

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project
Sister Marilyn Hopewell, S. F. C. C.
Interviewed by Merideth Taylor and Alma Jordon
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at her home in Lexington Park
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[this interview is not logged]
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1 hour, 47 minutes, 5 seconds

Marilyn Hopewell: So ...

MeridethTaylor: So uh, this is a UCAC interview, with Sister Marilyn Hopewell. And we are at her home in Lexington Park, Maryland. And the interview is being conducted by Alma Jordon and Merideth Taylor. Um, so we can start when you're ready. [crosstalk 00:00:24]

Marilyn Hopewell: Should I begin from my early childhood?

MeridethTaylor: I think Alma has few questions for you.

Marilyn Hopewell: Okay. Very good.

MeridethTaylor: If you can just state your name and ...

Marilyn Hopewell: All right. My name?

Alma Jordon: Yes. Miss, Sister, Marylyn, please tell us your full name?

Marilyn Hopewell: My full name is Sister Marilyn Agnes Hopewell.

Alma Jordon: Okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: And ... Uh, well Agnes Hopewell is ... was my original name before I became a nun. And when I became a nun, I took Marilyn, so in order to keep things going because of Social Security, I have combined my name. So if you never see my card, you'll notice I have SMAH and everyone keeps asking me, why do I have HAMS spelled backwards on my card. But I wouldn't ... hadn't even realized that, but that's my name. My name is Sister Marilyn but I was originally Agnes Hopewell, so I have it combined as Sister Marilyn Agnes Hopewell.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative) okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: No other nun did that. Nobody. They-they didn't think of doing that, but I thought it was a great way to do it. To keep myself because I love my name, Agnes Hopewell. I like when people call me Agnes (laughs).

MeridethTaylor: It's a nice name.

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Alma Jordon: So Sister Marilyn, uh, tell me about your family and where you're from.

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, my family. My mom, Mrs. Lila Hopewell, and my dad was Benedict Hopewell. Well, my mom really was Lila Smith. She married Benedict Hopewell. And um, uh ... I know a lot more about my mom's family than I do about my dad's family. Except that I know that my dad's family came from the ... from Virginia.

Marilyn Hopewell: He came over as slave. His ... His family came over as a slave and they came on a boat. The boat was called Hopewell, and they were called the Hopewell slaves. So when that ... That ... When the boat embarked, they named the town, the City of Hopewell. Then ... Then there's the other Hopewells. There's also some other Hopewells. They're related to me not because they are Hopewells but because our mothers were sisters.

Marilyn Hopewell: The other Hopewells came on, uh, that boat too. It was named Hopewell, but the boat they came on embarked in New Jersey, so there's a Hopewell, New Jersey. So that's why when everyone asks they think ... We're not related by Hopewells. We're really related by the Smiths. The two mothers were Smiths. Henry Smith. I don't know how they all got here, but that's how, uh, I-I ... we really began from being Smiths to Hopewells. Edna went back and forth to Hopewell, Smith. Then again then she went back to Smiths again.

Marilyn Hopewell: But, uh, we really, my dad's family came over on a boat ... on a boat and settled in Virginia. And they came across the water from Virginia to the Point Lookout and that's where ... and he settled there. Uh, his whole family moved to ... His mother took the family. They moved to Germantown, Pennsylvania, but my dad didn't want to go. He was only about 12 or 13 years old, but he didn't go with the family. There ... There were eight of them in their family, but dad stayed in Ridge. And he stayed with the family he was working with. They really raised him with the children – the Trossbachs really raised my dad.

Marilyn Hopewell: Uh, he lived with them, and became a farmer, and he stayed there. So all the other Hopewells grew up in Pennsylvania. Germantown, but my dad Hopewell, we-we stayed in Ridge. He stayed in Ridge and we grew up in Ridge. Oh, sorry. Uh, our ... Out of the eight of us, I'm number five of out of eight children. My oldest ... The oldest in the family also became a nun. It was ... She took the

name of Richard. Sister Richard. So she was the oldest in the family. She was number one and I'm number five of the family.

Marilyn Hopewell: Um, but all my life I've been a nun really. When I was in the second grade, say at school. Father McKenna had come to Rich when I was just a baby, so that's all I knew was Father McKenna. But when I was in the second grade, he had a black priest that come down to talk to us and give us a mission. Name was Father Gladstone Wilson and then he let the children who wanted to talk to him could talk to him and I wanted to talk to him. So I told him then that I wanted to be a nun in the second grade. So he told me to be sure to tell Father McKenna, and I told Father McKenna, and Father McKenna told me not to tell anybody, but to every day say three Hail Marys that God will make that happen.

Marilyn Hopewell: So from that time on, from the time that I was in second grade until I entered, I never told anyone else. Father McKenna would always ask me, "You keeping your promise?" I said, "Yes. I keep it to myself. I say three Hail Marys every day. Every day of my life." I said to become a nun. And I felt that nuns had to be smart. You know, because I saw that how they were teaching. And from that time on, I studied. I skipped three grades at Saint Peter Claver. So I finished ahead of my sister, Edna, who was two years older than me.

Marilyn Hopewell: At first I caught up with her in ... in the second grade. Then I stayed with her until I caught up with my brother, who was four years older than me. I caught up with him in the fourth grade. Then the three of us passed through the fifth grade, and when I entered the fifth grade, I skipped the fifth grade. And then I went from the fifth grade to the sixth grade in one year. And so by the time I really skipped ... We didn't have kindergarten, but I had what they called pre-primer. So I skipped the pre-primer and, uh, and, uh, second grade, and the fifth grade at Saint Peter Claver.

Marilyn Hopewell: But all my life every year I got the highest average. Every year from the kindergarten all the way through. And even when I skipped, I kept my study skills and I kept on. And when I graduated from the eighth grade, since I had gotten the highest average every year, the sisters saw that I got a scholarship to Saint Francis. So that's how I went to Saint Francis. On a scholarship because of the way I liked to study. And I was doing that because I wanted to be a nun. I said, "Nuns have to be smart."

Marilyn Hopewell: So I went from there to Saint Francis and I went ... And I ... When I went to Saint Francis, my brother's like, "You know, down here you just have little dumb children, but when you go to Saint Francis, you're going to have children coming from all over. So you've got ... You're going to have to really be smart to be good at Saint Francis." And I was just determined, so when I went to Saint Francis, I used to study and study and I got the highest average in math for two years at the Holy ... at Saint Francis Academy.

Marilyn Hopewell: I graduated as fifth in my class and every year I got a ... a great scholarship or a prize for something because, uh, uh, I knew that I wanted to be a nun and ... And it's all while I was at Saint Francis. They used to have a group of girls who wanted to be nuns. They would meet with the secretary, the sister, uh, on Sundays, but I would never meet because if I met with her ... with them, then they would know that I wanted to be a nun. So I would never. They kept asking me, "You know what?" They kept saying, "You've got to come to the meetings," but I would never the whole four years I was at Saint Francis.

Marilyn Hopewell: I would never got to that meeting. And I feel that if there was anything that she was saying that I need to know, I thought I would find out when I became a nun I said. But I would not go to that meeting because that ... When you went to the meeting, everybody said, "Well, those are the girls going to be nuns," and-and I didn't want anybody to say that. So I never went there. All while I was at Saint Francis, that was still in my on my mind.

Marilyn Hopewell: No one knew that but my one sister, Edna. Edna was two years older than me and, uh, although I skipped and passed her, everybody thought we were twins. For a while they thought I was older than she, but she knew it wasn't and everybody else knew, but Edna knew I ... Edna was the only one who knew that I wanted to be a nun. And so all while I was at Saint Francis, I kept the secret, and I graduated in June, and I entered the convent in October.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: And when I entered, it was ... I-I kept in my mind that I wanted to be the best teacher ever. I just knew what I wanted to do. And while I was in the novitiate, I'd found a book. It was called The Fervent Novice and I read that book. That book was telling you about what this young girl who had wanted to be a nun, and how she became a nun, and how she had her ... kept her focus, and how she was such a wonderful person. It was just the ideal book of what I wanted, so the whole time I was an oblate, every year that I taught, I was determined to be the best teacher.

Marilyn Hopewell: Whatever school I went to, everybody knew I was going to be the best. The ... They would all wait for me to decorate my classroom. Then they're all the nuns would come and sit in my classroom and get my ideas. But my whole time as a nun, it was because of what I learned about that Fervent Novice. The Fervent Novice kept her posture. She knew how to sit. She knew how to walk. She knew how to talk. She knew how to be with the children. She was ... The Fervent Novice was an ideal. It was just so ideal that I ... It was just ... It's been my whole life. That book that I learned the first month that I was there in the oblate, that book was like given to me by God. And I read it from beginning to end and all my life that ... that was what I wanted to be.

Marilyn Hopewell: Every school that I went to as an oblate, I got every prize. They said who was the best teacher? I got it. I got the prize every time and I've been an oblate for 67

years, but the whole time as an oblate ... The Mother Superiors, they all ... all thought that I was so ... Even the sisters. They were all ... They all thought I-I was so different, but I was different because of what I read and what I wanted to be and what I saw. I-I-I was ... I had this little saying that I would say. They would ask me my name and I'd say, "My name is Marilyn. A name that means grace, and charm, and dignity, and all that makes life beautiful and pleasant." And they would say, "Where'd you get that from?" I made it up because that was what I wanted to be.

Marilyn Hopewell: They ... Everybody wanted to be like sister. It was like all over the convent. Everybody wanted to be like Sister Marilyn. "Why? Why do you want to be like Sister Marilyn?" "Because we like the way you do." But they used to follow me around wherever. The Mother Superior, she just thought I was ideal. Every ... I did all the chanting. I was the one who led the little offers. I was the one when she needed somebody to go to another mission, she would change me from this mission to another mission. She'd check ... She would ... I was like everything for her. And that was the way it was with all the sisters because I just kept that on my mind. And if you would ask the children or whoever, "Who's the best?" they would say, "Sister Marilyn."

Marilyn Hopewell: No matter where I taught and-and-and and I taught in South Carolina, North Carolina, Baltimore, Washington, Chicago, Buffalo, uh, North and South Carolina. Uh, I taught all over, but wherever I taught, my I was determined that I was going to be the best teacher that every child had. And if a child said that I wasn't the best teacher, something had to wrong because I-I-I knew how I wanted to treat the children. I knew how children wanted to be treated and that was the way I did it.

Marilyn Hopewell: So my life has been so beautiful. I had a wonderful life. And, uh, um, I ... When I was a junior in ... You know, we call them junior nuns when you just be-before you make your final vows. You know, I was at, uh, Saint Augustine in Washington and it was there that, uh, I really began working with blacks. Although the oblates were black sisters, they didn't understand about the black movement, but I did.

Marilyn Hopewell: I knew what the black movement was about and I ... I would follow the black movement. Every time there was a march, I marched but the other oblates didn't. I ... They-they couldn't understand why I was going with ... out there and marching. I was in the, the Poor People's March. Oh, that was just terrible ... That was a march. The ... You couldn't walk. There was so many people in there. You-you're just ... creeping there. We marched from there to the White House to put candles on the fence around the White House. But wherever we went, and I would follow, but the other ... The other oblates couldn't understand it. They really did not understand.

