

'SPARKS SISTERS' Oral History Transcription

Interviewees: **Ani Rose Gentry* (Sparks), Georgia Pierce (Sparks), Marilyn R. Butler (Sparks)**

**a.k.a. Roseanna*

Seated left to right: Georgia (dark blue), Marilyn (light blue), and Roseanna (red)

Interviewers: **Jenifer Baker** (Deputy Archivist), **Tori Roberts** (Archives Technician), **Abby Search** (Summer Intern)

Date of Interview: 22 August 2019

List of Initials: JB = Jenifer Baker, TR = Tori Roberts, AS = Abby Search. Interviewees listed by first names.

Location of Interview: Warren County Admin Building in Lebanon, Ohio

Transcriber: Ted Hitchens

[Begin Transcript 00:00:05]

TR: Okay. So today is Thursday, August twenty-second, two-thousand and nineteen. My name is Tori Roberts and I am the archives technician for Warren County Records Center and Archives. I'm here with Jenifer Baker, our Deputy Archivist and Abby Search, our summer intern. So what we're gonna start with are some general background questions with these three lovely ladies, the Sparks sisters. We kinda usually do this as a whole, but what I'm gonna have you do is go through and say your name and introduce yourselves and say when you were born, if you would like to. So whoever would like to start, go ahead.

Roseanna: I'll start, I'm the oldest. I'm Rosanna. Roseanna Sparks, born in nineteen fifty-one.

Georgia: Georgia Pierce, or Sparks. And I was born in nineteen fifty-two.

Marilyn: Marilyn Sparks. I was born in nineteen fifty-four.

JB: Where were you born?

Roseanna: In town. My birth certificate says Stokes Street which is uhm right down off of East (*Street*).

JB: So in Lebanon?

Roseanna: Yes, we're all three born in Lebanon.

Georgia: Mine says Warren County.

JB: Okay.

Roseanna: Yeah.

TR: ... You're very much local.

Roseanna: Yes.

TR: Allright, so where did you grow up?

Marilyn: Lebanon, Hamilton...

Roseanna: Yeah.

JB: Lebanon and Hamilton here?

Marilyn: Springboro (*pointing to Roseanna*). West Chester (*pointing to self*).

TR: Around southwest Ohio I would say.

Roseanna: Yeah.

Georgia: At the zoo. (*Group laughter*)

TR: Perfect! So what were your parents' and siblings' names?

Roseanna: Our mom was Alma Catherine Henderson. She married a LeFevers and then she married our father, Sparks. Uhm...

Marilyn: Franklin Delano Roosevelt Sparks.

Roseanna: Our father was born at the time of uh President Roosevelt, and so they named- I guess what the deal was is if you named your- your child after him, then uh you could get like twenty dollars which was a lot of money.

Georgia: It was a contest.

Roseanna: And so, yeah, so there was a lot of kids named that at the time.

TR: I always wondered why that happened, now I know!

Georgia: It was a contest.

Roseanna: That's- yeah.

TR: Okay! So where all have you lived? This pertains to your entire life.

Roseanna: Oh my goodness!

TR: You can choose to say one or two, you can choose your whole list if you want, or just kind of like 'southwest Ohio.'

Roseanna (*to sisters*): You guys go first.

Marilyn: I've been here, Tennessee, and uh California...

Roseanna (*to Marilyn*): And Florida.

Marilyn (*to Roseanna*): I didn't live in Florida.

Georgia: I've been in Lebanon and Hamilton.

Marilyn: Oh I did live in Jacksonville. For about two years, Lord have mercy! I always put that behind me though, because of my second husband... (*Group laughter*)

Roseanna (*to Georgia*): And what'd you say?

Georgia: Uh, Hamilton and Lebanon.

Roseanna: Yeah that's- and I've traveled the entire United States, so uhm kind of like from one national forest to the next national forest...

Georgia: For four years.

Roseanna: ... But as far as addresses would be uh Indiana and then Florida, and now I'm back to Ohio again. Safely!

Marilyn: My husband was in the navy, is why I lived in other places.

TR: Aha. Well it sounds like you guys had adventures.

Roseanna: Yes.

TR: So, what jobs or occupations have you had?

Marilyn: Deputy clerk, Butler County...

TR: Okay.

Marilyn: Prisoner at Franklin brewery! (*laughter*)

Georgia: I was a retail manager.

TR (*to Georgia*): What was that?

Georgia: I was a retail manager.

TR: Alright. Do you care to tell us where? That's up to you.

Georgia: B.P.

TR: B.P.?

Georgia: ... of America.

TR: Nice!

Roseanna: And me, I'm the entrepreneur. I've owned about four or five of my own businesses. Uhm, one was a community newspaper in Hamilton which had ran for awhile doing the graphics and all the editing like you guys do here. And so (I am) very familiar with what you're doing, but uhm I also uhm I ended up- I was an artist and didn't know that I could even paint until I- at sixty years old I understand uh- I got it, girls! (*Group laughter*)

JB: How did you start doing that?

Roseanna: I just kept always saying that I could do it. I knew—

Georgia: She knew she was like that when she was young.

Marilyn: She could draw beautiful ... (*indecipherable*)

Roseanna: But it's like I just knew that I could. So finally, I was gifted with an entire set of every medium that you could think of and off I went. I did six portraits in one day. I'm just like 'whoa.' So yeah.

Marilyn: And I was a professional singer for twenty years. Twenty- now I still am.

JB: I was about to say! Yeah.

Roseanna: She is an entertainer. I sent you an invitation.

JB: Right, I was on vacation.

Marilyn: Still am!

Roseanna (*to Jenifer*): I was hoping if you were on vacation around here, you've got to go down and see her. But she sill be singing - (*to Marilyn*) which- which Sunday?

Marilyn: Second Sunday of every month.

(*Indecipherable group chatter*)

TR: I mean, I'm intrigued for sure.

Marilyn: Seven o'clock, you can be home in time for the news! (*Group laughter*)

TR: My kind of party right there!

Marilyn: Because it's oldies! But bring your dancing shoes.

Roseanna: Everybody dances!

Marilyn: They dance.

Roseanna: Yes.

TR: I'm intrigued. Let's go.

Roseanna: She- She leads a nine-piece band. She is an entertainer, yeah.

TR: I love the sister-support we have going on here.

JB: Yeah.

Marilyn: We sang together also when we were young.

TR: Oh cool, that's good to know!

Roseanna: We even made one record.

JB: Oh wow! Did you have a band name?

Georgia: No, we sang a cappella.

Roseanna: No. We just were the Sparks Girls. We did Hoot'n Annie's and our church and things like that. So – you probably don't even know what a "hoot'n Annie" is I'm sure. *(Laughter)*

Marilyn: Hayrides, hoot'n annies, you know.

TR: I've never been to one. *(Group chatter)*

Roseanna: And the radio. We got to sing on the radio. Live on the radio, so yeah. We come from a family of musicians, so it was natural for us. (*Georgia and Marilyn indecipherable conversation*)

Marilyn: Oh, we sang in a prison too. We sang out in the uh – Lebanon Correctional. We sang for Shaker Valley High School graduation.

Roseanna: Yes we did! Scared to death.

JB: How old were you when you did that?

Marilyn: I was fourteen, I think. No, you were sixteen (*to Rosanne*) and I was thirteen.

Georgia: I think I was fifteen.

JB: Was that for like a church?

Roseanna: No, it was their graduation.

Marilyn: ... Assistant Secretary for the warden and it was their high school graduation out there. Shaker Valley High school was Lebanon Correctional high school. When we sang- Tom Adkins used to be the newsman, he was the speaker and we were the singers. We had our tent dresses and (*indecipherable*) and we saw a guy from the neighborhood and he's like— (*Waving*).

(*Group Laughter*)

Georgia: Yep.

JB: I had no idea that that was a thing.

TR: I didn't know either. See that's also – (*indecipherable*) ... It's amazing. Allright so, we've covered our general background questions, so now we're going to get into a little bit of the Mary Haven questions. So when did you all enter the children's home and how long were you there?

Georgia: We were there from nineteen sixty-one to nineteen sixty-six. Both in January.

Roseanna: We actually entered on the day John F. Kennedy was inaugurated, which (we) just found all this out.

Georgia: Which is strange, because my wedding anniversary was his death.

Marilyn/Roseanna: (*indecipherable conversation*)

JB/TR: Oh wow! (*Indecipherable chatter*)

TR: Allright, so – did you get to spend time with your siblings while you were there?

Marilyn: Everyday.

Georgia: Yes.

Roseanna: With each other.

Georgia: Too much. (*Group laughter*)

JB: So do you think having siblings at the home made that more comfortable for you? Or what –

Roseanna: I don't know how it would have made ...

JB: Right.

Marilyn: Oh, I don't- I don't think that would have (*indecipherable*)...

Roseanna: They, when they was- When they sent us all to foster homes, it was devastating. As being the kid that was sent away, and then now that we see our papers— there was going to be tears—

Marilyn: And I was sent away two weeks after she left there (*pointing to Roseanna*).

Roseanna: And she (*Marilyn*) sat there without us, how awful that was.

Georgia (*to Roseanna, crying*): Don't say that.

Roseanna: So, it's really important...

Marilyn: It's like I heard her call me because I was living with a family. They were wonderful people ... And uh, I woke up in the middle of the night and I said 'I wanna go home!' I said my sister's by herself (*Georgia*). And they said 'are you sure.' And I said 'I gotta go home tomorrow, she's by herself.' And they took me back. They were wonderful people.

Roseanna: But see, they didn't let you know that you were even leaving. You were just—they would just pack you up, and you would come home from school and it was like 'you're leaving.'

Marilyn: We didn't get to say good-bye to each other.

Roseanna: We didn't even know where we were going. I remember in the bathroom there was a closet, and up above the closet was a flat—it was a flat top between the ceiling and the—and the first time they were sending me out over into Mason...

Marilyn (*to Georgia, laughing*): You used to smoke!

Roseanna: ... and I climbed up there to hide so they couldn't send me. Of course they- you know. But I had to go. But uh, that is- to keep the siblings together is so necessary because you've lost everything. We lost our home, our family, our friends.

Georgia: There were other people there with siblings.

Marilyn: Yes.

Georgia: Boys and girls.

Roseanna: And uhm, so we made a family out of all the children there. And then all of a sudden, it's just like 'you're going. Your things are packed.' You didn't want to know if you had any things...

Marilyn: Really.

Roseanna: ... But your things were in a little box like this ...

Marilyn: We never got any things when we left, but we got things when we went there.

Georgia: No clothes or anything. Just what you were wearing.

Roseanna: And as they—we watched so much of what they're doing now with the kids and I really applaud them when they're trying to keep the kids together—you know and it's like it's-- it's so necessary. You know, it really is. Did that answer your question?

(Group chatter)

TR: You're fine ... You're telling us what we need to know ... So, what school did you attend while you were at Mary Haven?

Marilyn: Dunlevy.

TR: Dunlevy?

Georgia: I went to "red brick" to finish up. Red brick building then I went to Dunlevy.

JB: Does the red brick, was that—?

