to go and show them to her when we had finished -- and she'd stick her hand in the thing, in the sock and work her finger out. If her finger went through, well, it was just too bad.

Margaret: You had to do it over again?

Mary: You had to do it over again. I don't know what happened but she put her finger through my sock and I don't know what I said to her but she got really angry at me. And she says, "Now stick your hand out." She had a great big scissors...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Margaret: Okay, Sister ran her finger...

Mary: (laughs) Through my sock and anyway she hit me and I was really annoyed. I didn't cry first, you know, and she looked at me and I dunno, I guess I dunno what she saw in my face but I know she looked terrible to me that time. So anyway I went and sat down and I banged down -- you know how you do when you get mad. She says, "Come back here," she says "come back here." So she says "You kneel right there and finish your sock." (laughs)

Margaret: On your knees?

Mary: On my knees and I don't have no thread in my needle so I just sat there and sucked my needle. (laughs) Oh, praise

the Lord, God rest their souls. (laughs) They did what they thought was best. But later on, you know, when I got a little higher and a little older I was put in... From grade three on you were able to be classed as a bigger girl, you know, so I used to go to the sewing room in the mornings and she start teaching us how to run the machines, you see. And sew, first it was aprons, we all had to wear aprons. Everybody had an apron to wear. So she gave me this material and she cut it out. She never let us cut it out, she cut it out and there she showed us where to sew and how to sew and your stitching had to be straight. So I started this interfacing, you know, this zig-zag. She'd make me rip it over and I'd sit there and cry and rip, you know, and the names I didn't call her. (laughs) Course to myself, it never came out because I didn't dare. I didn't trust nobody, you couldn't in a convent, you know. You'd say one thing and this girl might go and tell Sister and you got punished for it, so you had to say things to yourself that you didn't like. Oh my...

Margaret: In your first year there did you come to dislike the nuns?

Mary: No I didn't. I had certain favorites. This Sister Veronica she was a real needle in the side (laughs). And, you know, the Indians they have a name for everything and the owl always has a big eye, you know, and so this nun we all called her the -- In Indian the owl is Schkilulek(?) -- so we all called her Schkilulek, the owl in Indian. And we weren't allowed to speak our language in school. We had to speak English.

Margaret: Right from the day...

Mary: Right from day one.

Margaret: Was that a problem for you? Did you know any English?

Mary: Oh, I was pretty well bilingual, you might as well say. You see when we first moved to the reserve we couldn't talk Indian either. So we had to learn from the kids we played with and during this time, while we were on the reserve, we kept pretty well, at least I did anyway, kept pretty well our language, you know, the English and we talked in Indian too. So it didn't bother me too much although it was kind of different and you got mixed up, you know; it was a difficult situation. However we managed pretty well.

Margaret: But other children had little English?

Mary: Oh they, see they had different Indian dialects. You take along the Fraser Valley they had what they called the Stalo and the Thompson, and us here was the Chehalis, see. We talked differently than they did. So if we talked to them it was all English, you see, which was better in a way. But the nuns wouldn't, even if we could talk with one another... Of course there was a lot of us that could talk the same language. You take from Fountain to Pavillion down to Mount Currie we all talked the same language, you see. So we were not allowed to talk our... course when we were alone in some corner we did, you know, talk our own language and if the sisters caught us it was, "You talk English. You're in school, you talk English." So we had to talk English and that's where a lot of the girls, you know, kind of forgot their language. If you're there, stayed there a certain length of time you forget certain words in Indian. And you didn't, you couldn't explain yourself too much in Indian so you would in English, you see.

Margaret: Did you understand why you had to speak in English?

Mary: No. They said it was, that it was better for us to speak English because we could learn English and read and write better if we kept our English. If we spoke English instead of talking Indian.

Margaret: How did your mother feel about it?

Mary: Course all the parents thought that was great, you see, that we should talk English and be able to write so that we'd be able to write letters when we got home, you know, to do things for the Indian people. That was their big... "Oh, she can write now." You were something great when you came home, you know. You could talk English good. Or I don't know, they were kind of proud of us in a way, you know, once you were able to write your name and your mother's name, your father's name and whoever was in the family. We were doing all right. They were proud of you then. I remember my grandmother because she was, I don't know how old she was, but she was pretty blind and she was all crippled with arthritis. She'd pat us on the head because we can write. Poor old soul. Yes, she was a great old lady. So anyway that was quite a thing and then when, while I was there just two years, supposedly two years before... You see, we only can stay in school so long then we can stay or we can go home. Once you reach the age of say eighteen they didn't keep you there much longer. They considered you were

old enough to make your way in the world. And I remember this Sister Veronica because she'd always tell us how black the world outside was, that we were lucky to be in the convent because... I guess maybe she was right too, the world outside was wicked, it was black and there was times, you know, she'd sit for hours

and preach to us and what we didn't dare move. And we didn't dare contradict her, you know.