Marilyn Hopewell: Finally I ... The ... I was honored in Washington. They had ... They had a fundraiser and I was the one they were having the fundraiser for. About. I didn't

know they were having it for me. I didn't know, but then it came out the night of the thing, but I know the other oblates, they wouldn't ... They weren't going to come to that because they just saw black stuff. But they gave me a beautiful plaque because I had been working with the black groups in Washington. I was at every meeting and I was the one who really named, uh, uh, the Washington Library Doctor Martin Luther King.

Marilyn Hopewell: I st- ... I started working with, uh, Catholic ... The Washington Library Association. There were people on that association, they must have been there 100 years. I mean, they had never, never had any interest, so they got ... I mean, when they had the positions they stayed there. They-they were there forever and they couldn't believe that here was ... because I was a young nun then, but why would anybody come-come to their meetings? I went to their meetings because they didn't ... We didn't have libraries. There was nothing black about our the-the material that we had.

Marilyn Hopewell: And I was t- ... At that time, I was the seventh grade teacher at th-the Holy Comforter's Saint Augustine. Holy Comforter Saint Cyprian, Saint Augustine. Well, at that time I was at Holy Comforter and I saw that the-the kids didn't hav- ... You'd told, give them, an assignment. They couldn't find any material about black people. So that was why I went to those library meetings to let them know. So that they said they wouldn't spend the money on out black history material because they wouldn't bring the ... They-they got the books. They wouldn't bring them back. So I got ... I went to the superintendent of public ... of the public schools and he said to me, "Whatever you do, the day you want to leave the oblates, please come to me because I want you to work for ... work for me," but I was ... I went there because I wanted him to get permission to-to work with all the schools.

Marilyn Hopewell: So I began working with the Catholic schools as well as with the public schools. And, uh, he let me have a meeting with the-the librarians in the public schools. And I had a meeting with them and I told them that, "Well, the problem we have is that our children cannot find the materials they want because, number one, the library, we don't have a real library."

Marilyn Hopewell: There was a library, but it was such a distance away, and where we lived, if they went to the library, they would need to have car fare. And if they got books, well when it was time to take the books back, they'd need to have the car fare to take them back. So that's why you ... they're not taking them back because they don't have that kind of car fare. So Reading Is Fundamental is a ... had a program and when they heard what I was doing, they ... They used to be on the TV, so they have gave me their time on the TV and they gave me a ... They have like a truck that you ride around in and talk.

Marilyn Hopewell: So I told them, "I want them to see that out where our children lived and where the library was why the children don't take their books back because they don't have the money to take it back. It's bad enough for to get there, but when they

... When it's time to go back, the-they-they're spending money on some candy or whatever they could." So I ... When I think ... I had the day that I could go around, they let me go around the city and show the people, and talk to them about it.

Marilyn Hopewell: And the oblates, oh, they were excited because they had never had an oblate on the ... I was on that evening news. And I mean, they called every oblate house. Everybody was waiting. Sitting waiting that day. They were waiting at the ... to see me on the news. That I was talking and telling them about where the people ... you know, where our children lived and where ... why they didn't go back to the library. Well, it was because the ... They didn't have the money. And I said, "Why do we have to have such a distance for them to travel to-to go to the library?" Look at the, uh, where others live and how near they are to the library.

Marilyn Hopewell: So finally they built the ... They set up some small little libraries all over the city. And then they said that they're going to build a new library, but I was ... I was still ... I kept going to the library and the meeting center and telling everybody. So I told them. I said, "Get me the library. I want to, you know, name it Doctor Martin Luther King." And so the-the public library there down-downtown in Washington is named after Doctor Martin Luther King. But the children and that ... I got ... I got, um, a Welsh (?) bus company. And they had all the buses that I need. So we ... Uh, I decided. I met with all the librarians in the Catholic schools and the public schools. Uh, they came. They all came to Holy Comforter and I had the meeting.

Marilyn Hopewell: I told them what everyone needed to do and what I was trying to do because we want our children to be able to get ... have some black material. So I said, "But the librarians say when they get the books, they don't bring them back anyways, so why worry?" I said, "Well, we're going to work out a plan and that we're going to bring ... Take the children to the library. Uh, and then the books are due. We're going to take them back. So I had them all sign for what days they would have their children going. So the-the bus company gave me the buses that I need and each time it was time for that group to go, they would go to the school to pick up the children, and take them to the library to get their books, and they would keep them for two weeks.

Marilyn Hopewell: And we did that for the whole southeast and northeast side of Washington. Every child had a chance. Every school the librarians were ready. They had the children ready. When the buses came and picked them up, we would take them to the library, and the librarians were excited. They were calling and calling everybody because the children, they would call me every ... Every evening they would call me. The children were bringing their books back and what I ... We also had a-a little sort of a like a puncher made with little bit of stars on it. So when they would t- ... If they took the books back, they would punch the hole in their card to let them know that the books were back.

Marilyn Hopewell: And at the end of the month, we ... By the time the month was over, we had covered all the schools in the southeast and then I have a company saying that they were interested in that, so they gave me prizes for the children who took their books back. According to what ... how many books they had read. How many ... We had I think Holy Comforter's was ... The auditorium was filled with prizes. They had bicycles, tape recorders, uh, all kinds of telephones, and more things, and all kinds of little machines that they could use. Tabulating machines and all those. They could choose whatever they wanted according to the number of books they read.

Marilyn Hopewell: So at the end of the month we had them to come to Holy Comforter and we had the books. They could all go around and pick according to what they had and pick the prizes that because they took the books back and the librarians were excited. The-the older people down at the library meeting, they were excited. So that's when they started on the lib- Doctor Martin Luther King Library in Washington. And then they said, "Well, with that kind of interest, if they took their books back, then we need to build a big, bigger, library."

Marilyn Hopewell: So they ... The older library was ... I don't know what they did with it, but anyway, by the time they built the new library, I had gone on to Chicago. I was ... I had heard about the west side of Chicago and ... but before that, I had had a chance to go to France to study. While I was in France, I would always attend the black sister's meetings. When I came back from France, it was time for the meeting. Well, I was late for the meeting, but I had been studying all summer in France. When I came, went to, the meeting, there were oblates that were there and they said, "Sister Marilyn there's a priest here looking for you."

Marilyn Hopewell: "Priest looking for me?" They said, "Yeah. He's from Chicago." I said, "Oh." They said, "He's looking for somebody to come to his school." and they said, "Well, we know." Ooh, I thought that was a great idea, you know. They said, "Well, you know you're not going to be able to go. You know they're not going to let you go." I said, "Oh, I bet I can go. I'm sure I can go." So I just kept saying I didn't want him to see me because I don't know if you knew Father Cranston R-Rivers. You don't know him? Well, he was a black priest that started out s-singing black music in church.

Marilyn Hopewell: Father Cranston Joseph Rivers. He had p- ... Anyway. He was giving a workshop and I went to the workshop, but he knew me. Soon as I walked in the room, he yelled out, "Sister Marilyn Hopewell!" Well then the man whom I didn't want to know me was there and I was so .. I told him he had a big mouth because I did not want anybody to know. I didn't want ... I had too many people that was going to work with that I said, "Oh, I can't go to them all," but I did want to go to that one who called. He wanted me first anyway.

Marilyn Hopewell: Uh, well, after the meeting, I couldn't hide because the ... everybody they knew that I was that nun who-who was Sister Marilyn Hopewell well and someone had come from Chicago looking for. And I told them I was going to call them and

have a go because he said the sisters had just left his school. Just. It was just the end of August and they had left him without anyone. Any teachers. The nuns had all ... After all, he was looking for someone. So I-I finally got a chance. I told Father McKenna and Father McKenna said, "Go."

Marilyn Hopewell: So I went to my Superior. She said, "No. I already have some place for you," but I told her. I said, "But this looks like where it ... It's a real bad, you know, sad place because they said they had burned down almost the west, the entire west side of Chicago," because Doctor King had just died and everybody now after everybody's uh, uh, upset because of the death of Doctor King. And the nuns are afraid though of where they were and uh ... So everything was just, uh, torn down. The Catholic Church was just at its end. So I told Mother I thought I would that's the kind of thing I wanted to do.

Marilyn Hopewell: She said, "Well, I have your mission already," but I told her. I said, "I told the priest I would come," because she ... we-we-we ... She couldn't make up her mind whether I should go there or go where, so I called Father McKenna that day, and he told me to come down here, and I came down, and we sat down, and we talked. And, while we were talking, he called ... He called Mother and told her that he really felt that she should let me go to Chicago. And, uh, uh, told her that he was going to send me there no matter what. That I was c- ... going there with his blessing and for her to decide, but already he was telling me to go. And that's how I got to Chicago.

Marilyn Hopewell: And I came back to Baltimore. Mother Superior said, "I ..." They couldn't believe it that I was going to go because she had ... I had told her about a year before that the problem is that there are a lot of black children who had never seen black nuns. They were taught by white nuns, but they had never seen black nuns and I think what she should do is to exchange some black sisters to teach in those schools so that black children will begin to see that there are black nuns and let them send the white nuns to teach in-in their place." So she had already ... She said, "Well, you gave me that idea and now I have it all set up." Oh, she said, "So I have it set up for you to go to Macon, South Carolina to teach with the Dominican Sisters and our Dominican Sisters' going to come to Washington to teach in your place."

Marilyn Hopewell: Ugh. I said, "This is just too much." I said, "But I told you that ... That was two or three years ago." She said, "But it's ... This takes time to work it out," and she said, "But I'm not really satisfied with what-with the exchange," she said, "because I'm sending them my best teacher and they're sending me a kindergarten teacher." She said, "That's not an exchange. You-you teach seventh and eighth grade and she's in kindergarten. That's not going to be a real exchange. Although it's a black and white exchange, it's not. Say they ... They should be able to send someone better, you know to, on your equal."

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, she couldn't decide. The next day eve- ... all the sisters, everybody was going on their mission and I'm still at the mother house trying ... And the priest

was calling me from Chicago telling me that, you know, that he wanted me to come because he really didn't have anybody. And there were older nuns that just didn't come back. So finally he's ... I got ... I made up my mind. I was going to Chicago. So I called Father McKenna and he said, "Go. Go with my blessing. Your Mother Superior is just not on time." He said, "You tell her. Y-you're 40 years ahead of the oblates." So when he told Mother that, oh, that upset her so that the ... I was 40 years ahead of the oblates.

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, she ... She kept that on her mind forever. Every time she had something to say to me, she'd say, "Father McKenna thinks you're 40 years ahead of us, so what are you doing now?" And I went ... but I went out to Chicago and I stayed in Chicago 21 years working. I became ... That's when I ... While I was there, I started The Black Catholic Revival and the church, the bishop, the cardinal, Cardinal Cody, called the mother house in Baltimore and told her to get me out of Chicago as soon as possible. He said, "I don't know what she's doing, but I understand she's going to have something that's just not Catholic. Revival. Black Catholic Revival. And she ..." so Mother called me and said, "Come here to Baltimore. We've got to talk."