Georgia: I don't remember the street, it was on—

JB: Was it Pleasant—?

Georgia: It was a white building. There was one that was red brick and there was a white brick—

TR: Uh, is it the one over by the post office?

Roseanna: We don't know where the post office is now, but—

TR: It's on the west side of town. It's western Warren Street.

Roseanna: Uhm, I'm trying to think where—

(Indecipherable group chatter until 00:10:42)

Roseanna: Mechanic Street?

Georgia: Yeah, because we went by there.

Roseanna: I think it's Mechanic Street and — yeah, Mechanic and Silver — no, Silver is one block — yeah, Silver — I think Silver and Mechanic Street there was the old, old red brick. I mean when she (*Georgia*) went there, it was—

TR: It's gone now.

Roseanna: -- the bricks were dusty then. So — but uh, and then they had built Holbrook and uhm they bussed us in from forty-eight (*state route*) and they split us up and they send her (*Georgia*) to the red brick and they put me up in Holbrook and we were the first class to go in there. And then uh we went in a home and that was Dunlevy. And then I went all the way and then Lucille Berry was built onto the high school, so our classes were the first that went into Lucille Berry.

Marilyn: Your class.

Roseanna: Yeah.

Marilyn: We didn't make it that far.

Roseanna: Yeah, they didn't make it that far. (*Laughter*)

Marilyn: We went to Hamilton.

TR: There ya go.

Roseanna: So but our class should be in Holbrook uhm keystone and also in the Lucille Berry. I heard that they opened that up, I don't know what was in there ... Danita Kimberly, her record should have been in there. She did the highest jump in the state of Ohio that year. I think she jumped five-six and that was before they started teaching you to go over this way – or go over on your back.

Georgia: Yeah. Because me and her (*Roseanna*) was in the high jump and running.

Marilyn: I was a softball thrower. You know I held that in Hamilton! (*Group laughter*)

TR: Alright, so – while you were at school, were you ever singled out by other children for being residents of the children's home?

Marilyn: Not by the children. By the teachers.

Roseanna: She said she was (*pointing to Georgia*)

JB: Which is what we've heard.

Georgia: Children wouldn't play with me. Stuff like that. "You're in a home." I had what was supposed to be a cousin of ours I went to school with, and he let it be known that I was in the children's home and that was a bad thing with his family. So that influenced the other children.

Marilyn: When I started uhm kindergarten, I was already six because they hadn't put me in a school yet. But she (*pointing to Roseanna*) used to come home and teach me everything every day so I knew math, I knew how to write and print my name, I could do everything...

Georgia: She schooled me too.

Roseanna: By the time she hit first grade, she could do cursive writing.

Marilyn: But I did that in kindergarten. That's when I went in and missed out on my uhm kindergarten teachers.

Roseanna: Yeah. Yeah.

Marilyn: And she said come here – or one of the other teachers – and there she'd say “say that again” and I'm doing the two-plus-two is four and four-plus-four is eight and she'd look at them and say “she's in the children's home.” And I thought, oh I wonder what that means. You know - “oh, I'm in the children's home.” And we were singled out for our lunch tickets.

Georgia: Yep.

Marilyn: We always to go to the front of the line. “If you're in the home and you have lunch tickets, you have to go to the front of the line.” So that always pointed you out that you were (in the children's home), so we knew we were different like that, so – it didn't bother me.

Georgia: Because in Dunlevy, of course you have the four little buildings and you all meet in a group and do your line thing, then go back to your classroom and eat. So you were always with your class.

Roseanna: Now for me, no one- no kid, no teacher ever pointed me out. But uh, in eighth grade is the only time that it hurt me. And that was that we were picking out- voting for who we wanted for our class president. We were going into the high school. We were gonna get to cross that line, and I mean the buildings butted up and there was this line, so you actually got to cross the line to go to the high school. But uh apparently I won. And I was called down to uh I think his name was Mister Osborne I think was the president – I mean the principal – and uh he told me that I apparently I was very popular with all the kids and that uhm, he congratulated me, and then he let me know that I couldn't be the class president because I didn't have parents and I didn't have the type of - I forget the word he used at

the time – but I didn't have parents and I didn't represent the school. They needed someone who had a home, and family and things like that.

Georgia: A structured life.

TIME 00:15:00 MARK

Roseanna: So it went to the next guy down. But at least I know the kids, you know...

JB: Right. Didn't single you out for being in a home.

Roseanna: Yeah.

Marilyn: I never felt like the kids did me in.

Roseanna: They didn't bully – I don't - they weren't really bullies like what we see now. We don't know.

Georgia: Yes.

Marilyn: Oh there was one bully.

Roseanna: Yes.

Georgia: I know who you mean.

Marilyn: We'll keep that between you and me. You had the bully.

Roseanna: Yeah.

TR: Only share what you think is fair.

Roseanna: Right.

Georgia: Wasn't over that.

Marilyn: No.

TR: Okay. So, this kind of switches back to a different section of the home. Did you have to work or do any chores? If so, were they daily or weekly?

Roseanna: Every day!

TR: Well that answers that!

Marilyn: I did the third floor all the way to the first floor banisters every morning—

Roseanna: All the spindles. That was her job. But she was—

Marilyn: I was only five, six years old.

Roseanna: Six years old. So, you know—

Georgia: We worked down in the laundry.

Roseanna: We had to do our own laundry.

Georgia: ... Washer and dryer. I had to iron clothes with the big presser down there and everything.

Roseanna: They had to do the dishes too.

Marilyn: I didn't! I was in the little girls room, so I... (*laughter*)

Georgia: We had to wash dishes. We had to wash dishes with the dishwasher – wash pots and pans about to cook what she needed ... Set tables.

Roseanna: The first thing we learned – the very first thing we learned was to fold- how to fold hospital quarters(?).

Marilyn: Oh yeah. You better make your bed right or—

Georgia: Because our governess had been a nurse.

Roseanna: And she- she insisted that we know how to do that.

Marilyn: First thing you do when you get up in the morning is make your bed.

Roseanna: And then – (*with Marilyn*) get dressed. Brush your teeth. Comb your hair. Do your chores!

TR: Out of curiosity, do you follow these routines still?

Roseanna: We do.

Marilyn: Every time my life starts going crazy, I sit down with my soundwave and – I'm gonna tell you this – mom wants you to go write your little scheme, and I'm like I got to. And I write it down. Okay, I'm gonna get up, I'm gonna go brush my teeth, I do it over and over and over and I get back into my routine, I'm back in life. I'm okay again. It's only because (*indecipherable*)...

Roseanna: I don't have to write it down though. But at my age, I probably should! (*Group laughter*)

Marilyn: I do it because I'm more disciplined if I see it and make myself see it and stick to it.

Roseanna: And we all three have those CD's, so I think they added to that.

TR: They probably contributed, I wanna say.

JB: Do you recall the names of the cook or the governess?

Roseanna: Yes, Mrs. Curtis was our cook.

Marilyn: Helen Curtis. That was her name?

Roseanna: Helen Curtis was our cook. And then – it was strange, everybody had the name Helen – but we had- it was Helen Tolson...

Marilyn: No. Helen- Ms. Tolson's name was not Helen.

Georgia: Last two governesses (*indecipherable*)...

Marilyn: That was the old lady ... Ms. Tolson's name was just...

Georgia: Was Helen the one who had...?

Roseanna: Mrs. Tolson? (*laughter*)

Marilyn: Ms. Helen ... the other Helen had the wooden leg.

Roseanna: Right.

Georgia: And the other one was right before we left, the big tall one.

Marilyn (*to Georgia*): That was Helen Curtis.

(*Indecipherable group chatter until 00:18:06*)

Roseanna (*to interviewers*): Watch their expressions. We hated this one – Mrs. Pursley.

Marilyn: Ms. Pursley! (*Group laughter*)

Georgia: Why did we hate her? Because she carried around a thick belt all the time (*TR: Oh man*). ... "You better not get out of line." And she beat me a lot.

TR: Was she a governess?

Interviewees: Yes. Yeah.

Georgia: She beat them boys bad.

Roseanna: And then there was Mrs. Cull(?), she was on the boys' side.

Georgia: Mrs. Cull beat the boys too.

Roseanna: There was another one right at the same time as Mrs. Cull, and I got to think the other day they must have been children of civil war soldiers. I was thinking about how old they were.

Marilyn: But Ms. Tolson was fabulous to me. She was a sweetheart. She treated us all like girls. And she knew all our older brothers and sisters, and talked highly of them. Always did.

TR: Who was the individual with the wooden leg?

Marilyn: Aunt Helen is what we called her.

TR: We had another lady who we interviewed.

JB: Which I know you guys had been commenting back and forth with Beverly Bilandy(?) on Facebook, or I think—

Roseanna: Oh, is that who the one... (*indecipherable group chatter*)... She asked me a question and I thought...

JB: She was kind of in and out the same time that you were there.

Rosanna: Oh, okay. We don't remember her. I don't remember a Beverly-period.

TR: She goes by Susie now, she might have been.

Roseanna: Susie?

Marilyn: The last name sounds familiar.

TR: I think she's - well no, she can't be that much older. She's probably right about your same age because I know that she went to school with one of our employees who was born in the early fifties.

Roseanna: Wow!

TR: So...

Marilyn: That'd be our age ... Susie. Sister Sue that was on (*indecipherable*).

Roseanna: Interesting. Okay.

JB: Well that kind of answers, uhm – we had a question about discipline. Was there—

Marilyn: There was also 'mom and pop.' Mom and Pop Leek(?). They ran the children's home when we were there.

Georgia: They were there when we first went.

Marilyn: And in fact, I think I'm supposed to be named after him.

Roseanna: Marilyn. Her name was Marilyn. And then we had, uhm, mom and pop Saunders, they came. That's who owned that station wagon that's out in front in your old black and white picture. That was the Saunders' because the Leeks' had (a) Woody.

Georgia: I wish I had brought my phone with us...

Marilyn: Yeah, we went and took pictures on the tour.

TR: You ought to send them to us.

JB: Well yeah, if you have any.

Georgia: I was going to bring mine (*indecipherable*).

TR: We appreciate the thought.

Roseanna: Well when you were talking about chores, can I go back to that just real shortly?

JB: Yes.

Roseanna: Uhm, some of the chores that- that we had that we thought were fun to do is that we had to clean the laundry room.

Marilyn: Oh we loved that! (*laughter*)

Roseanna: This was- is the basement area that's under that addition that you see in your photo. And it probably was thirty by twenty-two; it seemed very huge. But uhm- but we got to pour soap on the floor and slide across it and surf! I still have my scar where I split my head open (*TR: Oh no!*).

Marilyn: She's why we never got to do it anymore.

Georgia: We never even did laundry anymore.

Roseanna: I hid for- I hid for the whole day. And it's like we were in trouble because of that. And then, Mrs. Tolson, she put a band-aid on it and said 'get outta here' and, you know, blah blah blah. But uh, that was one thing we did that was fun. Another chore we had to do, they would pick all the corn and put it in the back of the truck. They would pull it out right outside the door, that addition that you see. There was a huge tree there that we loved, it probably took up about – the diameter was this big (*arms outstretched*).