Margaret: Do you remember anyone ever trying?

Mary: Yeah, some. I remember one girl from Mount Currie, she was a real radical I guess you might as well call her. She made a face of some kind when Sister remarked about something and she was asked to go up and kneel on the floor, you see. She wouldn't go. She rebelled. So that was all right. Sister let her go until meal time -- I think it was lunch time -- and then of course the nuns, there's a Mother Superior that they always go and tell these things to, you see. And there the Mother Superior would come in the dining room and reprimand you, you see. So they took this girl out and I don't know what they did to her. They must have just talked to her because she came back in snickering, you know, and everything. And they told her to go over by the sink in the dining room, face the wall and eat her lunch. She got her plate and she turned right around and looked at everybody and made faces and threw her food around. Oh, she was really rebellious. Oh, they'd get so annoyed at (laughs)... That was the only one and there was another girl too that used to get slapped around quite a bit. She rebelled. But you didn't dare rebel of whatever they said was gospel truth.

Margaret: Did they ever dismiss you from the school?

Mary: There was two girls that got dismissed while I was there. I think that was... Oh, that was a terrible thing. They had gone home for the holiday. We came home on first of August, we just had a month's holiday and we had to be back. And I don't know, some time in September or October I think it

was, they ran from school, you see. We were staying up quite late that evening, until nine o'clock. We were having games and so on and all at once these girls disappeared. They must have went out and took off, you see. And come line up time to get ready to go to bed they weren't there. Boy, that was terrible for us. We were concerned, you know. So anyway we went to bed, went upstairs to bed eventually. We thought, "Well, maybe they're just hiding downstairs somewhere. They'll come up. And once you go to bed, once you get up in the dormitory there's a trap-door that goes over the stairs and that's got a great big bolt that Sister puts in there, you see. Nobody can get through there. So you were locked up there. I wonder, I often think afterwards, you know, when I got older, what would we do if the bottom part of the building got burnt and we wanted to get out of there? How would we get out of there? I often thought of that after I left school, you know,

but I didn't think about it at the time. But anyway they left, they went and left school and they were brought back about a month or so later on. They were found and brought back and their parents were notified. I don't know what they did but anyway they were brought back and one of them was found pregnant then, you see; course we didn't know what pregnant was then. We only knew she was getting fat and she had to let loose her clothes. She was going to have a baby so she had to go home. So she went home anyway. Those were the only two I ever knew. I don't know what happened to the other one. I met the girl, one of them was from here, I met her after I got out of school and come here to work. I met her here.

Margaret: Was running away a big problem?

Mary: Oh yes. You didn't dare walk outside the yard limits.

Margaret: But people did it?

Mary: Those were the only two that I remember.

Margaret: Of the girls?

Mary: Of the girls.

Margaret: What about the boys?

Mary: I think some of the boys did. I think some of the boys did but those were the only two I ever know of the girls that ran away. And they really got reprimanded. They not only got reprimanded. I remember they went to bed one evening and there was one big husky Sister. She came up and she had a great big, you know, they used to use the razor straps for shaving.

Margaret: Oh, the Sisters used to carry those things at their waist at...

Mary: Well, she had one of those with a wooden handle on it and those girls took off their clothes and then they took their nightgown and pushed them back and they laid on their stomach on the bed and they went to work on them. I don't know how many straps they got but we were all crying, everybody was sniffing and crying, you know, of the fifty girls. Fifty-one girls. Well, it was terrible. Poor things, you know.

Margaret: We had Sisters that used to have straps like that as part of their belt. Big leather ones.

Mary: Oh, this one here it was kept in the Sister Superior's room. She had a room on the second floor and that was her office in the room. That strap was kept there. Anyhow, it was used on these very big serious occasions.

Margaret: Did the Indian parents, like your mother and other

parents, have any say in the school at all? Did they, if a child was punished like that, would the mother be likely to give the Sisters an argument?