Marilyn Hopewell: So I went. I came to Baltimore. On my way to Baltimore to talk to her, before I drove from Chicago, and I went to the bishop before I went to the mother house, and I sat down, and I explained to the bishop what was going on and he gave ... told me, "You have my blessing." He said, "You are to go back to Chicago. I will call your Mother Superior before you get to the mother house and let her know that you must go back. God has-called you there." He told me I was doing God's work. So I went to the mother house from the bishop's house. I mean, when I ... When I got to the mother house, the Mother Superior said, "Ugh. You're going back. You're going back." That's what she said to me. (laughs)

Marilyn Hopewell: She said, "The bishop just called me." He can call. He said what he was going to do. He called her and told her to send me back to Chicago. She's like, "Uhh, yes. You're going back. You're going back. Don't need you coming here if this is what you're ... Why did you go to the bishop?" (laughs) Oh, I said that. So I was so happy I-I don't even know what to do. No matter what she said, it wasn't ... it didn't bother me because I kept saying, "Oh, gosh. I can go back," because it was ...

Marilyn Hopewell: The west side of Chicago was the worst part of the whole United States. If you had never been to any place, oh it was so ... There were priests. The priests didn't know. All the priests were white. None of them were black. They didn't know what to do. They was ... The priests was so happy that I had come. They had never had a black person to work with them. So they made ... They put me in charge of the ... of the coordinator for the whole ... It was nine churches in all. So they b- ... would meet with me every third Monday and I would give them ideas of what we needed to do and-and we'd meet together and have a mass

mon- ... One a monthly mass this year because the churches were immense, but they were not ... Well, the number of black Catholics were not that many.

Marilyn Hopewell: So they'd go to church, that whole big church and they had the little people sitting in there, so they-they ... Some of them [inaudible 00:28:54] the church in the pews and whatever, but the-the-the priests was so happy. I ... That's why I stayed there for 21 years in Chicago. I-I worked with those priests because every month I would have something different that they would need to do so we can bring them together. Then we got them to start black choirs in the churches. So oh, it was just simply wonderful. And I had Father Cranston Rivers. I had workshops for the priests and the people so-so that they would get to understanding the blackness as a religious person.

Marilyn Hopewell: You know. And then finally I would have ... I said, "I've done everything I had," but a lot of the churches in the ... in the west side were named after the blessed mother. So I would have a-a like a parade from one church to the other. We would say the rosary and have ... and meet at one church. Then we'd go to the next church. We'd go to ... We'd go to all the different churches which were named after the blessed mother, and-and the Reverend, and Jesus and we would, um, say the rosary. Then we'd have a big session at the end of the day. We would do ... We did everything possible.

Marilyn Hopewell: So after I'd done all that, the people started coming to church. People started turning up. Then we started having mass. Well, next month is going to be at this church and everybody goes there. So they ... They began to see the church filled because they hadn't seen a full church. Then we started having mass at other different churches. One month it's going to be at this church. And then it goes ... So that although the other Sundays were at their old parishes, at least once a month or so, they would see their church could be filled with people. Then that's when I started the Black Catholic Revival.

Marilyn Hopewell: And then when that bishop and the cardinal Cody called Baltimore and told the Mother, "That black nun you sent here, what she is doing is just turning this whole Catholic church! This is not Catholic! It's not Catholic!" So he told and the priests said that ... We'd have the meeting. The priests would come to me and say, "Sister Marilyn, Cardinal Cody is on you. He said you're not doing Catholic things. He said ..." because see, I would go (laughs) ...

Marilyn Hopewell: All my life, I-I-I always ... I would go to Catholic church and I'd direct all the masses at the church and instead of masses, I'd go down the speak to the Protestant church. I was going because I wanted to see what they were doing. How could they keep all these people coming to their churches? So and one priest, one Baptist minister, was also on the school board and he's ... He had more people in his choir than we had in the whole church. So I said, "This is ..." and so he would, he said...

Marilyn Hopewell: Every time I'd go to his church and I would ... he would see me coming, "Here come our Catholic nun. We're going to make a Protestant out of her yet!" I said (giggles) ... I said, "Oh, don't let the cardinal hear this, because he don't know I'm coming because I'm coming here to find out what you all are doing to keep the people here." So we had the first Black Catholic Revival. Have you heard of the Revival? Have you been to one?

MeridethTaylor: Uh-uh (negative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, I thought it was the first one. 1974. November, 1974 we had it. Father Jim Goode was the preacher. He was so good the people ... We went. Sometimes they wouldn't go home at night until 11:00/12:00 o'clock. They was just ... He was just so good. So we had the Black Catholic Revival and then when the cardinal heard about it, the very same week that we had planned the-the pope himself had said, "What the church needs now is a revival."

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, my pastor was the editor of the Chicago Catholic paper and he said ... Whatever the pope said, he printed it all in the Catholic ... He said, "The priests have got to see this. The pope is saying that it needs a revival." So the-the-the cardinal in Chicago, Cardinal Cody, changed. He had, you know, he decided he was going to have a workshop and he called for me to come to meet with him. So he ... So I would work with the black people. Now he was one of them that attended the workshop and on the front page, front of the Catholic paper, was Cardinal Cody and Sister Marilyn.

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, uh, they got the ... The Mother got the Catholic Standard in Baltimore. She called me and said, "What's going on out there? (laughs) He's telling me to get you out of there and now he has you on the front page of that. What's going on? He said he called and told me that he wanted you out of the city." But I said, "Well, I'm having the Black Revival." So from that time on, Cardinal Cody even came. He came. From that time on, everything he did was Sister Marilyn Hopewell. Sister Marilyn Hopewell. They said, "Well, he figured if he couldn't ... he couldn't change you, he was going to join you."

Marilyn Hopewell: So ... (laughs) and it was that at the time they had the first, um, deacons. They were going to ... They were ordaining the first deacons and so they ... the-the deacons are all ... they were all coming to my church. Everybody was coming to my church. They couldn't believe it. What has happened in that little church that all-all of a sudden, people from all over would come to our little church.

Marilyn Hopewell: But the whole west side began to change totally because the-the priests they had somebody to work with them and also Cardinal Cody was already, uh, blessing them because he saw that they were beginning to ... because some of them were getting so upset because, if you don't have somebody to work with you, and our people are something else, you know. You know, you-you-you can't always move them, and if you don't know how to preach to them, you're just going to lose them.

Marilyn Hopewell: So I told them exactly how to learn to preach to someone. When I had the first Revival, one night I had that minister who had a huge choir and he was also on the school board, so I gave him one night and the priest said, "Well, why are you going to have a Protestant priest come ... A Protester preacher come to a Revival for?" They said, "Why? Why are you having him for one night?" I said, "You'll see." (laughs) So I told them. I said, "You'll see." Well, that bishop, his name was Bishop ... Bishop Somebody. Well anyway, he came to the Revival and Lord, his choir. We had to put the people all out into ... The choir was ... The choir was immense and they sang. He preached.

Marilyn Hopewell: So I told them (laughs) when we had the next meeting, they said, "Marilyn, we see what you did. We see what you did." And ... And so then they-they began to understand. I said, "I'm going to ..." But they said but people ... "They told us you go to that church." I said, "I do go to that church, but I'm-I'm not thinking about becoming a-a Protestant. I'm going there to learn from them. To see what they are doing and they do the same to keep our churches open." So that's how it began. And now in the Revival, everybody that there are Revivals all over the country. And out of the country now.

Marilyn Hopewell: Even, yeah. Some of them going out of the country. But that was what got me to stay so long in Chicago. And they kept saying, "When are you coming back east?" But then I would come home in the summertime when I w- ... had vacation. I'd always come back to Ridge. I always. I would never take a vacation. I would always have ... First they'd say, "You can have a week." Then they say, "You can have 15 days," so when it was time for a vacation, I never took a vacation. I always spent my vacation in-in Ridge helping the priests there.

Marilyn Hopewell: I would go down and do everything to get ... because th-the-the people there ... When they closed the schools, I took the people and the people were ... You go to church and there's nobody in the church, you know. So I started visiting homes. I knew where everybody lived. I knew where they lived. They ... I don't know now, but I know th- ... I knew then and I would go to there. Every week I had, "Okay. This week I'm going to go down to Scotland. This week I'm going to Dameron, and next week I'm going down to Wynne. This week I'm going to Beachville. Each week I had different and I would go to all those different people's homes and invite them to church.

Marilyn Hopewell: When the ... In Washington when the Archbishop O'Boyle heard what I was doing, he gave us a bus. So I had Mr. Gantt and Mr. H- ... Not Hugh. Murphy Hewlett. Did-did you know him? Yeah. He used to drive the school bus for a while on up here. Murphy was – you knew Bobby Bennett? Yeah, well he was Bobby Bennett's best friend, but they used to drive the bus on Sundays and go to pick up-up-up the Cardinal O'Boyle. They g-gave us the bus. So, while he was doing all of that, I don't know. My pastor was really ... He was just so thrilled what I was doing.

Marilyn Hopewell: I know he was at a meeting and he was talking about me. The Christian Brothers were at this meeting and they didn't know who I was because the Christian Brothers used to have a school on the west side, but after they burned down all the buildings, they built their school out in the western suburbs. But they c- ... Out there, there are no black children, but they wanted, the Christian Brothers wanted black children in the schools too. And they didn't have anybody black, so they figured how are they going to get some black children in-in their schools?

Marilyn Hopewell: Anyway, the Christian Brothers heard him talking about me, so ... And I was at the mother house at that time because they ... I had to come home for the retreat and I had to ... When I went back to Chicago after my retreat, I had a note to call Brother Alfred Marshall and I thought, "I don't know any Christian Brothers." But anyway, I called him. So he's ... He told me to come. He told me how to get to the meetings out in the western suburbs. So I went out to-to the west to see him, and that's when he told me. He said, "I don't want your pastor to know." He said, "I heard him talking about you and-and I need somebody like you in my school other ... so I can get some black children to come here."

Marilyn Hopewell: And so I said, "Wow. I-I'm surprised he's not going to. He won't be ... mind." He said, "But don't let him know it. I'm not trying to take you away from him, but if you just come out here one day a week or so and just walk through the building, I'll pay you for coming out and, uh, because that will help to bring the-the boys to the school because it's an all-boys school." He said, "But we used to be on the west side and we used to have black students, but now that we had to move out here, we don't have any black students."

Marilyn Hopewell: So he said, "Well, I'll tell you, we-we'll pay you for coming." So I decided I would ... because I don't really know about coming, just to come out to p- ... to walk through the corridors? To be paid? I said, "I think I can do that." So he said, "Well, teach one subject. At least to get you here." So I went back and I told my pastor and he said, "He's right. If you doesn't get a black teacher, he's not going to get any black students." And that was the very year that Isaiah Thomas ... Do you remember Isaiah Thomas?

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah. Well, Isaiah Thomas was finishing at ... on the west side of the school where me ch- ... where my other children were and so that was the year he was going to s- ... to there. So I told her I was going out there because he ... We both went to Saint ... Saint Joseph's at the same time. So they started out with one. Then, before the year was over, we had about 19 and-and we just kept ... Whenever we'd have open houses and the parents would come and see a black person on the faculty, because they-they would always have me when they have open-open houses.

Marilyn Hopewell: They always had me to be the one to welcome everyone. To make sure everybody saw I was there in a black church. And then, mmm, by then there was

black students started coming. Started coming and by the time Isaiah graduated, we had, uh, over 100 such black students. And by the time I st- ... I stayed there as long as I could because I was ... I taught there for 15 of those 21 years I was in Chicago. So I taught there and then that was when the black students really really come.

Marilyn Hopewell: So I went out there that summer just to see how they were doing since I left and now they have a couple of ... I think it was two ... two black ladies. They come and they don't stay so I talked to them and say, "Please, no. Stay because you-you're needed. You know, there aren't that many Catholic schools. You know, wherever you have one, keep it and keep ... let them go."