Georgia: We thought...

Roseanna: Yeah. We were little!

Marilyn: It was only this big! (*Group laughter*)

Rosanna: But anyway, they'd sit there and uh, we would shuck corn. And we're talking about-

Marilyn: And they made homemade ice cream for us up there.

Roseanna: Yeah, I was gonna tell them about that uh- Half a ton, a truck, of sitting in doing corn. Uhm, all of the vegetables that were cleaned in that, they were sent down to the food bank...

Georgia: We had a garden down there in (*indecipherable*).

Roseanna: ... Down here behind the library which is still here. Well, whatever they – I forget what they have there now – there used to be a Chevrolet dealer and right behind them was the food bank. And so all the food that we grew out there uh was sent down there for us. And so were all the farm animals that were slaughtered. But uh, we had to – oh I hated this when they took me in there – but we had a chicken feather plucker; I don't know what you call it!

Marilyn: They used to cut their heads off and the chickens...

Roseanna: There was a metal round thing with these spikes on it, and you had to hold the chicken up to it and it would pick all the feathers off of it- the little bird. And uh, let's see, we had to do that and uh – like she said – uh, well that wasn't a chore to eat the ice cream.

Marilyn: Oh, and we had to clean the fire escape once a year (*Roseanna: Yes!*). We loved cleaning the fire escape!

Rosanna: It was- you girls- you wouldn't believe how much fun that was!

Marilyn: Oh my gosh! They had a ball.

Roseanna: We never even thought about it you had to climb back up there.

JB: Can you elaborate why it was so fun to clean the fire escape?

Marilyn: It was like a silo with a big slide ... (*indecipherable group chatter*)

Georgia (*pointing to Marilyn*): Somebody fell over it one time in the back of it.

Marilyn: Somebody we know fell over it one time. Because we're playing train and we're getting out on the circle- the second floor and we're all 'back it up! Back it up!' and we backed up and she's (*Georgia*) behind me and I heard 'boom' (*claps hands*) and the train went and she beat me down! She was the one who went over.

Rosanna: When you came out- When you came out the door...

Marilyn: We used wax paper and we had to go down it to clean it once so, you know, it the spring it would melt away, and then maybe once a month we'd go play in it.

Roseanna: But when you came out the door, the door was as high as this table up off the ground and we're little kids. And you're coming out- you're coming out like, like out of a chute, like- like... I mean like you're in mid-air for a good two feet, you know, so there always had to be somebody there to stop you at the end! So, yeah it was so much fun.

Marilyn: Because you're coming down so fast.

Roseanna: It was just so much fun. But we didn't know, like I said, how serious it was.

Marilyn: Oh, it was wonderful.

Georgia: ... We told them to wait – wait to come down.

Marilyn: We had to teach them the trains. 'Back it up! Make sure Georgia ain't falling over!' (*Laughter*)

Georgia: We had baseball teams. We played basketball; we had a basketball court. Tennis. Stuff like that. We'd make pot pies. We'd make our own mud pies ... we were forced to eat some of them.

Marilyn: We'd lay on the top of the hill and watch the clouds go by. 'What was that one?'

JB: Siblings, right?

TR: Well this ... kind of goes right into one of our next little groups of section- or questions of, how did you entertain yourselves?

Marilyn: I played round leader.

Georgia: Yeah. We uhm, had about every game going. Puzzles, jacks, coloring books.

Roseanna: See, where we came from, we didn't know- we didn't know...

Georgia: We were just let go. They told us to play.

Marilyn: Yeah. 'Go play outside.'

Roseanna: When we got there, we had never seen all the toys they had there for one...

Georgia: We had a radio.

Roseanna: ... We thought that's how all the other kids were living. And so, when every new toy that came out she saw on TV, we got it. There is nothing we didn't get.

Marilyn: We obviously had it made. Except for not having our parents and our family, we had it made. We got to go to Dayton probably, at least three Saturday a month. We went to movies seemed like every Saturday. Went to church.

Georgia: When we went outside to play, we were taking to place(s) ... to the movies, the Shriners, they took us places ... We went to Coney Island once a year every year.

Roseanna: We got to go to the movies. We got to go to Coney Island. The Shriners' Circus. But we thought all kids did that.

Marilyn: Yeah, we thought everybody did it.

Roseanna: We thought we were being treated like as if we had a home. We didn't know that guess what, all that costs money and families were budgeting and stuff. We didn't know any of that stuff. But uh, yeah...

Marilyn: Pop Saunders were put us on the bus, the boys and the girls. They sat on one side and us on the other and we'd go to town. We got to go swimming at Waynesville pool.

Roseanna: They'd give us money at Christmastime; every time we got money, we didn't know what money really was...

Georgia: We was allowed down at the creek. We had our own creek.

Marilyn: Oh yeah, the girls were allowed to go down to the creek.

Roseanna: ... And they would take us down here uh, downtown across from the- that's where the five-and-dime was. La Croix I think it was? And we got to go Christmas shopping. And we'd buy something for our teacher and things like that.

Georgia: We'd go to the schoolhouse.

Marilyn: And we got paid for our grades. Because I got the most!

Roseanna: That's why I only got a dime! (*Laughter*)

Georgia: We had bicycles, skateboards. We had slides, swings, monkey bars, jump rope, teeter-totters...

Marilyn: I got her on the swings.

Georgia: And we danced the hula! (*Laughter*)

Roseanna: She got her head split all the way open. She (*Marilyn*) was learning how to run underneath them.

Marilyn: Swings used to be wooden. They were this big (*showing dimensions*) you know, and wooden and her (*Rosanna*) in it ... She's like 'run fatty run!' I'm like 'okay.' 'Run now fatty!' I'm like 'Okay!' ... She swung the highest. So I ran and I got scared and I—

Rosanna: She froze.

Marilyn: I couldn't do nothing, so she screamed 'sit down or do something' (*Rosanna: Duck!*) and I sat down and she hit the swing—

Roseanna: On top of her head.

TR: Oh man!

Roseanna: So—So we're thinking that because there's blood of her foot that—

Marilyn: I keep saying my head and they're like 'You're okay, look at your foot, it's bleeding!' I said it's my head ... She thinks it's my head, she's wiping off my foot and she said 'it's her head.'

(Group Laughter)

Roseanna: It's the only time any girl was allowed to stay inside and that was her because of her head. We always were outside.

Marilyn: And that's when Mrs. Persley changed. All of a sudden I'm her baby girl (*Georgia: Yeah*). She hated us girls before then.

Roseanna: We used to stand outside and she'd be looking down at me at the window and we'd wave like we were never gonna see each other again!

Marilyn: I had to stay in bed for like - I don't know if it was a month, or three months or what. It was a long, long time.

Georgia: I used to sneak in to see her.

Roseanna: It was probably a month. Yeah.

Marilyn: My head was sewn up by Doctor Young; they took my into him ... (*indecipherable*) ... I was about six when that happened.

Roseanna: ... I wanna say that most of the histories that the kids were in there for was probably that I think that uhm, there was violence. I know there was in our family. And uhm, none of us fought.

Marilyn: Never!

Roseanna: We never had a fight. We never had a—

Marilyn: There was one fight one time on the boys' side.

Roseanna: Yes, on the boys' side that was probably hormones(?) now that I know of.

JB: Are you talking about all the children at the home?

Sisters: All the children.

Marilyn: I mean we had our little arguments - 'you're not playing with me today' you know, whatever.

TR: Children.

Marilyn: Yeah. But there was never violence, never...

Roseanna: We laughed and played and played and laughed all the time. Danced. We danced the rodeo. That was our retinue. We did the polka! (*Laughter with Marilyn*) We knew how to do the barrel. What was it, a barrel – pork barrel?

TIME 00:30:00 MARK

Marilyn: Beer barrel polka!

Roseanna: Beer barrel polka (*laughter*).

Marilyn: We thought we were – I don't know if we were or not – but we thought we were doing it.

Roseanna: It was fun. We had a lot of fun. We put- we put little plays on for ourselves.

Marilyn: And we had a little groom. All the girls were the 'astro-nets.'

Georgia: We weren't allowed to be in school activities, so we had our own.

Roseanna: Yes, and I made up a song for us. The astronauts had just taken off, so we were the astro-nets from Lebanon, Ohio.

(Marilyn singing)

Roseanna: Yes, we still know the song so sometimes we sing it! *(Group laughter)*

JB: That's amazing!

TR: So you were provided with all of your toys that you could ever want. Did they also provide your clothing, your shoes, your personal items?

Marilyn/Roseanna: Yes, everything.

Georgia: Everything was donated to us.

Rosanna: And it was- everyone wore whatever dress. I mean, it didn't matter what – except for Kathy Burkowitz(?) - she always got the newest...

Marilyn: Yes, she always got the newest and the best.

(Indecipherable group chatter)

Georgia: I know where she is if you wanna go see her.

Roseanna: She was a beautiful little girl, she really was.

Marilyn: She was a sweetie.

Roseanna: But uh, she was kind of 'favored.'

Georgia: She had a big nose!

JB: There's always one, right?

Marilyn: She was smart. She was smarter than me. And I was the smartest until she came.

Roseanna: But it was like- when Coney Island came, we knew it was getting time for Coney Island because all the new clothes come in in boxes. All the new shorts, all the new tops – everything. And we got to pick out which one we wanted to wear for that day and it was really exciting.

Marilyn: We got to ride the Shooting Star fifty times in a row! (*Laughter*)

TR: Oh man!

Marilyn: You never had to get off and get in line because it was the children's home day. All the rides you can do ... Now, they were in front of us.

Georgia: ... We were just taken there and let go.

Marilyn: She and another girl were in front of us. They were gonna beat us but we beat 'em.

Rosanna: It was all the orphanages, they would go ... from the whole southwest area, I guess ... see, we still carry those rivalries from back then.

Georgia: Yeah, I don't remember having any food or anything ... I know we ate very good ... (*indecipherable*)

Marilyn: And we were there all day long. We'd leave at dark. It was fabulous.

TR: The entire Coney Island day.

Marilyn: And we went to every circus that came to town. The Shriners- they all took us.

Georgia: The Shriners club.

Roseanna: We got to go to the theater, we got to go to— what's the other place?

Georgia: What's the other place we got to go to?

Roseanna: Yeah, what's the other club that we got to go to?

Marilyn: The Syrian—something...

Roseanna: Oh no, the Syrian—that's the- that's the circus. Yeah. Can't remember. (We'd see) signs outside of the city on plaques, you know-

Marilyn: Yeah, like the Rotary Club or something like that...

Roseanna: But we always got to go to all of that stuff. I just- I'm amazed—

Marilyn: And when we got home, we didn't get to go to anything! (*Laughter*)

Roseanna: I think- Right. I think- We lived a very privileged time—We were privileged, but we didn't know that we were privileged. We thought that we were just keeping up with everybody. But truth is, they- they did us good.

Marilyn: They really did.

Roseanna: They stabilized us, they- they gave us a...