Mary: We were not to tell our parents what went on in the school. That was another rule. We were not allowed to discuss what goes on in the school when we go home. There was one girl... You see, we never got sugar at school, no sugar in our porridge or in our tea. So when we went home I guess this girl was telling her parents how she never got sugar at school and that she'd like sugar when she went home. When she got back to school she was really reprimanded by the principal -- that was old Father Rob then. And he didn't go about it a nice way. He went about it in a very insulting way of telling you what you did in your camp and what you told your father and mother and the tattletales, you know. And your parents never had anything to say of what you were doing in the school because they didn't know. They never knew. Well, maybe they did, some of them. I don't know but my mother... I was told I was not to tell my mother of what went on. But anyway, you see, my mother had been alone. She had no say what was going on as far as we were concerned. But there was one time she went there. They were allowed once or twice a year visiting you, you know. You were allowed to see your parents then if they come to visit you, and there was a little place they called the parlor. You went in there to visit. So my mother came there and I had a cousin so her and I we went. We had to ask Sister if my cousin could

come with me so she went with us to visit my mother. And then my brother was allowed to come in and visit with us. So this one afternoon Father Rob was the principal, see. He said that we could go downtown with my mother. So the three of us we marched off downtown with mother and of course we never told the Sisters, you see. So that was another... We lost a note, I lost a note, both my cousin and myself, because we didn't tell her that we weren't going to be in school, that we were going downtown with my mother. So we lost a note.

Margaret: I don't understand what that is.

Mary: The note... they gave you notes. Like in school you have certain notes. If it's "A" you're perfect; "B" you're not too good; "C" you're getting worse.

Margaret: Getting worse.

Mary: Getting worse and "D" you're very poor and you need reprimanding and you need the strap or something. So anyway we just lost... those were considered as notes. So we completely lost, my cousin and I. We had zero marks on the blackboard when we came to have our average day, they called it.

Margaret: That was supposed to make you feel bad?

Mary: Oh it did, because that was a disgrace to lose your note. So Father Rob the principal came over and he went up to

the board and marked off the zero and put ninety-five there. Oh, were the nuns ever mad. They were really annoyed. It was his fault, you see. He told us we could go and we never thought of telling the nuns. Course we didn't know that we had to. It was his place to go and tell them. So that was one time we lost a note.

Another time I lost my note -- this was really funny. We were in the kitchen, I was working in the kitchen. I used to work in the pantry helping the Sister. She was grinding up this meat, you know, to make meatballs for their table. You see, they had a dining room by themselves. So after we got through grinding this meat she went into the kitchen, she says, "Clean up that meat grinder." So I cleaned up the meat grinder. Course I had scraps of meat left, you see, and I came down into the kitchen. She was French, you see, she could hardly talk English. So I asked her and there was a pot of hash on the stove for the girls; ground up meat and potatoes and everything was in that big pot of hash. So I went and I asked her what was I to do with this handful of scraps of meat. Instead of saying "hash" she said, "Put it in your ass." (laughs) And I started to laugh, you know, and laughed and oh, was she annoyed at me. She went right away and told Sister Superior.

And of course I had to practise that, you had to practically memorize it in order to make a perfect recitation, you see. And there's where a lot of it and Sister Veronica would say, "Now if you weren't an Indian girl you could do that perfectly well better, as a white girl she would go over that very well, nicely," you see. They always were degrading us because we were Indian. We didn't come from homes, we came from camps. And we didn't know how to live -- we ate rotten fish -- so they didn't seem to be particular in what they gave us to eat. They never let us forget that we were Indian and that we weren't very civilized. That we were more or less savages, you know.

The other nuns they weren't too forward with their mentioning of Indian or... But this one particular nun, Sister Veronica, she looked after us in the recreation room and she looked after us in the dining room. Once in a while the other nun would come and take her place and she looked after us in the dormitory. So she was constantly with us, which I think was

too much of a strain for her in a way. If they had changed places I think it would have eased her tension a little more and she wouldn't have been so radical and so hateful towards us. If we were in a recreation room she came in there and she sat and you didn't dare stay sitting down when she came in the room, you had to stand up. If you didn't stand up it was just, they wanted to know the reason why. Same any of them ever come in the room where you were and you were all sitting around -- you know how you are -- there was benches all around in the recreation room and you'd sit and talk and do things, you know. Crochet or, you know, do things with a... And if you didn't stand up when they came in, well, it was too bad. They wanted to know why and you stood in the corner if you had no reason.

Margaret: Did you get this attitude from all of the Sisters?
Were any of them exceptional?

Mary: Most of them were pretty nice. Like our teacher, she was pretty nice. But we were told that we were expected to stand up and if we didn't, well, she used to report us to the Sister Superior. I lost my note for that.

Margaret: Did you explain why you were laughing?

Mary: Well, yeah. But we were reprimanded because we're not to condemn the nuns because they couldn't speak very good English. And they reminded us that we weren't perfect in English either because we spoke Indian. But I never forget poor Sister Ag -- her name was Sister Agnes. Instead of saying "hacks,"... instead of saying "axe" she'd say "hacks" and "heggs". Course she meant well when she said, "Put it in your ass." (laughs) Oh, praise the Lord.

Margaret: Were they all French nuns?