Marilyn Hopewell: So I talk ... They said they were going to stay. So that's how they started getting their black students at there, because I-Isaiah was one of the first ones. So he was such a terrific basketball player that all the black boys came there. All the blacks boys that could come thought they were going to be another Isaiah. There can't be a, you know ... Isaiah was just a talented guy. But they were ... But lots of them had become famous because they came there and they are on good teams. When they finished Saint Joseph's, they get scholarships to high schools and they are playing on their teams and several of them have been on, you know, gone to other schools and-and colleges because of the-the-their interest in Saint Joseph's as basketball players.

Marilyn Hopewell: So, I decided it was time to come east because my family was beginning to get sick and dying and I said, "I can't stay out here any longer," so I had told them I was moving back to the east. They said, "Oh!" They about just had a fit. They had a fit. So I said, "I've got to go back." My mother was dying. Sisters. My other sister was a nun. She died. Anyway, she would be ... She and I were just the opposite. She was always sick. Always sick. But she would work herself to death. But she was always in the hospital. Always in the hospital. And I had never never sick. I had never been sick in my life. I had never had a prescription in my life.

Marilyn Hopewell: I had never missed a day of school in my life. Whether I was principal, or teacher, or 65 years teaching and I never missed a day. God was so good. And I feel he was doing it. He gave me the good health because he wanted me to do the things I was doing. Nobody would ever believe I was as old as I was. And they wouldn't believe that I had been teaching as long as I was teaching. (laughs) Nobody believed it. Well, every time I would tell them I was going to retire, "What you going to retire for?" Well, then I decided, "Oh, well I'll stop now." I said, "I've done everything. I've done everything I wanted to do. I really have." So I said, "Oh, I haven't had my own school." So then I started a school, Hopewell Academy, in Clinton.

Marilyn Hopewell: Taught for 10 years when I came back from Chicago. I had my own school in Chicago. In-in Clinton. Until I said, "I'm closing this now and I'm going to retire, but no matter what you all say, I finally decided to close it." And when I saw they were building th-this place, they were building this ... I saw on the news the

archdioceses is building in Lexington Park? I got in my car and drove down there and they ... They didn't have ... They just had little p-p-p ... those things on the ground. They hadn't even started to do it. So I decided ... I signed up on the first ... one of the first ones to say, "You know, you're among the first. We-we tried to get a list of people, but you're among the first." So that's how-how I got here."

Marilyn Hopewell: And when I saw it was finished, then I closed my school and came down and it's ... (sigh) I knew I answered all your questions, but-but ... I was ... Probably not, but anyway, I've had such a wonderful life. I really I have. Now every time they'd want somebody, they would choose. I was chosen to go to Africa. I-I worked for the community organization that was right across the street from the convent and the pope was going to Chicago to bless them ... the-the-the ... They had the old building that had been built for the martyrs of Uganda and, uh, they wanted someone to go to represent them. So they sent me to-to go and they said to stay as long as you want.

Marilyn Hopewell: I stayed two months. They gave me all the money that I needed. I didn't have to pay anything. They were great. They did everything. All I had to do was go in and get my, uh, my own, you know, things that you have to do personally. And I got ... Like they did everything for me. So that's how I got there, but they paid every penny. Everything. I ... So I went to Chi- ... went out to ... I've been all over Africa because of them. They-they gave me the money to do whatever.

Marilyn Hopewell: Not only did I went to also to all of the Patmos where Saint John wrote the Book of Revelations. I was ... I went to Greece. All over Greece and Corinth. Old Corinth, New Corinth, Rome, Italy, all over Italy, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania. Uh, there's another one I can't remember. Yeah. Well, it was five countries in Africa I went. So I spent about a week in each one. At each ... At each country. But it was all paid for by somebody else.

MeridethTaylor: So the-the pope, which pope was this?

Marilyn Hopewell: Paul VI.

MeridethTaylor: Oh, okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Alma Jordon: I would love to hear just a little bit about your early life. You know in Saint Mary's County.

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Alma Jordon: You talking in the meeting about how you want ... how you want Ridge and Saint Mary's County to be remembered, and the way it was when you were young.

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes!

MeridethTaylor: And-and also, uh, the names of your siblings.

Marilyn Hopewell: Okay. My oldest sister's was Lucille Hopewell. She became Sister Mary Richard. She was named after Cardinal Cushing because his name was Richard and my brother's name was Richard and the Mother Superior wanted someone named after Cardinal Cushing, so she said, "I'm doing two things at once, you know. I've chosen ..." I said, "Girl, I don't want any masculine. If they gave me a masculine name, I would walk out." I said, "I don't ..." I said, "I'm not going to spend my life with a masculine name." So she said, "But that's ... No. I'm doing it today," and so she-she took Richard and she was the oldest.

Marilyn Hopewell: Then my brother was next. Next. He was Richard. And then I had a ... my next brother was Calvin. Now, he was four years older than me and I passed him in school and left him behind. Then there was Edna. Edna was two years older than me and I passed her. And I told you how Edna was ... I was the number five.

Marilyn Hopewell: So, all while I was in Ridge, I was working toward being a nun. My whole life has been spent in that direction. So when the nuns changed, everything changed. Uh, I didn't like ... I don't like the way it changed. I don't like the way the nuns are now. I-I really don't. That's why I like to live by myself. I can be what I want. You know, I can still do all the things I used to do.

Alma Jordon: So they changed in what way?

Marilyn Hopewell: The changed all the habits. You know, those. I didn't like that change in the habits. We could make our ... We could design a habit. Pope John XXIII is the one that started that. He said we had to wear the modern habits. Our habits were-were too old-fashioned that we had. So everybody said, "All the nuns start moving and changing."

Marilyn Hopewell: Those ... the Dominicans didn't change theirs. The older sisters are ... Those charity sisters that used to wear those big things on them, they-they're changing. The ... Just they all changed. I didn't like the change that. I designed a habit, but I didn't design that. What we ... you know, but then they voted. It's what they voted on you have to wear. Do you see ...? Do you see the picture over there? See my other sister? The one who is dressed like a nun?

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah, that's my oldest sister. That's the old five of us. That's my ... Those are my sisters. Sister Richard was the oldest. That's Edna next to her and then that's me. That ... that's Sadie. You know Sadie. Sadie's on the last end and Anne is on the other end. My mama had five girls and three boys.

- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So you were a nun in that picture?
- Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. Yes.
- Alma Jordon: So you're in the habit?
- Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. That's what they had to wear. The habit was color.
- Alma Jordon: Oh, okay. Oh, okay.
- Marilyn Hopewell: You would wear blue and white, black and white, red and white, but you-you know, it was a color. And we changed the veil. Oh, I have my sister ... a picture of my sister and me. Uh, that's [inaudible 00:48:47]. See there we are there, but that's when we started changing. That's my sister. That's Sister Richard and that's me.
- MeridethTaylor: Oh, okay.
- Marilyn Hopewell: And the one behind back there, as you can see, the one back there, it was, uh, the first change. I have also I have us with the ... when we had the other habit. I liked that other one. Except that you couldn't drive with it on, you know. And I was, uh, one of the first to drive.
- Alma Jordon: You sure couldn't.
- Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah. Right. You couldn't. It's like you had to push it back and I-I did ... I designed something that would go back over your shoulder, but I didn't want ... You know, I told them I didn't like wearing all these short habits. I didn't like that. I didn't. And then they stopped doing a lot of things that they used to do because when I was at Saint Augustine, it was actually even at Holy Comforter. There were 10 of us. 10 nuns there.
- Marilyn Hopewell: If you know the oblates used to teach Sunday school. We had over 200 children in that Sunday school and I could not get not one of them to come to teach Sunday school. I had to go to the seminary and I got the seminarians to come. They would come from Saint Joseph's to teach Sunday school. Oblates would be right there in the house but. They said, "We work during the week." They ... they ... It just ... they just changed so that I said, "This is not ... This is not the way it's supposed to be. It's not supposed to be like this."
- Marilyn Hopewell: They would sit in that house on Sunday mornings. They'd go to mass on Saturdays evenings and they would sit in that house on Sunday, and would play cards, and do whatever they wanted to do, but they would not come over to teach Sunday school. So all the bishops called. You know Bishop Fischer. Commissioner Fischer. Did you never hear of the Black Bishop?

Alma Jordon: Uh-uh (negative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Karl Fischer?

Alma Jordon: No.

Marilyn Hopewell: Really? He died young. He was a Josephite, but h-his sister entered the oblates. She's still ... She's the ... his sister is the Superior General now for the oblates.

Alma Jordon: What's her name?

Marilyn Hopewell: Alicia ... Okay. I can't think of her name right now. Oh, I can't think of her name. Uh, Sister Fischer. Uh ... Her last name was Fischer, but I can't think of her real first name.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: But her brother, while in the seminary, and he was a good friend of mine, because everything I would do, he would come to. Oh, I used to have ... I started the Black Catholic Priests and Nuns of Washington D.C. Every month they would meet with me. And he was a seminarian at the time. He was my secretary. And you-you know Bishop Merino? He was a black bishop. Do you know him? No? Uh-uh (negative). Uh, Bishop Merino was my a-assistant and Karl was ... Karl was my secretary, but there were 25 black priests then in Washington.

Marilyn Hopewell: And they knew they would meet with me every month and we ... We had the first memorial mass for Doctor Martin Luther King's death at Saint Augustine. And all of the priests came and [inaudible 00:51:46] celebrated. And everybody says, "You're not going to be able to do that." I said, "Yes, I am. Yes, I am." They said, "Go down to Father Bernard Joy." Did you know him? No. He was a black priest, but they didn't ... He didn't look black, so they said, "Marilyn, Bernard Joy is not going to come. You say black priest, Bernard Joy." I said, "He's going to come. He's going to come. I'm teaching his sisters, and-and so I know he's going to come." And he came.

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, they said, "How did you?" They kept saying, "How did you do it?" 25 black priests come and celebrated that first mass for Doctor Martin Luther King's anniversary at Sai- ... At Holy Comforter Church. And then the church was packed because they had never heard of it. And they had never seen that many black priests. So they all came. They all came. And the worst was that Father McKenna came. And when they said ... I saw him going inside I said, "Oh, what am I going to do?" because I told them I didn't want any white priests. Oh, I told them I wanted only black.

Marilyn Hopewell: Everybody kept saying, "Lord, Marilyn. Did you see he went in?" I said, "Yes, I saw." So I said, "Well, I got to do something because the other white priests are going to want to come. I let him do it and-and I wanted ... This was a black

priests' thing. So I went in the s-sacristy and I called him aside and I told him. Ooh, he said, "I understand." He said ... Oh, Father McKenna. And all the black priests were standing around. They saw. They said, "What did you say to him, Marilyn? What?" I said, "That's my man. That's my priest. That's my priest. You don't have to tell him."

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, I said ... They said, "Well, what did you say to him?" And then he-he (laughs) ... He had his little vestments and [inaudible 00:53:23] no, no, no, no. He said, "No, I will not wear it." When he came out in co- ... and sat in the pews, but then yes, that was a ... That was a big day. That was the first mass we had in memory of Doctor King. Then I have my other sister, Sadie is two years younger than me and she's the one that's got the big ... Her children are still like my children. They're ... That's Sadie's children. See that picture? That ... Her son drew that picture of her. And he does that kind of drawing.