Marilyn: You hear about children being molested or mistreated and stuff and all of this – nobody ever, ever was touched. Nobody was ever, ever – I mean, we were together constantly. You wouldn't have known...

Roseanna: We were protected. We were protected—

Georgia: If something happened to you, I would have known right away.

Marilyn: We were treated honestly very, very nice.

Roseanna: You didn't mess around with them old governesses.

Marilyn: Oh man! Ms. Tolson, when she ... I didn't see her getting mean one time with the girls, but she was gonna kill them boys. She was gonna kill 'em one time! It was when the two boys had gotten in a fight. And she was the one who was gonna take care of us because they couldn't get them to stop. And that's when she let us know she knew our older brothers and sisters- she was like 'if your brother was here, that wouldn't be going on. He'd go over there and take of that right now.' And we're like, 'you knew our older brother?' That was pretty cool.

Georgia: And they'd stay up one night past bedtime so we could see The Beatles on TV.

Marilyn/Roseanna: Oh yes! Yes (*Rosanna: Popcorn!*)

Georgia: That was a big deal because we were usually in bed by seven-thirty to eight o'clock...

Marilyn: And we all ran away together one time! All the girls ran away together.

Roseanna: We all- we decided to- we dressed in black (*laughter*).

Marilyn: We all went down to the end of the cornfield and turned around and came back.

Roseanna: We made it to town. We made it to the library.

Marilyn (*to Rosanna*): No, you did. I went back in the cornfield.

Roseanna: ... We did make it, but every time a car would go by on (*state route*) sixty-three, right? And you're out by the old substation (*Georgia: You'd get down in that ditch*) out there in that cornfield, and we- we'd lay down in the wood.

Marilyn: And we didn't even know why we were running away!

JB: I was about to say, ask why-

Georgia: She (*Marilyn*) was saying she didn't want Rosanna to leave her.

Roseanna: You know pre-teens. You know what I mean – going home.

Georgia: The rest of us stood up on the fire escape trying to see them down there.

Roseanna: But I did make it into town. Some boy did pull over; he was gonna take us all the way to Dayton. Thank God he didn't. You know what I mean?

JB: Yeah.

Marilyn (*to Rosanna*): You wouldn't have made it to Dayton.

Roseanna: So then we're like, okay what are we going to do? Everything's closed. What do we think, you know? We didn't think, so we- we- got all the way back and we creep up the- creep up the fire escape (*JB: Oh no! [laughter]*). Now the girls' side didn't have the siding.

Georgia (*to Rosanna*): Remember the guy that broke into the children's home on the second floor?

Marilyn (*to Rosanna*): That was the girls' side when we first went.

Roseanna: I don't remember that.

Georgia: The one that had all the chickens in it?

Marilyn: ...The big little girls' room was where you used to come over and tell us the stories when the dog- when they took the dog away from the woods.

Roseanna: Oh.

Marilyn: We were on that side when we first went in, and then they put the big wall down the middle and moved the girls to the other side—

Georgia: And the boys they put by the fire doors.

Roseanna: But that was another thing uh when we went in is that uh to keep all the little girls uh calm, I used to tuck every one of them in—

Marilyn: She'd sneak in-

Roseanna: ... and kiss everybody goodnight and then lay there; I would tell stories of that in the dark. So, it was really—

Marilyn: I'd act like I'm letting her in, and letting her (*Georgia*) in, and I'd put the covers over my head, and then I'm like 'Okay now Jesus, here we go, so...'

TR: Well speaking of Jesus, did you attend church or Sunday school?

Marilyn: Sure did. Springboro.

Georgia: Both.

Roseanna: They had us go to the Methodist church up here by Cherry? Is that Cherry Street? Springboro?

Marilyn: Springboro.

Roseanna: Methodist?

Marilyn: ... Methodist.

Roseanna: Um, I'm trying to think—

Marilyn: That's where we'd go to bible school.

Roseanna: That – mainly we did not go into the church (*Marilyn: No, we were in Sunday school*). Only one time I remember going into the Methodist; it was just the Sunday school. And ... we ... it wasn't what we were taught.

Marilyn: Now before that, we did. We went to, uh, Church of Christ in Lebanon.

Roseanna: But ... but ... were we taught anything? No.

Marilyn: I was! I learned the books of the bible. I learned the bible verses. (*JB: It's up to the learner*) But you had to want to know, that's the difference. (*Group laughter*)

Roseanna: She liked her little coloring pictures.

Marilyn: You had five books, you had those five books in a row that you read that week. And next week – if you leaned those, you got a star and you moved on to the next ... If you were done learning, you were still on those. That's how I learned them.

Roseanna: Glad I was older.

Marilyn (*to Rosanna*): See, if you'd learned them, you wouldn't be asking me. But she's a very spiritual person.

Roseanna: It didn't. It did turn around and bite me in the ass. (*Group laughter*)

Marilyn: No doubt about it.

TR: Is there anything else you would like to say about the staff? We've talked about it already and described our various memories, but is there anything else you'd like to add about them or anything else you -- ?

Marilyn: I remember one night getting up and Mrs. Anne Helen(?), her leg was hurting really really bad. And we'd never seen her without her leg, ever, you know. And she had it off as I walked by the bathroom and she called to make sure I was okay. And I could tell she was crying from her voice. And you were gone (*to Rosanna*) at the time, it was just me and her (*pointing to Georgia*) still there. And I went into her and she told me the story about how when she was young, she'd been on a motorcycle with her boyfriend and they'd wrecked on a bridge and she lost her leg ... But she- but she was just as nice as could be and sweet; I mean she was mean when she wanted to be. They had to be, you know. You got that many kids, you gotta— But they didn't beat us or anything like that. They were wonderful nice people – to the girls.

Georgia: We never had it bad.

Roseanna: What we lacked was that we weren't held. We were nurtured that way. It wasn't- they never combed our hair. They never uhm- they never draped our clothes up. They never put us on their laps. Though I think she (*Marilyn*) did get held a couple times by Mrs. Tolson. But anyway uh, we didn't know really too much what that was like. We were allowed to see our mom the first Sunday of every month from two until four o'clock. And she came every time but once; they said she couldn't get off of work...

Georgia: When our older brothers and sisters wanted to come, they were allowed too. They came two or three times.

Roseanna: ...But there were- there were children there whose parents didn't come.

Marilyn: We saw them standing at the window every time.

Roseanna: It broke our hearts for them because they had become our family too. But um, I think that uh if there's any evaluation of the staff, it's that you can be loving because those children need that.

Georgia: You can't give them everything, but you can give them love.

Roseanna: Right. And- and the problem is is that when you get out, you don't know what that is, so you don't know- you don't learn boundaries, you don't learn uh- you don't learn...

Marilyn: Yeah, we had no idea. We were taken to Hamilton and it was like we were in New York City. We walked the street until one, two o'clock in the morning ... that's what we did; we walked, we stayed together and we walked.

Georgia: Because we were separated. The girls were always here, the boys were always here, we went to school ... You weren't allowed to go to any of your friends' homes that you had in school to interact or anything. The only time you interacted with that is if it was Christmas or Thanksgiving and some family came and said 'okay I'll take you with me and you can come back and have dinner with my family.'

Roseanna: They would just take us. They would separate us on holidays. (*Marilyn: Yeah, we weren't together at Christmas*) They would say I'll take you, you and you and you're gone. There wasn't any ... But we were all lucky. None of us were molested or anything while we were out—

Marilyn: Not even when we were out in other people's homes.

Georgia: We won't say the older boys didn't try at times. But...

Marilyn: Oh the boys, well they tried. You guys were older.

Georgia: The staff never did anything that I know of.

Roseanna: But I did get my first kiss at Mary Haven by a boy there. And uh—

Marilyn: I'm telling! (*Laughter*)

Roseanna: I remember me and Sandy, we'd practice because as we both knew that he was gonna give me a kiss. And so—

Marilyn (*pointing to Georgia*): Well I'll be someone else did too, if she'd tell the truth!

Georgia: I didn't say anything.

Marilyn: Oh, I knew it!

Roseanna: There was this mirror, and her and I would stand there pressing our lips against the mirror and then look at our lips to see if they look like the—you know Lois Lane and Superman in the comic books, and that's how you had to turn your head and stuff like that. And I remember, their vestibule went between the children- the home part and over into that addition. It was almost like a lockdown fire area is what it was that kept the building safe here because this was a metal door that we had to go through. And now I know it is a fire door is what it was. But in the vestibule, right there's the only time we could have an exchange between boys and girls because their door was off to the left, and then ours went off downside to the right, and that was where they had us go. So, I had to—

Marilyn: That's where you lined up before dinner and lunch.

Rosanna: So Sandy, she watched for me and she- she watched for the governess so I could sneak out and go down and have my first kiss there. So ... yes, and so anyways that's a- that's a very important thing for a girl to get her very first kiss. So, anyway, things like that we did too, so there's little stories and they're special.

Marilyn: I was eleven when we left, so I didn't... *(Group laughter)*

Roseanna: No, she didn't have any.

TR: Alright, so were the older children able to have jobs outside of the home?

Georgia: Not when we were there *(Marilyn & Rosanna shaking heads)*.

TR: Okay.

Marilyn: I think they were when older siblings were there because um...

Roseanna: I think I heard somebody—

(Indecipherable group chatter)

Georgia: They said he wouldn't work the horses in the barn...

JB: Early on in the nineteen-hundreds, I believe they would – I wanna say loan (*indecipherable*) ... Kind of 'loan' children out and they would work and live with various...

Roseanna: I can see that being done.

JB: They weren't like adopted by those families, but lived at their farms or houses and helped out. Okay ... Even the house, girls would work on house chores and stuff like that, so—

Roseanna: That part they trained us well on. We know to clean under the beds and to move things and clean under them, yes.

Marilyn: Cook and clean.

TR: Would you describe the setup of the building for us? See, all we have is some very rough blueprints from the early nineteen-hundreds and there's no photos that exist from the inside.

Marilyn: Oh, well we're gonna send you these photos.

TR: We would love that!

Roseanna: I will- I will tell you they way it was set up. Anyone else?

Georgia: No, you can go ahead.

Roseanna: Well, when you're looking up the lane, that would be the main entrance. And then there was a very large entrance on the right side of the building looking at the front of it now (*TR: Okay*) on the right side. And uhm, when you walked in – we weren't allowed to go in the main...

Marilyn: The main entrance was mom and pop's - their home.

Rosanna: ... We weren't allowed to go in the main entrance. We were allowed to go into that side entrance. But when you walked in, there was a huge, huge hallway. I mean, I bet the ceilings in there

seemed like twenty feet high because we were so little, but they were really high, probably fifteen feet. And uh anyway, you had the two big staircases coming down like this (*circulating arms*) back and forth to the main center.

TIME 00:45:00 MARK

TR: Okay, wow.

Roseanna: So, so if you're looking out from the very front of it, imagine a cross. Right? (*Marilyn: Okay, wait a minute...*) The staircase is fed in from left and right and entrances for the boys and ours was here.

Marilyn: You're talking from the lead- from the mom and pop place, from where—

Roseanna: I'm just talking about the layout of the building.