Mary: No, some of them were Irish and Canadian or they were... But she was the only one that spoke very broken English. Sister Mary Agnes her name was. She was really annoyed at me for laughing. (laughs) So I lost my note that month. You see every month we have averages, they called them averages, that was your account of what your behaviour was in the school year or in the school month. Our grades, your behavior and everything was all added up and put on the board. It was just too bad, you know, we all razzed one another if we got a poor note.

Margaret: Did you ever feel... Were you ever made to feel ashamed of being Indian?

Mary: Oh yes. Oh yes. That was one thing the nuns... This one nun particularly -- that Sister Veronica -- her and those other nuns they'd talk, and we know they were talking about us. And there was one time... You see, every occasion that comes up, like a principal's birthday, like Father Rob's birthday, or he'd go away and he'd come back and we'd have a welcoming party. And one girl, the sister would write out a speech and you had to read that to the priest and there would be nuns and priests and all the boys and girls there, you see. We'd go to the community hall -- they called it the museum -- and there was always somebody to read that big speech. I forget what they called it, it had another name, it wasn't a speech. But anyway you had to read this on long sheets, you know, and you had to read every word perfect, you see. Pronounce perfect and everything. I read it several times but my cousin she was always getting chosen to read this and you... And we were to be awfully... We were called rude if we didn't stand up whenever any of them -- don't make no difference -- and some way if you passed them in the hall or anywhere you're

to stop and bow your head. They were really up on the pedestal. I often wondered, you know. I guess it was a good

training in a way, I don't know. They sure put themselves somewhere where you couldn't touch them. You couldn't reach them and you had to bow to them. That's something I could never... It made me to a certain extent very, very bitter by the time I left school.

Another thing that made me very rebellious was the punishment. They used prayer to punish you. If you were late or you disobeyed in one way or another you knelt down and you said ten Hail Mary's or ten Our Father's or something like that. Well, saying those things was against your nature, you know. It wasn't a praying thing and therefore I, well particularly me too, I rebelled against it. I couldn't see the sense of using prayer as a punishment. And going in the chapel or in the church you couldn't look at your next person to you. We wore veils and we went in there with our hands folded and even if we nudged there's a nun watching way at the back and she saw everything that ever went on, Sister Veronica. You got your ears pulled or you got a slap in the face. Course she very seldom slapped me. She slapped me once and I told her she'd better not do that again. It was in the kitchen, it was in the summertime we were... It was hot in there, and we were washing up these little potatoes and of course a streak of hair had come down my face and she says, "Pull up your hair." She says, "You should have your hair combed properly." I says, "My hands are dirty. I couldn't push my hair back." I says, "You'd better not slap me again." I was quite a girl then, you see, and when I was growing up I was very husky. So they didn't dare tackle me (laughs) or God, my temperament started to build up by this time.

Margaret: You were asserting yourself.

Mary: Oh yeah. I was about thirteen, fourteen there. You were at a bad stage, a bad time. You were going through puberty and it was a trying time for you. There was no mother or anyone to tell you what you were going through -- not like nowadays, everything was told to the young people. But in our time we had to just guess. Whatever happened to us it happened and you didn't know why. And when we were... That time of the month came along you were given these bundles of cloth that you had to use and you had to put them in a laundry bag and take them to the laundry and soak them and they were washed over and used over again, see. And there was no such a thing as what they call comforts nowadays. These were the things we had to use and if you didn't your clothes were soiled in one way or another; you were reprimanded for it. You had to wash your own clothes then put them in the wash. You were not to put them in the wash, which is no more than right, I guess. But there was a lot of things that they did to us, you see, that could have been made easier in a lot of... Like they could have taken you aside and explained what you were going through and what to expect. Sometimes when you come around these things happened and you don't know why it ran all over your clothes and then to, as a punishment, go and wash your clothes.

Margaret: Which doesn't do anything to explain to you...

Mary: No it didn't.

Margaret: It almost made it seem like a wrong doing.

Mary: Yes. Yeah, it was a secret thing that you were, you know. You had to look after yourself, but it didn't tell you why or when. It was a very trying time and that's when I

started rebelling, you see, and by the time I left school I was very rebellious.

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
EDUCATION				
-accounts of	IH-BC.79	M. ENGLUND#1	182	3-31
EDUCATION				
-and cultural suppression	IH-BC.79	M. ENGLUND#1	182	19,20
EDUCATION				
-and discrimination	IH-BC.79	M. ENGLUND#1	182	26,28,29
EDUCATION				
-conditions	IH-BC.79	M. ENGLUND#1	182	11,12
EDUCATION				
-residential schools	IH-BC.79	M. ENGLUND#1	182	3-31

PROPER NAME INDEX

PROPER NAME	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
MISSION, B.C.	IH-BC.79	M. ENGLUND#1	182	3