Alma Jordon: Oh. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah. Joshua does that kind of drawing. That's Sadie and, uh, that's her children. That's their family just before she died. Mm-hmm (affirmative). And s-so ... Anne is the only one left and she's been sick all her life. That's Anne and Sister Richard and-and-and the three of them were sick all their lives. So Anne, she-she was just c-came back home because she's been in the care center for about three months and she's just back home now.

Alma Jordon: Where does Anne live?

Marilyn Hopewell: Anne lives in-in Michigan. Anne raised her family in Michigan, but her husband was in the service, so wherever he moves, she moved with the family. His last place was in Michigan and that was the last place, so she just stayed there and she raised them in Michigan. Ah, but Sadie's children are everywhere. And a little bit here and d- ... And Lexington Park and r- ... and Waldorf, and that's between the Waldorf and Lexington Park. Those are all Sadie's children.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: So those are all my-my mama's grandchildren. So Sister Richard didn't have any children and Edna didn't have any children. I didn't have any children. Calvin didn't have any children. Richard had some chil- ... Two. I think he had two boys, three, and one girl, and that's it.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: What we did here, we farmed. My-my dad was a farmer. He plowed everybody's farmland. That-that's ... He-he learned. He was a terrific farmer. He had horses, cows, pigs, chickens, e-everything they would have. So we learned how to farm. We worked on the farm from the time we were able to walk. Uh, but he ... You

would go anywhere. You would see him out plowing for ... plowing somebody's backyard. Everybody [inaudible 00:55:43] everybody's farmer.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Alma Jordon: So you mentioned your dad was a farmer. What did your mom do?

Marilyn Hopewell: Moms was a housekeeper. Homemaker. And she cooked at Cardinal Gibbons, after everybody was grown, you know? Maybe once in a while she would ... There were a couple of people who used to have fishing parties and she would go and cook for them. Only if it ... But on a regular basis, she had eight of us to take care of and she took ... and she was good. Everybody said she was a saint. All the k-kids. They would all say, "Sister, your mama is a saint." All my ... All my nephews would say that.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I can attest to that.

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, yeah. All my ... And all my cousins they always say that. They would come an-and because my aunt Maggie, I'll never forget it. Aunt Maggie, well, she moved to New Jer- ... Well, her children had grew up in after they left Saint Peter's they grew up in New ... In the city. But all her children, they would come to our house and see ... They would tell us all the time, "Your mama is a saint." And we ... I really felt that.

Marilyn Hopewell: I-I got my vocation from her. Through her. She never wanted me ... Oh, she didn't want me to be, uh, in the convent. Oh, she cried every day. I wouldn't tell her because I didn't tell her until after I graduated from high school. But Sister Richard was already a nun, so she said, "One nun is enough," my mama said. "One nun is enough." My-my dad. Every morning I would wake up, she'd be crying. Dad would talk to her. "Lila, look," he would say to my mom. "Lila, let it go. Let it go. She's a different girl. She's different." Our dad used to say that to my mom. I used to hear him say that to my mama, but I wouldn't let mama know I knew, but she cried.

Marilyn Hopewell: My mom cried, and cried, and cried. She did not ... She said one girl ... because see, at that time, you couldn't come home. You had to make a choice. You either come home when your parents die or you come home when they're sick, but you can't go both times. So you make up your mind which one you want to do. That was it. That was when I came, but then after a while they changed it. It ... Uh, Pope ... Pope John XXIII was the one who changed ... made the orders change from doing that. Once you had orders, you couldn't go home. Once you came to the convent, that was it. You could go and walk around the house, but you can't go in the house. (laughs)

Marilyn Hopewell: That's the way it was. I mean, that's it. So mama she would say, "Oh, no, no, no." Yes. I could hear her. Dad would get up early because he'd go plowing somewhere, but she was fixing breakfast and while he's eating breakfast, she would be crying and he would be talking to her. "Lila, let her go." He would say that to my mom. "let her go. She's different." But my sisters all said I was different. They said I was different, but I-I-I and I knew I was different, but I was different because I knew what I wanted to do early.

Marilyn Hopewell: So I was going to be different. They would go out to parties. I was like one time. I said, "I'm not going to any more parties. They smoke and they drink. I will not go." Mama said after they got ... when I was in high school, I would come home. Edna say get on ready, and I would go and get in the bed and cover my head. And they would call me. "Agnes, you ready? You ready?" They'd come knocking on my door. "Agnes, you ready?" I would be in bed with my head covered. I would not go to any more ... any parties. I wouldn't go to parties. I-it was just a lot of things that I would not do. And when I would come home from school, I would go and sit down and study. Do my work. Do all ... I would do all kinds.

Marilyn Hopewell: That's why I skipped so many grades because the grades were together. Your-first and second, third and fourth, fifth and sixth. They were together. So I when I was in the first grade, I did the second grade work. When I was in third grade I did the fourth grade. I did both work. Then when I went to fifth and sixth grade and I this ... I only had three teachers. My first grade teacher was, uh, kindergarten, first. Well, they didn't call it kindergarten then. They called it primer. Pre-primer, first, and second. Sister Maurice. She skipped me from the ... You're supposed to spend four years in that classroom, but she skipped me.

Marilyn Hopewell: I skipped the pre-primer, the primer, and I caught up with Edna in the first grade. And-then I went to third and fourth grade. I had Sister Magdalene. Sister and I skipped the third grade and went to the fourth grade. Then she didn't come back the next year and the-the sister who came down couldn't hold ... couldn't control the kids. So Father McKenna said they had to take her away and bring Sister Magdalene back. So he brought that other nun back to the mother house and they-they found Sister Magdalene, brought Sister Magdalene back to their. SO Sister Magdalene was my third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. So she skipped me in both grades. She skipped me in the fourth grade and she skipped me in the fifth grade. And then I had seventh and eighth grade and [inaudible 01:00:29]. I-I stayed in those two grades, but that's how I skipped from everyone.

Marilyn Hopewell: So my-my other sisters, they just said ... They said I was smart, but I was smart because I of ... Not smart smart, but I was smart because of what I wanted to do. I knew what I wanted to do. And-and I just studied, did all my work. I did my work and I would do their work. So I did first grade work and second grade work. I did all the work from every grade, but I wasn't that ... I just didn't stay in every grade.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: And then when I went to Saint Francis, I did the same thing. But, yeah, Sadie always had, "Oh, girl, you're so different." Sadie would say that all the time. Every time they'd say, "Say, you're different." Uh, I was different because I wanted to be different. Because I knew they didn't know what they wanted to be. I knew what I wanted to be and I said ... So my brothers, the-they-they always thought that I was going to be different.

Marilyn Hopewell: They al- ... Richard and Calvin. My brother, Calvin, because I worked during the summer. During the summer I would work on the beach on the base and Calvin used to drive. He would never take any money from me because Edna and I were both working on the beach. He would never take ... He said told me, "Don't let Edna know," because he would never take any money from me for gas. Never. And but he would take money from Edna, but not from me. He'd say, "You know what you're going to do with that money." And he knew all the time. And when he would take me sometimes, he would take me over to the job at the place. What you call your place? Uh, uh ...

MeridethTaylor: Happy Land?

Marilyn Hopewell: Happy Land. Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative). He would take me to Happy Land and then he would be telling everybody I was his wife. (laughs) Yeah, my brother would say that. "Don't you talk to my wife!" As we got older though [inaudible 01:02:03]. He would tell the guys, "Get away! Get away from my wife! Get away from my wife!" They'd say, "What's her name?" "Agnes Hopewell."

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, well he was Hopewell and I was a Hopewell. They didn't ... They didn't know the difference. No, he would tell them. Everybody thought that I was Calvin's wife. (laughs) And I told them. I would say [inaudible 01:02:20] Calvin, he's protecting you. Um, he knows. He doesn't let anybody bother me. Say Calvin's protecting you. He was ... Calvin was always always sa- ... taking care of me.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MeridethTaylor: Well, you talked about, uh, your-your father far-farming.

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MeridethTaylor: And, uh, basically was that what your family lived off of? The farm?

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. Yes.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes.

MeridethTaylor: What kind of food did-did your family eat? What kind of food did you make?

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, the whole of Ridge, we had gardens. We-we-we-we were ... We had real real food and what we didn't, you know ... Then we would make ... We would preserve and can. We-we had the whole top floor of our house was filled with cans, cans, cans. We would go in the woods and get ... and pick berries, and can berries, and she would c- ... make-make preserves, and jellies. Uh, everything that we raised.

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, we had ... Oh, now when I see all the trees I just can't believe it. That was all farmland. But we had to make what they call potato kills. I don't know if you've ever heard of the potato kills. Well, we'd have the potato kills. Well, that's what we'd put all our potatoes. We'd put potatoes in it so that we'd have the potatoes all winter.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: And we sh- ... We would preserve and can the cabbages. We'd put the string beans. We'd put all these things we would preserve. We would can them. So it was the summertime was-was cooking time. We would ... Yeah, so yeah. We had good food. We had chickens. We had our own chickens. We had our own eggs. Own milk. Owned pigs.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: So we had everything.

MeridethTaylor: So those were basically your chores then?

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah.

MeridethTaylor: What was your chore?

Marilyn Hopewell: We all had turns. Took they turns to feed the pigs. So this is your day to feed ... to feed the pigs. To feed the chickens. Make sure that, uh, that we would go in when it was our days. We-we all were out in the field we had to bug the beans. We had to bug the beans so that the bugs wouldn't get on the beans. We'd be out there in the cans. The cans and the buckets of beans. Oh, we planted the f- ... We planted. We were out there planting. We-we planted everything.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah, so we had plenty to eat. We never had to worry about what to eat.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Because we really raised potatoes in a little potato field. Oh, my. We were digging them up. Digging potatoes. Go home from school to dig the potatoes and then plant them and put them in the kill.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Now, how did you bug the beans?

Marilyn Hopewell: How do you bug beans?

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative). How did you do it?

Marilyn Hopewell: Say we would have ... You would have a can. Like ... Like you'd kick the can. If you ... When you had the big can of peaches and you take the can and you go to the beans and you have like a little stick and you hit the bean. Hit the bug off the bean into the can. You'd go like that. yeah.

Alma Jordon: And then what? What was in the can to kill the beans? I mean, I kill the bugs?

Marilyn Hopewell: They they put kerosene.

Alma Jordon: Okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: A little. They would put kerosene into the can. Mm-hmm (affirmative). These was kerosene in the can. You've got p-p-p-p up and down the fields. Up and down the fields. We all had it. "Okay. Mama. Count the number of ... Number of rows. You're ... That's ... Okay, yes. That's your row. Those are your rows. That's your rows. Then that's your rows. So we, yes, we were out there painting, and picking, and doing ... Oh, that's ... we did it. We did everything that [inaudible 01:05:38] children should do.

Alma Jordon: I didn't know that was a thing. I never heard of bugging beans.

Marilyn Hopewell: No?

Alma Jordon: No.

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, really?

Alma Jordon: It sounds like you really enjoyed working. What other...? What did you do for entertainment other than playing games and things?