Georgia: Which is really the main floor.

Rosanna: I wasn't talking about who was in what.

Marilyn: Where we came in the door, I'm saying, when we lived the steps came down this way and this way (*motioning with hands*). That would be from mom's where the steps came up this way.

Roseanna: Okay well – it was all three stories of- this is where she had to clean all the spindles – it was three stories of spindle work. And those were as long as your room for- and then it would curl and then come back down the next layer to the second floor, and then curl and go back down to the first floor. So and then now you got that- that cross is what I was trying to say was that this was the front of the house and then, this part is where the vestibule was built on that arm there. Right? And uh, but uh the rooms they- there's what, four beds in a room? Except for the little girls' room.

Marilyn: Little girls' room had six beds when we first got there.

Georgia: Little girls' room had eight beds at one time.

Marilyn: Little girls' room had eight, yes.

Roseanna: Yeah, we were divided by – I thought were- should have been divided by ages, but I think it's more about what you could do.

Marilyn: Size I thought it was. It was how big you were. If you were little, you were in the little girls' room.

JB: And you said that was on the first floor?

Marilyn: No, that was on the second floor.

Roseanna: They had us all together. We were all on the same floor together. You got that picture? I can show you each

JB: I didn't bring it with me.

Roseanna: Ok, well when you're looking at the building, look up on the second floor. That is bedroom, bedroom, governess room, governess room, bedroom, bedroom (*TR: Okay*). That is the layout on the second floor when you're looking from the front of the house. So – because that was my window I lit in there. But anyway, in this next room was the little girls' room – (*Georgia: -indecipherable-*) - I'm talking about the second room – the second floor. But anyway, and then when you're looking on the backside of it, that again was another room, then a room and then – I think that was Helen's room, aunt Helen's room there. And then it was the boys' area which they just duplicated...

Marilyn: After the fire wall was the boys' room.

Roseanna: Yeah. So—

Marilyn: But it was our area before that. And that's where the little girls' room was there, then the hallway, then the middle girls' room, then the big girls' room.

Georgia: Yeah, we just got the fire wall the last two years.

Marilyn: And it would have been where they put the fire wall.

Roseanna: Does that help you at all?

TR: It does actually.

Roseanna: But they were huge rooms.

Marilyn: And the third floor was hopping.

TR: The third floor was hopping! Okay. How was the third floor hopping?

Marilyn: Because the music was on(?) by itself. You could hear people laughing.

TR: That's crazy.

Marilyn: I thought there was a baby overtop of my bed one night!

Georgia: We had records. They played records for that. We thought it was the older ones playing gigs on us.

Roseanna: Which makes no sense because it was only a children's home.

JB: Early days of the children's home, they did have a nursery.

Roseanna: Did they?

JB: Yes. So...

Roseanna: The attic was really scary. The attic—

JB: So did you do anything in the attic? Was it set up for anything?

Roseanna: We weren't allowed up there, but we got- I would get punished from Mrs.- (*laughing*) Mrs. Tolson would make me sit on the steps there and shut the door and I cried. But then I crept up there one day and there was the grim reaper sickle hanging from the rafter and I got really scared and it was just really haunting because you could also hear- I think pigeons were in there.

JB: Oh yeah. Was it ever living space, do you know?

Roseanna: No, it was unfinished.

Marilyn: And the third floor wasn't really- we weren't really up there. The big girls' room was up there after she (Rosanna) left. She (Georgia) and I were in the big girls' room up there. And then there was a room next to us that was right before the fire wall. We called it the play room. We were allowed to go in and play music and we do all that. Well then we're in there one night in the- in the bedroom and the light came on and the music started playing and we can hear everybody laughing. And she (Georgia) yelled "Turn that music off!" and the lights went off (*Georgia: It was noisy*). Well we thought somebody was in there that wasn't supposed to be in there, you know, and then it came back on and we're like "uh oh." And nobody was in there. And they didn't believe us; we ran downstairs and aunt Helen couldn't get her leg on to get upstairs! So she thought we were nuts.

Georgia: They took us out of that room, didn't they. Took us out of that room.

Marilyn: Yeah they took us out of the room. We had to move downstairs. Nobody was allowed to stay on the third floor.

Georgia: After that happened, we couldn't sleep up there no more.

Marilyn: Except for Jamie Tomley(?) when she ran away.

TR: Her punishment was staying on the third floor?

Marilyn: She was locked in the bedroom that we used to have to (*indecipherable*). Two weeks because of- I mean she ran away real often. She was gone for a few days.

JB: So, I know we mentioned a little bit- did we circle back to forms of discipline?

Marilyn: Stand in the corner.

Georgia: Stand in the corner.

Marilyn: Get a switch or—

Roseanna: Fly swatter.

Marilyn: Fly swatter. Go make your own switch or bring it back—

Roseanna: You have to strip your switch.

TR: Oh no.

Georgia: Ma mentioned that.

Roseanna: Yes, mother did that then uh—

Marilyn: Didn't they do that to- Mrs. Tolson would get you with the switch.

Georgia: There wasn't no switch for me. They just—

Marilyn: Well me neither, honey, I never got one. I never got whooped ever.

Roseanna (*whispering*): She was spoiled rotten.

Marilyn: No I wasn't, I was a good girl!

JB: Would you say that the forms of punishment were for the time...?

Roseanna: Yes. It was not, no.

(Indecipherable group chatter)

Georgia: I don't think I ever was abused, no. And we know what abuse was, we lived with our father.

Marilyn: Our mom beat us with the belt ... She whipped us but she never beat us.

Roseanna: No, it was appropriate for what it was.

Georgia: Yeah.

Marilyn: Yes. And them handing the boys, that's probably why they had to whip us hard as they did.

Georgia: Boy they got- you could hear them clear on our side.

Roseanna: It was very normal. That was very normal corporal punishment was at the time.

Marilyn: Yes.

JB: Right.

Roseanna: I mean, Mr. Taylor had school, and in seventh grade walked around with a big bopper, and anybody in this town that knows him knows what he carried. It was a paddle that was this thick and holes drilled in it. It was about that long, and he walked through smacking his hand like "I dare ya."

Georgia: Waiting to get those boys.

Rosanna: So if you- if you ask anybody here at my age that knows Mr. Taylor, they will tell you about the big bopper. And the boys got it. I mean they had—

Marilyn: They didn't get swatted in the home? That's what I'm saying, I don't think anybody ever got swatted at the home.

Roseanna: No, not in the home. This was at school. I mean they had to bend over, touch their toes and he held back and bam. And they'd go about a foot. And- and you know what? It was quiet around there.

(Group laughter)

Marilyn: They did what you said to do. That's for sure.

JB: I think in my time in elementary school is when they had a transition out of that part of it.

Marilyn: Oh I tried to get them to do it to my son and they wouldn't do it. They were too chicken, so I took him home and whipped him myself.

Roseanna: The stuff they do today!

Marilyn: My son is forty now. Forty-two?

TR: Alright, so we had already touched on some of this. Was there a garden in the home, you said yes. If so, do you guys recall how large it is and what kind of plants were grown there?

Roseanna: Oh yes!

Marilyn *(to Georgia)*: Green beans?

Georgia: Green beans, tomatoes, corn, lima beans- uhm, we had wild strawberry patches.

Roseanna: We had an apple orchard.

Georgia: Yeah, we had an orchard that had apples in it.

Roseanna: Now when you get out there – I don't know what lane they call that now – uh that runs along the side and then they built that building back there, uhm— where the county parks things. That was all garden. Row after row and then there was a cesspool down there for, you know, the waste. And uh, anyway but I mean we must have had – I'd say twenty rows of like tomatoes and that. Then they also plowed a- where the corn up behind where the old chicken coop and everything was on the boys' side. Uhm, and then uh so it was uh- it was huge. It was huge. And uh when we got there when Pop (*indecipherable*), I mean he was always down there plowing that garden. And then when Pop Saunders came in, then he was too and then the older boys- the older boys were always running the tractors and doing the

Georgia: The children were not allowed to do any of that. Or around it.

Marilyn: Yeah, we were allowed around that. We were allowed to work in the garden, but we weren't allowed around the—

Roseanna: But they did get us- we were allowed to have a salt shaker and a couple times in the summertime, we'd go down to the garden and we could have anything we wanted. And we got to play softball with the boys on that day and everything. It was a real treat, so I mean they were very special days.

Marilyn: And Pop would pitch.

Roseanna: Yes.

AB: Do you remember where the softball field was? We were trying to figure this out the other day.

Georgia: On the boys' side. And then you had the big tower for the slide and fire escape thing. It was over on that side up there. That's where we played there.

Marilyn: It went from there up towards the fence.

Georgia: And the fence would have been up there, and stuff. This fence behind us from the field was ours. But this fence belonged to the horse farm next door.

Roseanna: Shaker Hill.

JB: And that's the farm that's still there, right?

Marilyn: Yeah.

JB: It's still there for now.

Marilyn: We used to sled ride through there!

Roseanna: We'd sled ride those hills up there.

AS(?): We walked those hills a lot.

Roseanna: You can imagine how fun that was. And then when we cut a tree down, we got to make a chute on it so when you come down you and you hit it and you go high in the air!

JB: Did you guys have like proper snow attire?

Marilyn: I don't know.

Roseanna: We had- we had five pairs of socks and a pair of rubber boots that we put socks on our hands that were this thick.

Marilyn: We always had coats and everything. We had all that.

(Group chatter)

Roseanna: We had a blizzard around here back then and they actually took a picture of us kids, we built snow forts. Yeah, and they put us in the newspaper and that so—

Marilyn: They didn't have any big plans that day.

Roseanna (*to Marilyn*): I don't know where you were. But that was a lot of fun.

TR: So, we've also touched on farm animals. You guys are actually some of the first to actually say yes, there were farm animals—

Georgia: That's because they started getting rid of them—

(Indecipherable group chatter)

Marilyn: I think as the Saunders came in, they started getting rid of them.

TR: So I heard you say for sure there were chickens, there were horses, there were cows...

Roseanna: Not horses.

TR: One horse?

(Indecipherable group chatter)

Roseanna: We had one pony. They did not take care of him. They let his toes(?) grow until they were curled. He just wandered around the cows. But every now and then- yeah they would, they would...

Marilyn: They had a cow, they named it after Ms. Tolson. She had a son named Denny, and the cow had a calf and they called it Denny after—

(Indecipherable group chatter)

Roseanna: Where we dumped our plates, the older boys always carried it up to the slop to slop the pigs (*Georgia: The kids were not allowed up there*). So we got to at least walk up there and watch them do that. And that's where we learned to— *(indecipherable)*

Marilyn: You couldn't get near them.

Roseanna: And there was a dog there when the Leeks(?) were there (*Marilyn: Yes*). Beautiful collie.

Marilyn: When I took him away, how many times did he come back?

Roseanna: I don't know. They tried to remove him, but—and now they tell stories about that on TV...

Marilyn: We even sat one night in the little girls' room and she let us in at prayer - we're gonna do a prayer for our dog to come back. And I'll be darned if he didn't come back! (*Laughter*) It was like so cool, I remember.

Georgia: Remember our little flower garden out front?

Marilyn/Rosanna: Yeah.

(Indecipherable group chatter)

Roseanna: ... When you come up the drive and got up to the top, uh there was a- the road went around it like this (*circling finger on tabletop*) then went all the way up to the end. But uhm, anyway, that was a flower bed that she built and it was- it was quite beautiful.

Georgia: And when I went back, it was so tiny.

Roseanna: I know! Yeah that's what I thought of ... what'd you do to that?

Marilyn: The tree and the slide- how little it was, I thought the slide was so big!

Georgia: The swing set was big.

Marilyn: The swing set was big. She used to walk across the top of the swing set.

TR: Oh man!

Marilyn (*pointing to Georgia*): She was a nut!

Georgia: I was going to go join the circus.

TR: You fell off of a fire slide! I would think so.

Georgia: I fell a lot. I always had cuts and everything...

Marilyn: She was a tomboy ... She'd hang on the monkey-bars for hours laughing upside-down.

TR: So how would you all describe what the building conditions themselves were like? Was it clean all the time...?

Marilyn/Rosanna: Always clean.

Roseanna: There was a boy that came once a month, and everything had to be so clean that they put a white glove on and did the 'white glove test.' (*TR: Oh man*) So it really scared us that – (*Georgia: Yeah, they did that*) -- ... our chore did not come up to par if they were to test us.

Marilyn: When they say 'stairs' it scared us ourselves, but didn't scare us then— (*indecipherable*)

Roseanna: I mean we made sure that no water-spots on silver and stuff like that.

Marilyn: Oh yeah.

Roseanna: We had to – everything was spotless.

Marilyn: But we wanted to do it that way.

Georgia: Our cook was not just a cook, our new cook was a (Marilyn: *Nutritionist*) nutritionist. She was not a cook, she was a nutritionist. And we- we had to just ate what she mostly cooked.

Roseanna: We had wonderful food. As I said, we were lived privileged. We really did, I'm serious!

TIME 01:00:00 MARK

(Indecipherable group chatter)

Georgia: ... We had barbeques. We had barbeques outside some of the times ... We just didn't have a lot of snacks. They didn't believe in that; no snacks in between ... might have had something on Sunday.

Roseanna: I remember they had popcorn—

Marilyn: We had popcorn on Sunday nights.

Georgia: For breakfast you always had hot cereal, cold cereal and on weekends we got uh pancakes and yeah, pastries sometimes ... we actually had a large menu of everything.

Marilyn: They had - didn't they have a table that was pie or something or cake when you got it, (*Rosanna: I don't remember that*) and you'd walk by and you got a slice (*Rosanna: I don't remember that*) and you'd take the one slice, we had to line up...?

Roseanna: Don't remember that.

Marilyn (*to Rosanna*): You weren't there. You were gone the last two years.

Georgia: So, they did have stuff like that at times.

Marilyn: Yes they did. Because we only had like cake and all that like once in a while. You still had a nice meal and you did get cake or did get pie or something, and you got to go by and get - 'you got my piece...' *(nudges Georgia – laughter)*

Roseanna: And of course we didn't know the boys and the boys didn't know us either even though we all sit in the same areas. I mean we had tables like this, the same. And girls were here, girls were there, girls were there and then the boys were over there.

Marilyn: And mom and pop were always right down the center at the head of the table.

Georgia: There were somewhere between sixty and a hundred kids every day.

Roseanna: But when birthdays would come, you didn't- we didn't get birthday cake. It wasn't- we didn't know that we were missing out on anything. But we learned then that you sing Happy Birthday, then at the end there was a little chorus to it that went- that you had to stand up. Stand up-sit down-stand up (*singing*). And that way we knew who it was- whose birthday it was because we didn't know them.

Marilyn: Unless we went to school with them. (*Rosanna: So now our kids...*) If they were in our class, and we knew they- 'oh, you're from...' Like Danny.

Georgia: One thing they did as punishment I never liked period, is they would put the boys if they wet the bed (*Rosanna: Yes*), they'd put a sheet on them like a diaper and make them go up and down the dining room.

Marilyn: Ms. Cole used to do that. Wasn't necessary.

Roseanna: Shame them. Shame them and make them wash out their sheets.

Georgia: (If) You got caught passing a note to a boy, you stood and read it and everything in front of everyone to shame you.

Marilyn: ...sit down in the middle of the room and sit this far away from each other all day and look at each other all day. Now do you think we wanted to pass a note again? No way. And I was only eleven then, you know, Jesus Christ did you think I was gonna pass another one at you after that?

Georgia: I wonder what they would have done to you if they caught you kissing.

Roseanna: Oh I can't imagine!

Marilyn (*to Rosanna*): You might have had to borrow the paddle from the teacher! (*Group laughter*)

Roseanna: Probably.

Marilyn: They would've hung you out to dry.

Rosanna: Well it was only once.

JB: This is going to be a totally weird question but still going back to the setup of the building. As she said, we don't really know- like what was the bathroom situation like? Like, were there multiple showers?

Roseanna: When you came in the bathroom there was two sinks to your left, three sinks to your right. And then there was a doorway, and you walked into the doorway and there was three showers and then two toilets.

Georgia: No, one shower, two bathtubs—

Roseanna: The bathtub, that was up on the second floor.

Georgia: I'm the one who spent time in that room all the time.

Marilyn: Smoking. (*Laughter*)

Roseanna: So anyway, that's my (*indecipherable*)--

(*Indecipherable group chatter*)

Georgia (*pointing to Marilyn*): She could never get up; she was too little. She couldn't get on top of the flat cupboards. We'd find cigarette butts.

Marilyn: But now when we had the tubs upstairs, the water would run out from being too hot. And I remember having- she'd (*Georgia*) have to take a bath after me in the same water. So if I knew you were taking a bath that night, I would make sure I didn't get dirty all day as much as I could. I didn't go playing in and didn't nobody make mudpies because I knew she had to get in after me and- and the water still had to be warm so I had to be fast so she could get in the hot water and still have it hot, so...

Georgia: She (*Marilyn*) never knew there were kids in front of her. Because we didn't get into the tub. And by the time I got into it... (*JB: It was real hot!*) When I got older, I said—

Roseanna: And it went, the older girls got to bathe first and then middle girls and then the little girls.

Marilyn: And it shouldn't have been that way. It should've been the other way around.

Roseanna: I don't know, I was always the little girl.

TR: Worked out for you!

Marilyn: Because older girls have problems that little girls don't have.

JB: Right, yeah.

Roseanna: But you know what, as far as maintenance of the buildings and that, we never ran out of anything, never had a break-down in the boiler, we never had any electricity out, anything—

Marilyn: Nothing fell off the roof, nothing.

Georgia: Clean sheets on the beds and everything. And there was extra ones in the linen closet.

Marilyn: No matter what, they made the beds. I mean it was—

Roseanna: And the thing is, I don't recall that there was ever any maintenance up there doing anything to keep it all running right - (*indecipherable group chatter*) - yeah, but as far as uh- everything always

ran, and everything was clean and the grass was always cut everywhere. I mean there wasn't a weed eater at the time and nobody had to go pull weeds, so I still don't know how all that got cleaned up. But uhm, everything was painted. It was never- nothing was ever out of order. Everything had its place and had to be put in its place.

Marilyn: They probably had outside tools.

JB: So you all had the indoor jobs, and they were probably doing the outdoor chores.

TR: We've not actually talked to any boys who worked there.

Marilyn: Well we know that Victor Burkhart(?) helped run the tractor, take care of the animals and things until the animals were gone. They left- the animals left before the Burkharts did.

Roseanna: And so did Alfred (?) do that too. And uh, some of the older boys—

Georgia: We stayed away from them. They were prison material.

Marilyn: He was crazy. He was the one who got in a fight, I mean he was mean—

TR: Do you know what the fight was about out of curiosity?

Marilyn: No.

TR: Okay.

Roseanna: It was a big deal because it happened.

Marilyn: Something about him and one of the younger boys and he was beating up the younger boys and that's why Ms. Tolson said 'your brother ... taking care of that.' She said he didn't let them older boys pick on the younger boys.

Georgia: She had to be talking about Jack.

Marilyn: She said Jack.

Georgia: Our oldest brother.

Roseanna: Did that help?

JB: Yeah.

TR: Very much so. Do not worry. Uhm, I do have a random question about the building condition. Would you guys describe it as a comfortable place to live? Was it somewhat homey, or did you very much feel...?

Roseanna: Furniture wise, I- I'll tell you what, we weren't into that. It-

Georgia: It was just wooden chairs and tables. But they were good.

Roseanna: No they weren't wooden. They were the metal chairs that they build at the Lebanon Correction Institute. The chairs were, the tables were, the kind that- you know...

Marilyn (*to Georgia*): The ones that were metal were the ones we played jacks on. Remember when we went in there and we sat—

Roseanna: Oh yes, where we played jacks was wooden. I meant ... It uhm ...

Marilyn: I can't say it was 'institutionalized feeling'

Roseanna: Because we loved each other.

Marilyn: But I've been in jail since then, and I know that it wasn't like jail.

TR: Well that's good.

Marilyn: It was like- it was like a dorm. It was like a dorm. (*Georgia: That's what we tell people*) Like a college dorm where you've got five kids here, five kids there—

TR: It was compact living.

Marilyn: Yes.

Roseanna: They didn't feel that way.

Marilyn: Like with having the thirteen of us if we'd all been home together, we'd probably have one big bedroom and how many beds. That's what it was like.

Georgia: And us coming from a bigger family, maybe that's what made it felt that way and not so institutionalized.

JB: Right.

TR: Yeah. Okay.

Marilyn: Not that we ever had a big room for all of us to sleep in (*laughter*).

Georgia: No. We all shared everywhere.

Marilyn: We shared a room when we got out. The three of us and mom all slept in the same room.

TR: So what was life like for all of you after you left the home, like future schooling? Jobs? Marriage? Children? I've heard some of you say you have children.

Roseanna: We all have children.

TR: All of you have children, okay.

Georgia: I was gonna let you finish before I interrupt you.

TR: No, go ahead.

Georgia: Um, that was another thing in the home though is, uhm, there was no education (*Marilyn: No*). We had no idea that we had to have jobs. We didn't even know what jobs were.

Roseanna: We didn't know what paying a bill was.

TR: So you weren't prepared for life at all.

Marilyn: No, not left at all.

Georgia: We weren't even made to— back then, you really didn't have homework before this new thing I know they got now. But we didn't have homework and they didn't see to it that we read books or uh practice handwriting, math or anything – nothing.

Marilyn (*pointing to Roseanna*): She did (*laughter*). She was our teacher! She taught us everything.

Rosanna: But- but when we got out, it's like Georgia and I, we both- we don't know if in our school system at the time if they were doing all that math because I- I see now that some school systems change three different times the way to do math. So, I could barely do subtraction today. Uh, it's a real challenge for me to do math. Uh, we were never taught that we could ever be anything other than—

Marilyn: Moms...

Roseanna: Yeah! And that even, we never even had held a baby.