Marilyn Hopewell: We had ... Mama had th-they made our games. Yeah. We had like a butter, button, game. Something like checkers, but, uh, we had black button and white button. And we would play this game, but she would ... she would take the tops

off of shoe boxes and she would draw the lines, you know, and make the ... and we would have your f- ... So we would ... Whoever ... It's like you played it liked you play checkers.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: You know? And then you had ... So one would have the white checker and one would have the black checker and then you would push just like you do to checkers. And-and skip over that one [inaudible 01:06:24]. Like whoever got to the other opposite side was the winner. Then we played cards. You know, [inaudible 01:06:30] played. We used to play cards every ... I-I never did like to play cards, but they did, you know.

Marilyn Hopewell: And played with our dolls. Uh, I never played with my dolls. I kept all my dolls, but when I came to the convent, I gave them away. But I had lots of dolls. They would play with their dolls and break them up, but I didn't play with my dolls. My dolls never got broken because I didn't play with them. (laughs)

Marilyn Hopewell: I just dressed them up and set them down. But they played with their dolls and then the next day you know the doll didn't have legs. The doll didn't have an arm. You know. But my dolls were ... They said, "What you going to do with your dolls when you go to the convent?" I said, "Y'all can have them." Oh, my, that was all they wanted to hear. (laughs) yeah, they would jump rope. We played hopscotch outside.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: We played, uh, oh we had a lot of games that we ... that our parents had taught us. Uh, London Bridge Is Falling Down. We had that.

Alma Jordon: Oh, okay. And it sounds like you got along really well with your brothers and sisters.

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. They ... B-because they wanted me to do their homework.

Alma Jordon: Oh.

Marilyn Hopewell: I did their homework. Yeah. Oh, my. Agnes, they'd go out and play ball and they're out there jumping rope and I'm doing my homework. Then I would see because they all had [inaudible 01:07:38] open their books. I'd do their homework. I'd do their homework. They'd come in. "Agnes, did you finish the homework?" (laughter) I would do their homework. [inaudible 01:07:46].

MeridethTaylor: Did they get disciplined for not doing their own homework?

Marilyn Hopewell: They-they never knew.

Alma Jordon: Oh.

Marilyn Hopewell: Nobody knew but us. I mean, they weren't going to tell anybody that, uh, that I did that. They knew I did it. They'd never do it. I'd tell them that's right. That's right. That's right. Yes.

Alma Jordon: Well, you mentioned that you have never been ill, but it would be interesting to, uh, share some of the health remedies that they used back in those days for illnesses. Do you remember?

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, I had never been ill and since ... since I was in the fifth grade.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: When I was in the fifth grade, I don't know what it was, but I had a ... My ... some kind of a sickness that it was a fever. That with the peels. I would peel skin all over. I peeled all over, but I'd never been sick since then. I don't know what it was, but I was sick a whole summer.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: And, uh, i-i ... All my aunts, they would all come over and help my mama to take care of me. Right. That was the last sickness I've ever had.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: And they didn't know what it was, but it was some kind of fever they said it was. And it lasted all summer. Mm-hmm (affirmative). And that's [inaudible 01:09:01] when I-I called my sister, and they said, "You know one thing. You haven't been sick since you were in the fifth grade." I said, "You know, I ..." (laughs) I said, "That's a long time." I said, "That's true. I never was sick since the ... since the fifth grade."

Alma Jordon: Well, when you were sick though, did the doctor come to your house to, uh, see about you or ... or anything?

Marilyn Hopewell: Doctor Bean did. Yes. The Doctor Bean came once and he told them what to do. Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). But Doctor King. I don't know if you know about him. Doctor King came only a couple times. Doctor Bean is the one who really told them just what to-to do to get help to break the fever and that ... and help to fight it.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). You talked some about, um, about school. Going to school. Did you have an, uh, problems with say getting books and-and pencils or anything like that to use in school?

Marilyn Hopewell: No, no, no. We didn't. Father McKenna had some friends. We had a lot of benefactors. We were like the poor people and knowing that Rich was poor. So all of ... We were ... Every ... We had to write letters to the ... all these friends that he had in Massachusetts and New York. They were, oh, good friends of ours. They always sent money, and clothing, and school supplies. Everything. We got Christmastime they sent toys. And you would write ... We were to write a letter, tell them what we want, and they would send it to us. We'd ... So we had lots of friends. Well, having all those friends that he had, he knew every ... You know, he knew everybody. But, uh, so we got everything. We had everything that poor people would get from others, you know.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: They would come down to see us too. They would. Yeah. I'll never forget Father McKenna would, you know, take us and, "She-she's deeply spiritual." He would say ... T-told them about me. He'd go, "She's deeply spiritual." I said, "Oh, what's deeply spiritual? What's that about?" I didn't know what he meant by saying deeply spiritual. So I-I have a letter that he wrote to Mother Katherine Drexell.

Alma Jordon: Oh, really?

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Oh, where did I put it? I'll let you see it later. Oh! I think I I have it because I just had it three days ago. Yes, he wrote to Mother Katherine Drexell to tell her, "Sister Richard entered the convent and her deeply spiritual sister, Agnes is, uh, going to the academy." He wrote that and Father, uh, who was Father, uh, who was the little preacher who used to be at Ridge? He found the letter and gave it to me. Gave me a copy. The one who's at Hilltop. It-it's Hilltop Crest now. Father Damien.

MeridethTaylor: Oh.

Alma Jordon: Oh ...

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah. Father Damien. Yeah. His. He-he asked me. He said, "Were you Lucille or Agnes?" I said "I'm Agnes. Sister Richard was Lucille." He said, "Because I have a letter that, uh, that Father McKenna wrote to, uh, Mother Katherine about Lucille and Agnes. It said Lucille was entering the convent and Agnes, a deeply spiritual d- ... little sister, is going to the academy. (laughs) That's why he gave me that. He made a copy of it. Yeah.

Alma Jordon: Oh my goodness.

Marilyn Hopewell: I said, "I don't know why he would." He'd always say that. Deeply spiritual. That's Father McKenna's words. And I still don't know where he got that from. Every single day I would go to that church. The church burned down when I was in the second grade, but it was rebuilt when I was in the sixth grade. Fifth/sixth grade, but I would go to the church every day. We only had to go across the yard.

Alma Jordon: So, you. Oh, you lived close to the church.

Marilyn Hopewell: The church ... The church was at the school and I was at the school.

Alma Jordon: They lived near the church?

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. We lived near enough to walk. It only took about 15 minutes to walk to there.

Alma Jordon: Oh, I see. Because that was going to be my next question.

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, really?

Alma Jordon: The church and the school.

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. Oh, Edna and I went to ... We would go to a 6:30 mass every morning with the sisters. We would. When daddy would get up to feed the horses, mama would call Edna and me and say, "Get up, girls. It's time." So we would get up and get dressed and say, "hurry up, because it's ... You've got to make the 6:30 mass." And we would walk up to Saint Peter's and go to mass with the sisters every day.

MeridethTaylor: So you lived very close.

Marilyn Hopewell: Close enough to walk 15 minutes. We needed to give ourselves 15 minutes. We would be there.

Alma Jordon: Did you live in Ridge or ...?

Marilyn Hopewell: Ridge.

Alma Jordon: Okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah. Ridge. We lived ... Yeah. Yeah. Well, we lived closer than just about anybody living. Yeah. Right across the woods. Because when we would be home, we could hear the children play at recess time. Though we could hear. We do.

Alma Jordan: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. Well, do you remember, uh ... I know you got a lot of news from be-being involved in the church, but how did black people get their news back then? Did you have a newspaper or a Catholic newsletter or anything?

Marilyn Hopewell: About th- ... Everything. You ... We knew everything that was going on. They would go with Robinson Barnes. Have you ever heard of Robinson Barnes? My daddy used to come home with all kinds of news. He would go to Robinson Barnes all the time. Every- Robinson Barnes knew everything. (laughter) So we didn't have to have any newspaper. Daddy would come from Robinson Barnes and sit down telling us every new ... We knew everything that was going on.

Alma Jordan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: From ... From hearsay. Then the sisters used to get the newspaper. And that's how the ... Mother (Birkman?) - She was bringing the sister's newspaper over to the seventh and eighth grade and we would read. Especially when the war was going on. The war, World War II was going on. Yeah. When, uh, we would read the sister's newspaper, but anything else that was going on, we ... Daddy would bring it home first.

Alma Jordan: You had a ... Did you have a-a radio?

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. We would have a radio. The-the kind that you use with the battery.

Alma Jordan: Right.

Marilyn Hopewell: Uh, we didn't have any electricity.

Alma Jordan: Right.

Marilyn Hopewell: Uh-uh (negative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Alma Jordan: Do you remember? Did your family take any vacations or special trips anywhere?

Marilyn Hopewell: No.

Jordon: You know, special?

Marilyn Hopewell: No. Because our ... All of daddy's people who lived in Philadelphia, they always came down to us. So we ... And we never got a chance to go up to them until we were grown. But they were always coming down. It was just my daddy would never got up there, so they would come down to see him.

Alma Jordan: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- Marilyn Hopewell: But he had all of his sisters and brothers were our aunts and uncles.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah.
- Alma Jordon: How did ... How did you feel about life in Saint Mary's County back in those days? I mean, did you feel like you had missed something or ...?
- Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. That's why I went to Saint Francis.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Marilyn Hopewell: Because Mr. Pitts was at Cardinal Gibbons. Oh, he kept begging me to come to Cardinal Gibbons. He said it's just people like you that we need here in this school. Oh, he begged me to come to Cardinal Gibbons, but I said, "People there they-they might need me, but I need something else." I just kept saying ... And-and my mind was so made up and so set. Mama told me ... My mama was talking. She got to talk to her more. (laughs) My mama would tell him. She told Mr. Pitts. Mr Pitts. Mr. Pitts. They were telling me to come over to the ... I went to the house.
- Marilyn Hopewell: Edna and I would go over and they would sit me down and he would talk to me and tell me, "But Agnes, we need you here at the Cardinal Gibbons." He said, "You're the kind of person ..." He said, "When we get someone like you, they-they always go away." And he said, "But you could be a great help to us here at Saint Peter ... At the Cardinal Gibbons." Uh, on my way home I said, "Edna. I am not going to Cardinal Gibbons." I said, "I am going to Saint Francis." He's said, "That's what you want to do, Agnes?" [inaudible 01:16:33] let you change your mind. I said, "I'm not going to change my mind." She went there. She went to Cardinal Gibbons.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah. All my sisters went there. Yeah, they all went. Sister Richard didn't go there. Sister Richard went to Saint Francis too.
- Alma Jordon: Oh. Okay.
- Marilyn Hopewell: And but I didn't know she was going to become a nun. I didn't know until she became a nun.
- Alma Jordon: So did she get a scholarship to Cardinal ...?
- Marilyn Hopewell: To Saint Francis? Yes.