Marilyn: We were supposed to get married and pregnant and that was it. No way.

Roseanna: We were so isolated from what real life was.

Marilyn: And I don't mean the home told us that, I mean we had our own mother. You know. Just get married, get pregnant and get outta here, I don't wanna take care of you anymore. She loved us, but she didn't want to have to provide for us.

JB: Right.

Rosanna: But we didn't uhm, no.

Marilyn: We provided for our- all of our life! (*Laughter*)

Roseanna: It isn't like today how you want ... you, you- and now it's 'oh, she's learning this! And she's learning that. And she wants to be this when she grows up.' Our aspirations were, uh, 'can you do the hoola-hoop?' (*Laughter*) You know, we didn't know anything outside of that- that...

Marilyn: I could do a cartwheel in the room (*TR: There you go*). And I wanted twenty kids and to be a mom.

Georgia: I wanted ten.

Roseanna: So did you run out of your film?

TR (*to Marilyn*): You have one. (*To Georgia*) You have three.

Roseanna: I have three.

Marilyn: I lost one before my one after (*TR: Okay*). I only have the one.

TR: Okay. Well none of you got your ten or your twenty. And are you sad about that?

Marilyn: Yes.

TR: Okay. I was gonna say, do you actually still now think going back, would you want twenty kids?

Marilyn: Yeah! (*TR: Okay*). I would've loved it.

Georgia: That's what I was born to be. And so ever since, I've wanted to be a mother.

Marilyn: I think maybe because of being the baby, that's why.

Georgia: I don't want a husband; I want children.

JB: And we, uhm, one of the other people we interviewed, her grandfather was the one that spent time in the children's home in the early nineteen-hundreds. But she reflected a lot about how his behavior towards his family was impacted by his time at the home, so do you feel like (*Georgia: I can imagine*)- do you feel like the time that you spent at the home impacted how you then, like how your family life was (*Marilyn: Yes!*) kind of— and I know you said—

Georgia: We strived to do a lot better. We were more loving to our children and everything. We still strive for that.

Marilyn: When we came home- When we came home, we lived on a corner—if this is the house where we lived (*pointing on tabletop like a map*), we had a sister that lived here, a sister that lived the third door down in here, we had a sister that moved in with us and then she finally found an apartment upstairs—

JB: Was this as adults?

Marilyn: No, this was when we came home from the children's home. And when we came home, they shut the doors and went in.

Roseanna: We didn't get any attention from them when we got home.

Marilyn: And we thought- we thought 'Wow, we're gonna be with our sisters' and they shut the door.

TR: So they lived close but didn't actually—

Marilyn: They lived across the yard.

Roseanna: They lived across the hallway here.

TR: Okay!

Georgia: I remember actually one Sunday – because the church where(?) mama cooked –

Marilyn: Yeah every Sunday, the whole family come over at one o'clock.

Georgia: Yeah, some people from the church came.

Roseanna: As far as impact, yes I'm gonna say for me the impact was a serious impact, because uhm my first-born was uhm adopted away ... so I had no idea of one – I'm not gonna try to go into it too deeply – but that- that was normal to that if you couldn't do whatever it was, the child is taken away. Uhm, so – that uhm ... but there is a happy ending to that. I got to meet him when he was twenty years old when he walked in with his little daughter. So I got to see her and then- and then there was a separation, I won't go into it, but- yeah I will go into it, that he had married well-to-do and he also had a wonderful life. But uhm, the new wife didn't want the children to know about my history and their father's history. And so therefore uhm, I didn't get to see him for another twenty years. Well they eventually divorced. And guess who knocked on my door? And then I got to see he had three daughters which are three sisters. Well not only that, our grandmother (had) three sisters and ...

Georgia: Her daughters were three sisters.

Roseanna: ... The 'three sisters' goes through our father's line and down all the way. So—

Marilyn: His mother was three sisters.

Roseanna: And Louis(?) adopted two who was three sisters—

Marilyn: 'Marilyn' was his mother's name.

Roseanna: ...and- and they were three sisters and yes, and they sang. And so anyway, it had a very happy ending. And uhm—

Marilyn: He still comes around.

Roseanna: But the impact of that is that, uh now when I divorced my- I had two more sons and I divorced them. And I tried very hard to get the boys to stay with their father. Well one did and the little one didn't for whatever reasons...

TIME 01:15:00 MARK

Roseanna (*continuing*): ...But uh the thing is is that I- from what had happened to me, I knew that I did not- I- I don't think my mother should have ever been allowed to have taken us back. And we've talked many times that what if we could have stayed there where we were safe, where we had stability, routine, you know- and what would that have been like? So, when I set up for my son, I go "okay, well you're gonna get to prove this out. Will he have a better life?" Because you're not gonna get in there, and you're not gonna get involved with that older son because you want him to have that stability. You want him to have – excuse me (*emotional*) because it's very uncomfortable – but anyway, that's the impact of that. So you learn that no matter what, you're protecting your children. So, yeah, there's a big impact with that. Sorry...

JB: No, you're okay.

TR: Don't apologize for that.

Roseanna: And I'm still not- still not estranged. I did find him just recently that he's up in Alaska. But then my baby boy ... he went ... he lives in Australia (*JB: Wow*). So I don't have any of my three sons. So, I figured that when I look at it, I go well this is the same setup isn't it. Think about it. Isolation, your family is out here, you've got a love from afar, you know and- and it prepared me to get through all this. In one sense or another, that's good. But in the other sense, I still don't get my hugs; I still don't get to have all of that. So yeah, a big impact on my- on my personal life. So did that give you any insight to being a child that's raised like this?

JB: Yeah.

Roseanna: Okay. And it's worth it.

TR: And it'll help other people who are looking at our videos...

Roseanna: Yes, because that's what I'm hoping. I'm hoping they'll see how important siblings are.

TR: This is exactly what we have learned though, from individuals at the children's home. They have a very big connection to their siblings who were there.

Sisters: Yes!

Georgia: It's all you have.

Marilyn: And I'll tell you the truth, we do to the ones who were there with us. If we'd see them, it would be like—

Georgia: We tried to find our old siblings, yeah.

Marilyn: Oh we tried to move with our brothers and sisters. And they've more or less taken me in, but they were so jealous of these two (*Georgia & Roseanna*) because they were becoming women at the time. And they were worried about their husbands looking at how pretty they were getting. And we were always told how fat we were and how ugly we were I wore a size four and you were what, and you were what—?

Roseanna: Five...

Marilyn: And we were fat.

TR: That seemed like a lie.

Roseanna: Yeah ... But after all, he's always wanting the attention from older brothers and sisters and mother. And then that's the kind of attention that we got, so it's like "ew, our hair!"

Marilyn: But our brothers didn't teach- our brothers didn't treat us that way (*Roseanna: No, no*). Our sisters treated us that way.

Roseanna: But it did have an impact on us.

Marilyn: We always say "why didn't they teach us..." They didn't teach about when you had a period, they didn't teach us to put on makeup, they didn't teach us- "stay away from those guys that are gonna..." You know, they don't want anything from you, don't let them bother you. You know, they didn't teach us anything when we came home. Nothing.

JB: Right.

Roseanna: And these- I don't know what- what the procedure is now to let children out in foster homes and that. That too is not really- it was not then, it was not healthy. Because uh they too didn't really give a rat's ass what was going on with you as long as you were- you filled whatever void they (*indecipherable*)--

Marilyn: ... They were absolutely wonderful, wonderful people. He became a minister after ... They even came back like about three years after I come back home just to come by and see how I was doing and say hello. You know. I was baptized while I lived with them and everything. They were really wonderful people. Wonderful people.

TR: Well you guys have covered all of our questions...

Roseanna: Yay, we made it! You guys made it.

TR: ... we learned so much which is absolutely amazing, but I'm going to leave the time up to you now. Is there anything you would like to add that we did not cover? Or any like any overall arching theme that you want to share about you think of the children's home, or if not we can end this right here.

Marilyn: When I saw it close and they were tearing it down, it broke my heart (*emotional*) to know nobody was gonna care for kids anymore like that. It broke my heart.

Roseanna: It was really hard on all three of us.

Marilyn: That was honestly our home.

JB: Right. Well, and that building itself was very strong with the community and I think a lot of the people that we talked to feel that way, so...

Roseanna: I tell you, thank God it was there.

JB: Right. Well it kind of makes you wonder about the new way that they do things (*Sisters: Yes*). You know, there's always that conversation back in (*indecipherable group chatter*)...

Roseanna: Well you know what I think is really strange is when I watch like Doctor Oz or Doctor Hill and he always sends the kids off to a farm, they send them off to a ranch (*Marilyn: Yeah, wonder why*) and they give them responsibilities and chores to do (*Marilyn: Just like in children's home!*) and just suddenly, suddenly the kids are starting to blossom and they're starting to not do all these...

Marilyn: And they're doing chores instead of running the streets.

Roseanna: I would think that- that should tell people something that it's necessary.

JB: Well, and it was even that way with the infirmary. I'm not sure if you're familiar with the history of that building—

Roseanna: No, we don't even know what it is.

JB: It was for people who couldn't take care of themselves.

TR: That's where the Health Department is now. That building was the Warren County infirmary and it held—

Roseanna: I don't even know where that- where is the health department?

TR: It's right next to here, the big yellow building that's three stories tall.

Roseanna: That used to be the old, uhm, the administration building, wasn't it?

TR: That was on Silver Street. It did used to be where you could go get your flu shots back in the day.

Marilyn: So what was the infirmary?

JB: So it was- it was kind of like the children's home but for adults. So for anyone who couldn't take care of themselves within the community—

Marilyn: Like a drop-in center.

JB: Yeah. But they would go and live there in the infirmary. And there was a farm for people to work on and stuff like that, so it was kind of a thing – rehabilitation...

TR: It was a poorhouse.

JB: That's what they would call it too...

Roseanna: Right, okay. I hadn't even realized that we had one here. I had no idea that there was one in Lebanon.

TR: It was older than the children's home actually.

Marilyn: I can tell you this: One thing we were taught was to mind. And one thing we could do when they said shut up, you shut up. And when I went to jail, that's the one thing I could not believe that at five years old I learned to shut up, and these girls could not. Just shut up! Even for nighttime for you to go to sleep, I used to tell them we'll all be fine in jail because we'd been there already, you know. And then when I got there, jail wasn't- when I say that it's nothing compared to the home, the discipline of it was nothing compared to the home. But the discipline of the home was, you didn't mind the discipline of it, you know.

Roseanna: But we certainly were institutionalized. We were (*Marilyn: Yes*), and that's what carries through once she writes down like "okay, I get up and make my bed, then I fold my pajamas and I put them under my pillow..."

Marilyn: But now I almost make my bed every day still, all of us probably do.

Georgia: Nope.

Marilyn (*laughter*): You used to! You used to and you know it.

Georgia: Yeah, I used to. I don't anymore.

Marilyn: Because that was the first thing, I mean, we did for years when we came home. I made my bed no matter what. Okay, I'll shut up.

AS: Can I ask you a really silly question?

Marilyn: Sure!

AS: Were all the rooms painted a different color?

Marilyn: I don't know!

AS: There was like an article that said like every room was painted a different color and I was like, now I'm curious.

Marilyn: I don't know.

Georgia: Our rooms were green and blue and stuff ... and green down in the kitchen (*Marilyn: Weren't there yellows?*)... and there was whites, not really off-whites ...

Marilyn: It was white.

Roseanna: I got to go through there uhm when everything was moved out.

Marilyn: Yeah, but they repainted that structure white, didn't they.

Roseanna: Um no, but I mean it didn't look like the same place.

Marilyn: No. Because I saw it after that too, and it didn't look like it was even there.

Roseanna: and I was like 'what the hell are they doing in here?' and I thought

Marilyn: And we didn't have matching bed spreads or anything like that, did we?

Roseanna: I don't remember us having bed spreads.

Georgia: We had spreads. We had quilts on everything.

Marilyn: Everything didn't match is what I'm saying; you had your quilt so that you knew which one was yours, you know. And we had a doll on our bed. We were all allowed to have a doll – except for the one she kept that she thought was each one of us. Aunt Helen kept a doll that was supposedly each one of us—

Roseanna: Yes, in the room. She had a doll that was of each child—

Marilyn: So we meant something to her too. That's pretty nice.

TR: Does anybody know what happened to Helen?

Roseanna: I only knew that she – I ran into somebody uhm, when I was doing this newspaper, someone somewhere knew that she was in a uh nursing home and she was ninety-eight years old.

TR: Oh wow.

JB: Do you recall what her last name was?

Marilyn: No I don't.

JB: Okay.

Roseanna: Who's that?

TR: Aunt Helen.

Roseanna: Aunt Helen? No, I'm talking about Ms. Tolson is who I was talking about, I'm sorry (*Marilyn: Oh, Mrs. Tolson!*). Mrs. Tolson was ninety-eight years old. I don't know about Aunt Helen.

AS: ... her only one leg, and I assume you (*indecipherable*)

Roseanna: Yeah that was Aunt Helen.

Marilyn: And she was older then. She was white curly hair. She was our governess.

Roseanna: Yeah. But ... honestly, they were good to us. We had fun (*Marilyn: Amen*). We'd play everyday, all day long from the crack of dawn til dark.

Marilyn: I saw a question on Family Feud—

Georgia: But we didn't go out if we weren't told we could.

Marilyn: Yeah. You're not allowed to go out without asking. But I saw a question on Family Feud about uhm what was something that you did when you were outside, playing when you were young. And Steve Harvey said uh "You kids don't understand it was punishment to not get to go outside." (*Laughter*) And it was! If we didn't get to go outside, oh my god!

JB: It was probably punishment for the people in charge too, with all those kids inside all day.

Roseanna: But you know, I don't remember— (*indecipherable*)

Marilyn: Rainy days we had jacks – we had jacks, puzzles, cards, games...

Georgia: We weren't allowed to be real loud.

Roseanna: We played jacks like crazy.

Marilyn: Oh yeah, you talk loud, you...

Georgia: Don't get rowdy.

Roseanna: It wasn't uh rowdy. We never were rowdy. That's what uh- we were well behaved.

Georgia: They didn't tell us that all the time. We just knew it.

Roseanna: We just knew not to be- not to be rowdy.

Georgia: They looked at us a lot because we were- other kids looked at us a lot because we were in there so long. 'We' knew the rules.

Marilyn: We were reminded.

JB: So the mom and pop's apartment (*Roseanna: Yeah*), did you ever go in there?

Marilyn: To sign to get money for your grades or get your money to go to—

Georgia: Had big fireplaces in there (*Marilyn: Yeah*).

JB: Was in nicely set up, I guess...?

Marilyn: As I remember, it was very homey; I thought it looked warm as I remember.

Roseanna: It looked like a home.

Marilyn: Yeah. And it was darker, much darker than our place was.

Georgia: Really nice furniture and stuff.

Roseanna: I only went in the (*indecipherable name*) one time and their apartment was upstairs when we first got there. And uhm, and uh but she- they had their own children there. She had like three or four – four kids...

Marilyn: And Jimmy was an asshole, wasn't he. (*Laughter*) Yeah he was!

Roseanna: So, but anyway, it was like teenagers being in a house. It was normal, it wasn't like disarray. Now when you walked into the Saunders' - they, which theirs was in the front entrance of the building and they also had the rooms on the left and the right – very, very neat. Very uhm- the front room looked like a parlor almost (*Georgia: Very English, yes*). It had a nice desk in it and everything like that.

Marilyn: Dark colors and...

Roseanna: And they had taken the hallway and cut it off from the rest of the thing and put in a kitchen right there – like when you come in the main entrance, you'd almost walk right into the kitchen. That's where they built their kitchen at. And um anyway, and the cupboards and that were all there. Everything was always immaculate. Spotless. But she was that kind of person.

Marilyn: Mom Saunders wasn't as friendly as- Mom was- she was mom.

Roseanna: None of them got close to us.

Marilyn: Pop Saunders was really nice and friendly.

Georgia: I assumed he governed himself to make sure he wasn't accused of anything.

Roseanna: Right. Pop Saunders was really nice.

Marilyn: Mom and Pop were both very nice.

JB: And then did they entertain people?

Roseanna: I only know that uh- that the Saunders' sons came. And uhm, that's about it.

Marilyn: And when they bring a new girl in, of course somebody would come to bring the new girl or the new boy or somebody left and they came a got you, that's--

Roseanna: We didn't have a lot of interaction with moms and pops. It was very, very little.

Marilyn: Usually at dinner or breakfast or lunch, that's usually—

Roseanna: The governesses mainly sat in the rocking chair all day long.

Marilyn: Or if you were in trouble.

Roseanna: They didn't come outside ... There was no adults outside with us.

Marilyn: Except for when I got hurt, that's the only time they'd ever come outside.

Roseanna: I never even saw Mrs. Pursley walk outside, period.

Marilyn: Yeah, I didn't get to tell you why I didn't like when she cut my hair. I used to have this habit of twirling my hair like this and I sued to play with it like that (*placing hair between lips*).

Georgia: In your mouth.

TIME 01:30:00 MARK

Marilyn: And she said – I was five – she said “(If) you don’t get that hair out of your mouth or I’m gonna cut it!” So I went back in and she (*Roseanna*) pulled my hair back in a ponytail. And I came back in and she said “who did that to your hair?” And I said “Roseanna put it up for me” and she said “bring me the scissors.” And she cut it right out and I was like (*showing surprised expression*) and from that time on, I was her baby and she treated me like gold. But she done- she was mean as- she was a mean old lady.

Roseanna: I’ll tell you what they did for Christmas when I was in the eighth grade. And that was uh- it was nice of the people of Mason to do this. But they uhm- all the beauticians in there got together and gave all us girls new haircuts and perms and everything. Well, you don’t do that to this type of hair (*pointing to her head*). I think I was the first white girl that ever had an afro in my school (*group laughter*). And I will tell you that these kids- not one of them ever made fun of me walking into school. So that’s- that’s the way we were raised (*Marilyn – indecipherable*). Yes, exactly! Only a little more frayed. You know, but uh, that’s- things like that, the community- the comm- the communities gave us parties. We- I’m telling you girls, when Christmas would come we had a party every weekend.

Marilyn: Every weekend!

Roseanna: We got- we got to dress up—

Marilyn: Sometimes two on Saturdays.

Roseanna: ... presents and Santa would come, and music, and—

Marilyn: And you got a present at every party.

Roseanna: Yeah! And you know, just fill out this thing, tell them what you want...

Marilyn (*silently to Georgia*): And she always got what she wanted (*Georgia, indecipherable response*).

Rosanna: ...And I remember the V.F.W. gave us a party, the- you know and things like that, but uh I remember writing down the roller skates because oh man, I loved to roller skate and they let us go every- whatever night Star Trek was on that’s the night we got to go skating. Tuesdays, I think. Anyway, and I got the (*indecipherable*) for that Christmas from somebody from - oh my god, I just died. Got a

guitar once because I wanted a guitar. Well of course! The Beatles had just started and then, you know, and all of that stuff so – it was wonderful.

Marilyn: But she got her roller skates.

Georgia (*to Marilyn*): You did too.

Marilyn: I did once, yeah, and I took them as soon as I got them. I loved them ... I never got to use mine or anything else—

Roseanna (*while Georgia & Marilyn conversing*): Yes I did. But the community came together and ... (*indecipherable group chatter*) ... clothing, parties... Did we give you too much information?

JB/TR: No, not at all. It was all wonderful.

TR: So does anybody else have any more questions?

Roseanna: You guys have to ask us, can we go too? Because you would've had a ball (*Marilyn: Oh yeah*). You would've had a ball.

Marilyn: And thank you guys that you care enough to (*Roseanna: ...Try to save it*) to save something about it because it did, it broke our hearts when it was gone. And now for somebody to care, it makes a real difference.

JB: Right.

TR: We got far more information from you than we have from any documents...

AS: The exhibit- our exhibit is going up tomorrow and I wished he would have talked to you beforehand.

Roseanna: Well we were going to give you something, and it meant to bring it today (*Marilyn: We couldn't find it*) and I didn't- I couldn't find it, I thought I had it right where it was and it wasn't - one of those moments.

Georgia: Yep. She just had it. We don't know where it's at.

JB: So I'm going to go ahead and conclude this interview if nobody else has anything.

Roseanna: But I have a Mary Haven sign to give to you.

Marilyn: The sign that was at the bottom of the hill.

JB: Oh! Yeah...

TR: Cool!

Roseanna: The one that was forged that hung there at the end of the lane. I have it. You probably don't even know that it existed (*TR: Nope!*). On the lamp post on the very last- when you sit right at (*state route*) sixty-three, the lamp post that sat there had a sign – Mary Haven – and I have that sign. And I have even the chain—

Marilyn: She was gonna bring it so you'd have it for tomorrow.

Roseanna: Yeah, and I couldn't find it! Go ahead, follow me home, we'll go look for it.

TR: If you find it, we can always pull the case out and put it in there (JB: Right).

Roseanna: Well, we- I decided it was like this: We're all- I'm almost seventy years old now. And as we're getting older, we're thinning out things we know that were in- the ends of our deeds. Our children are not going to understand all of this and they're not going to value what it is.

Georgia: It doesn't mean nothing to them.

Roseanna/Marilyn: So, we want to give it to you all.

TR: Oh my gosh, that is so amazing.

JB: Well we would be very happy to have that and as a department, that's something that we will preserve and share (*Roseanna: I know that now*) with others so, uhm—

Roseanna: I'm glad I have it, because I don't know what would have happened to it.

JB: It would have been lost forever – as most of this stuff is. So we appreciate that.

Roseanna: So, yeah we appreciate what you're doing too.

JB: Thank you.

Roseanna: And I hope someday that you'll have a reunion for all of us kids that we—

Marilyn: Oh, that'd be so cool!

Roseanna: I've never met one!

JB: I'm going to go ahead and end the recording, so--

[End transcript 01:34:54]