- Alma Jordon: Saint Francis.
- Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. That's how I knew I could get one too.
- Alma Jordon: Oh, okay.
- Marilyn Hopewell: But I did not know she was going to. She never told me. She never said to us that she was going to become a nun until she be- ... When I was going ... When I got my scholarship to go to Saint Francis and then just she told me that she had written to some other nuns and see I just wrote to them just to be writing because I knew they weren't going to take a ... take a black girl. But she wrote. That's what she told me. (laughs) She told me that. But it wasn't until last minute. You know, everybody said ... Well, it's my brothers that said, "Don't any of you all go to Saint Francis. Nobody else goes to Saint Francis." My brothers used to say "Because all my sisters that go to Saint Francis, they go to the convent. (laughter)
- Marilyn Hopewell: They did. [inaudible 01:17:34] Calvin he used to always say, "No, no, no. Nobody else goes to Saint Francis. But no, no, no. They go to Saint Francis and they go to the convent." But it wasn't, you know, there were girls who went to Saint Francis who never went to the convent. Uh, uh, right. But I-I-I knew what I wanted to do, but I never knew that Sister Richard was going to become a nun. Everybody said, "You're just following her," but I wasn't following her. I didn't know what she was going to do.
- Marilyn Hopewell: She didn't talk to me about going to a ... A couple of times she used to say, "You know, I like the name of Sister Rose [inaudible 01:18:07]." She said, "I like that name. Sister Rose [inaudible 01:18:09] but she never as- ... I said, "Well, [inaudible 01:18:11] nobody named that, but she never said, "I am going to the convent." When I was getting myself ready to go to Saint Francis, she said one day, "Mother ... Reverend Mother told me that when you come to Saint Francis, for me to come and enter the convent that day." And she ... we did.
- Marilyn Hopewell: Mama got my Uncle [inaudible 01:18:33] in to drive us to Baltimore. My mother and my aunt Maggie went with us and they dropped me off at Saint Francis and they took her out to the mo- ... where the mother house is now. That used to be the novitiate. And they took her to there and she entered the convent. So all while I was at Saint Francis, she was in ... in the novitiate.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Marilyn Hopewell: And she was professed when I was junior at Saint Francis. She was a professed nun. And I-I still didn't tell her. Sh-she didn't know I was coming.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

- Marilyn Hopewell: She said she knew. She-she [inaudible 01:19:03] you didn't have to tell us. We knew. [inaudible 01:19:08] told us that. I said, "She always said this. Sister Marilyn. I said, "I didn't tell anybody!" I said, "Father McKenna told me not to tell."
- Marilyn Hopewell: She goes, "But we knew. We knew. We knew what ..." She said, "You just didn't act like the rest of us." I said, "I didn't know that. I didn't know that. I-I just knew I was doing what I thought was good for me. I didn't know that you all were just watching what I was ... Know everything I was doing."
- Marilyn Hopewell: She said yes. And mama said ... She said, "Calvin knew. So you didn't have to tell him. Calvin knew because Calvin, that's why he didn't take any money from you." She said [inaudible 01:19:38] Calvin never takes any money from me and I'm going [inaudible 01:19:43] Calvin knows what you're going to do. Calvin knows what you're going to do.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Marilyn Hopewell: She knew. Mama says she knew, but she just didn't want to be-believe it. That she knew. She said, "Marilyn, I knew it," and I know why they're all there. Yes. They all said that I was different. Edna was different. Edna and I were alike. I mean, Edna and I, we did everything together.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Marilyn Hopewell: We came to church every day. We were in that church all the time. Father McKenna used to call on the two of us for everything. Everything it was Edna and Agnes. Edna and Agnes. Edna and Agnes. Edna, but she did say one time she was going to come to the convent and my sister said, "Edna's not going to," but I said to Edna, "No. Don't come. Don't. Don't need three of us here." (laugh) I said, "No. No. Don't come. Don't come." So she ... She said, "I don't think I'll go." I said, "Mama needs you. Mama needs you." Because Sadie and Anne, they were different. They're like, you know, whooo ... They weren't like us.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Marilyn Hopewell: Mama said, "I wish all of them had gone to the convent," she said to me. (laughs) "I-I wish they had gone to the convent." She said, "They weren't like you-you. I wish they had gone." You know, Sadie and Anna Mae were different.
- Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Merideth Taylor: How old were you, uh, when you, uh, went to Saint Francis? When you left and went to Saint Francis?
- Marilyn Hopewell: 17.

Alma Jordon: You were 17 then?

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MeridethTaylor: When ... When you left here and went to Saint Francis?

Alma Jordon: When you went to Saint Francis.

MeridethTaylor: To enter.

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, to go to Saint Francis?

Alma Jordon: Yeah. To go to ... Okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: 13. 13. Going to Saint Francis. At Saint Peter Claver. Yeah, I graduated when I was in eighth grade at 13.

Alma Jordon: Okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: I was 13. I was 13 and then I went to Saint Francis when I was 13.

Merideth Taylor: I was trying to think when that was.

Marilyn Hopewell: Then I finished. I finished when I was 17.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Really I had just been turned 16 [inaudible 01:21:19], but I was 17 that S-September. I ... when I finished.

Alma Jordon: So how ... One last thing I wanted to ask you. How do you feel about Saint Mary's County now? Is it better off or ...?

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, my. It's much better off.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Because it's like a whole new place.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Very much better off.

Alma Jordon: Do you like the changes?

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, very much. Yes. Yes. You see, when I would come here. All while I was in Chicago, I came here. But every ... Every priest, they knew that I was coming. I was the parish. I mean, I would come here to just make the parish do things because I saw they weren't doing anything. I would have to do everything. I-I just had to do ... I did everything. Ma-ma- ... Take care of the readers. I took care of the altar boys. I took care of the ... to the ... making sure they clean the church. Come and cut grass. I-I did everything whenever I-I would come home.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Because after a while, they would just nothing. Nothing going on.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: But I loved to get Mother (Birkman?) who was the principal then. She said, "Unless there's a business coming down here, there's not going to ever be anything." So when the ... The ...

Alma Jordon: Base?

Marilyn Hopewell: Base opened.

Alma Jordon: How old were you when the base opened? Were you still here?

Marilyn Hopewell: I was in high school. Mm-hmm (affirmative). Because I worked there on the base. Edna and I worked on the base. They would take us. They would let us work there.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah, we would ...

Alma Jordon: What did you d-do there?

Marilyn Hopewell: We cleaned the offices.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: There. She had offices to clean. I had offices to clean.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. Okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Merideth Taylor: Well, tell us more about the changes.

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, the people had their homes now. You know, we ... When I was ... Without electricity, you are just not living. You know, today. Today all the people that I see now have electricity, running water. We didn't have that when I grew up. We didn't have ... We didn't have any water. We ... You had a well. A pump, but you didn't have any water. You had to pump your water. And we ... When you washed your clothes, you had to pump your water to wash [inaudible 01:23:31]. And you had to put your ... fill your tubs and put your tub on the coals and it ... Put it to heat the water.

Marilyn Hopewell: So it's ... It's better because of the-the ... all the inventions that we've had since, you know, people ... You didn't have TVs. You had radios, but you didn't have TV. You didn't have telephone. Just had t- ... If you wanted to-to use the telephone, you either went to the sisters or you went to the store. And at-at the store they would let you use the telephone. But they didn't have ... Uh ... You know and there's a lot of independence now. People - were really dependent on ... There were lots of things that I liked that we did that we don't do now. That's ... Uh, uh, uh, you know ... The-the-the older people were more involved with the children and the children respected them more. It was ...

Marilyn Hopewell: I liked the way it was. Better than it is now. I mean, I like what what I see them doing because this is advancing, but I ... We had a happy f-f-family life. It was happy. We played together. We had games together. We had parties together. It was ... It was much ... I liked the ... We'd go to each other's house and some of the children'd come to their house. We'd play games. We jumped rope. We'd play ball. Then you'd go to their house. You ... It was ... They were ... It was a more togetherness for a community. Now I don't see that. I don't see that kind of community. You don't really see the children now that, uh, that there used to be. Because there used to be a lot of children.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: But there ... There are not a lot of children no more. And they would all come to church, but you don't see them.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MeridethTaylor: Is there anything else that you'd like to share with us before we ...?

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Let's see. I-I-I ... It's my home. Rich is my home, but I'd still say that it was with all the inventions, I like the way it was better. I-I liked it that way. I liked it. Yes. Those growing up years were wonderful years for me. And it was ... I didn't ... I never talked much. I didn't talk. Unless I felt I had something worth saying. Everybody said, "Why don't you talk?" Even when I went to Saint Francis, the girls said, "Peaches," my nickname was Peaches, "Peaches, why don't you talk?" "I ... Because I don't have anything to say." (laughs)

Marilyn Hopewell: But they used to say that always. They ... They were ... I'd never talk unless I just had to talk, but uh, uh, everything I used to always watch. And, you know, at the whole time I was at Saint Francis, I would not let them know where I studied. They didn't know it. They never knew where I studied. I would ... The stage. We had the big hall and the stage there ... there was cur- ... They had curtains on the stage. Big curtains that were all around the stage. I had a little ... I put a desk up there. There was a window and they didn't ... because [inaudible 01:27:11] thick blue velvet curtains all around the stage and I had my desk behind those curtains by that window and that's where I studied.

Marilyn Hopewell: The whole four years I was at Saint Francis, they did not know where I studied because they liked to talk too much. Eh, they talked too much and I wanted to study. But that was where and I did not tell anyone in four years. No one ever knew where and they would ask me, "Peaches, where do you go?" Peaches didn't tell them. (laughs) I didn't. They never knew. Four years and I was right behind. I could hear them coming down the stairway and I was sitting right there behind those velvet curtains at that window. Doing my work, studying, memorizing.

Marilyn Hopewell: Uh, yeah. That's how. And I ... I got the highest math award for two straight years. In geometry, I'll never forget because if you got an A on your su- ... on your report card, you didn't have to take your exam. Midterm exam. But no matter what you got in geometry, Sister [inaudible 01:28:19] I don't know if you've ever heard of her, but no matter what you got, you're going to take her exam. She'd say that was her basic thing. You're going to take that exam. I said, "No matter what, I'm going to take it." I had straight As, but I still had to take that exam. I didn't take ... I only took about two, two, three exams the whole time I was there because I-I got straight As.

MeridethTaylor: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: And when they ... When they were taking the exams, they would let me go out mountain. I would go out to the-the mountain with, uh, Sister Richard was out there. They would let me go out with her. Or sometimes they'd let me go to Washington with the sister. If a sister was going to visit, I'd go with ... travel with the sister. But for geometry I said, "I'm going to m- ..." I kept saying, "I don't know why I have to take this exam," because I had straight As on my report card at the time, but Sister [inaudible 01:29:13] said everybody takes her exam.

Marilyn Hopewell: So I took my-my-my geometry book and I went behind that curtain and she had given us ideas of what might ... might, uh, be included. I went behind that curtain and I memorized every theorem, all the corollaries we had to memorize. All the words and matchings. Everything and she had said the pages that she said she was going to include in it. I memorized it. I mean, I saw them in my mind just as clear as they were in that book. And I said, "If she has these on this exam paper, I'm going to get it."

Marilyn Hopewell: Do you know, God was so good? When we got the exam paper, I couldn't ... except I never stopped writing. I mean, it was exactly what I had memorized. Everything! Everything! Everything! The whole exam and I went up and gave her the paper. She almost fell over because nobody else was finished. I gave her the paper and she told me that I could go. And do you know? I got 99 and a half. Ugh. Because I left out the word of in writing the theorem. Oh! A half a point off. That was it! That was it! I'll never forget it! I'll never forget it! And then the kids! And-and [inaudible 01:30:46] I bet you got it and sure enough, I had gotten it.

Marilyn Hopewell: And she put it. She wrote it in that of in red on my paper. She passed the papers out again. They said, "Peaches, you got it? You said you ..." All right, but they said, "How could you do that? How could ...?" I mean, they were the highest mark, the next mark, was Sister [inaudible 01:31:10]. She was in the 80's. When I had 99, she was in the 80's and she was smart. And a couple other people were smart, but they were in the 80's and 70's. They said, "Wait, how did you?" I said, "It's called memory. Memory. That's what it is. The only way you're going to get g-g-geometry is to mem- ... you have to memorize all that stuff."

Marilyn Hopewell: I mean, I had mem- ... All. I was ... I couldn't write fast enough to get finished with it because it was all coming into my mind. Everything. I could see it real clear in the book. I could see it just like it was in the book. It was like that. I got ... Uh, so I get ... I got an award at the end of the year for the highest average in math that year and the next year. So two straight years I got the highest average. You didn't have math in-in-in your fourth year, but your first two, three, years you do. They said, "How did you do that?" They kept ... They kept asking me, "How did you do it?" "God did it. God did it." I said, "I don't know. I sat on that stage until I had memorized that whole book."

MeridethTaylor: I was pretty sure you were going to get 100.

Marilyn Hopewell: [inaudible 01:32:18] she was ... she was so sure. She-she was ... Everybody said [inaudible 01:32:23] all the girls said it. "Girl. She was determined. She was not going to give you 100. A half point off? 99 and a half for ...? Ugh, a half a point off for of. They couldn't. They said ... (laughs) She said that-that changed the whole theory because I didn't put that of in there. (laughs) they said that did it.

Alma Jordon: That did it.

MeridethTaylor: Um, I just ... I still want to just one more ... one more time about in the meeting the-the committee, you said, you know, what ... Everybody went around and talked about what they wanted.

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MeridethTaylor: The committee. What they wanted that museum to be. Saint Peter Claver.

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MeridethTaylor: You know, and you, you said that it-it was home to you and that you wanted to have ... You wanted to have your part in how it was remembered. So if you we- ... have anything else to say about how-how you would like the-the parish or the area to be remembered? Could you? How would you like it to be remembered?

Marilyn Hopewell: I had planned a gala day for the parish. Uh, when are you going to get it? When you going to do it? When you going to do it? I haven't ... I haven't decided yet when I want to do it, but I-I-I just want to honor those whom I see doing the things that really makes a difference. And-and anyone who's given any awards or any donations to the parish. You know, I-I would like to see it remembered as a ... as what they're doing. I want them to-to know. That's what I want for ... for Black History Month. I had them to talk about each area of the parish. Because last year I had we, uh, I took black history, we talked about the-the-the priests.

Marilyn Hopewell: We talk about the priest each Sunday. We talked about the priests and how they worked with us and how we worked with them. And this year we talked about the areas that the people came from. Ridge, Scotland, Beachville, Dameron, Park Hall, Saint James. I t-t-told him. We-we-we talked about that and then the-the family that gave them the list of the families who were there so that they would begin to know who. I said because you're not living in these places now, but that's where they lived. You know, relatives were living there. So I wanted them to know that.

Marilyn Hopewell: Then I said, "Oh, that was a good idea." So, yeah, I wanted them and I told her that has to be part of the museum, and that's what we're working on now." We ... So we made the posters and we have that to show them. So, but at least they got the chance to hear what their relative did and how the priests were successful because of their own relatives. Although they had moved away. There was nobody living in Beachville. Beachville's like a ghost town now. And Dameron, the people, you know, they moved away. Ridge. When Trappe. We used to ... We used to call it Trappe, but now they call it Dameron.

Marilyn Hopewell: So we-we made the posters and then we'd explain to them what's ... I wanted those things to be up in the museums that they were, you know, where they came from and what they did. Although, now they're not living there. You know. Yeah. Um, and the older people used to have all the Kiddie's Day. Things like when it can see things like that going on. That's what I keep telling them. That's when I come to the meetings because there are things that I enjoyed and liked. You probably won't be able to do them, but at least they'll hear about them and know about them. They're going to be available in the museum in the archives.

Marilyn Hopewell: So, church-wise, there are more people coming to church now, but they're not people who grew up down here. A lot of people are coming to church aren't from Ridge. They didn't ... That's not their background. I would ... Yeah. I just wanted to see the school, then I'll fix the classroom. We're going to do a

classroom so that they can see what the classroom is like. So one of those rooms is going to be up. **It just broke my heart when the Cardinal Gibbons was destroyed. I was there, but I had gone to church and I looked over. Where is the Cardinal Gibbons? Oh. I had a meeting as a rigor. Priests aren't supposed to do that. That's not fair.**

Marilyn Hopewell: So I had ministers. The Black Catholics of Washington. The people came from Ridge from everywhere. From Beachville I mean, I had packed that church that Sunday night. And, I mean, It was ... Everybody was so heartbroken because that building meant everything to us. He said nothing to anyone and I was up there every single day I went to church. Oh, he was staying in the convent then. That's what.

Marilyn Hopewell: Go over and get him out of that convent. They brought him over. And he came into church. The church was packed. We ... We told him. We told him about himself. You are not ... This is not what you have to do. You don't own this place. We do. That was our building. That is the picture right there? Yes. Oh, that ...

Alma Jordon: Which was? What priest was this?

Marilyn Hopewell: He died this year and I said, "Thank, God," but I wrote to the Cardinal. And he sent him back to Ireland. Twohig.

Alma Jordon: Twohig?

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. Her name was Twohig. T-W-O-H-I-G. Did you ever meet him?

Alma Jordon: Uh-uh (negative).

Marilyn Hopewell: Twohig.

Merideth Taylor: So you're saying it was the priest's decision?

Marilyn Hopewell: The priest's decision. Priest didn't say nothing to anybody. Not even to the cardinal. Not to anybody. No one. We went to church that S- ... I had been there on Saturday and fixed up. I would go every Saturday and fixed up. I would go every Saturday and fix up for the mass. Fix up the Vestment. I went to mass on Sunday. I'm this ... When it ... It must have been during the night because I was always this up at the church. I was ... I'd go up there and practice on the organ. Edna and I would go up and practice. So we ... Gosh, she would play and I would lead the singing. What year was it demolished? Mm-hmm (affirmative). When was it? It had to have been ...

Alma Jordon: Because I had ... I graduated from there in '58.

Marilyn Hopewell: And the cardinal was [inaudible 01:39:56]. Oh, we had it was later than that.

MeridethTaylor: I thought it was '72.

Marilyn Hopewell: It had to have been 70 ...

MeridethTaylor: 2?

Marilyn Hopewell: 2? Yes. '71.

MeridethTaylor: You were here.

Marilyn Hopewell: 71, '72.

Alma Jordon: I graduated from Cardinal Gibbons. Oh, '55, wasn't it?

Marilyn Hopewell: Yeah. R-r-r-right. It was '71 or '72. '71.

MeridethTaylor: You were here.

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

MeridethTaylor: You were here then.

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, I had. Yes. Yes.

MeridethTaylor: So you were coming down and ...

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, yes. I was there. I mean, I would come down and stay at least a week or two. Two weeks. Yes, I was there.

MeridethTaylor: So you were there?

Marilyn Hopewell: Yes. It had to have been '70. '72. Because from there I went to France to study. I had a year off to study. But I was there. The very next day, I had ... I had to be in New York to take a flight to France. But, oh, we-we tore him up that night. There was this one time where, "We cannot respect you as a priest. We just can't." You you don't do that without saying anything to people." I mean, that building. That everything to us. And like how did [inaudible 01:41:11]? They say you had to put it down in the ground. How could they do that.

Alma Jordon: They just turned it over.

Marilyn Hopewell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Alma Jordon: Turned around it.

Marilyn Hopewell: How could they do that? We couldn't know. I mean, it had to have happened between Saturday and Sunday because I was there Saturday. How did it happen? How could you put it down in the ground? And we still used it. We weren't supposed to, but we did.

Alma Jordon: Maybe he wanted to put a stop to it.

Marilyn Hopewell: I mean, people in that whole ... in that church that night. Ooh, they almost ... They were ready to kill him really. He was just so mad. Boy this has been here all this time for us. Father LaFarge had this built for us. The first one. Oh, wow. Even if it ... It closed. We could use it in ... in a way or we would get somebody to help us to get him back on his feet again like Father McKenna did. He told you before. Father McKenna got it reopened.

MeridethTaylor: What did he have to say for himself?

Marilyn Hopewell: Couldn't say anything. Said it was expensive. Couldn't pay the taxes. People said why didn't we know? Couldn't pay the taxes. We couldn't fix it up. How do you know? It had been closed, which I was was there. I taught the last class. '70. What was it? '67.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Tell us about it. Because Joyce is 10 years younger than me and -

Marilyn Hopewell: You were there with him.

Alma Jordon: Who?

Marilyn Hopewell: Richard. Didn't you go to Cardinal together?

Alma Jordon: Yeah. I graduated in '58.

Marilyn Hopewell: Oh, '58. Okay. Mm-hmm (affirmative). No, he wasn't there then. But he was there when it closed in '67. And I taught that last class.

Merideth Taylor: Do you have anything else you want to say about Father McKenna?

Marilyn Hopewell: Um ...

Merideth Taylor: That's a whole other story.

Marilyn Hopewell: That-that is.

Alma Jordon: We'll have to do that another day.

Marilyn Hopewell: You need to do that forever.

Alma Jordon: Okay.

Marilyn Hopewell: Father McKenna was my ... He was my one and only. One and only priest that I knew. That I really admired. I also got my vocations from my mom, but I surely was ... imitating him. As he was doing everything for poor people and he knew it. He knew it. Oh, Father McKenna. I was everything to him. When I entered the comment there was nobody like Agnes. Nobody. When I would come home, I would ... Even after he left, he was just saying I was just ... I would never come home without going to see him. And everything I would him, he would kiss my hand. He was ... He was everything here. Oh, yeah. There he is. (photo?)

Alma Jordon: St. Alliaceous in Leonardtown?

Marilyn Hopewell: No. In Washington.

Alma Jordon: Right.

Marilyn Hopewell: Gonzaga. Yes. Uh, exactly. Mm-hmm (affirmative). Oh my ... Yes. That was ... He was my heart. Uh, just to watch what he would do. I just started searching a lot. I just ... There was something about him that I just felt that was ... That man. I kept saying that. I said to myself, "no matter what anyone say, God is in him. God is there. That's ... He did so much. He never thought of himself. He would just help everybody anybody. Oh, he was a gem of a person. Just a saint. That's [inaudible 01:45:14] just a saint. I only wish he could ... he could have lived, he could have lived forever. And see them, oh, [photo] and say, you know, this this that's Anna Mae, and that's Sadie.

Alma Jordon: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Marilyn Hopewell: You knew that? Ah.

Alma Jordon: I mean, I-I-I recognized their pictures. Well, that you so much.

Marilyn Hopewell: Well, when I was at Saint Francis, he would always come by to see me. He would come up to walk too. And pick up clothes and things are [inaudible 01:45:50] to the people, but it would stop at Saint Francis and paging. He was going to page me. "Peaches! Come to the front! Father McKenna!" Oh, my. Just to see him as was meant everything to me. He only stayed five minutes. That's all. He was just coming to say, "How you doing?"

Marilyn Hopewell: Then she took [inaudible 01:46:10] Yes, father. Your mama's [inaudible 01:46:14] ended up doing well. Sadie's doing well. Anna's doing well. You mama Ms.-Ms Hopewell. [inaudible 01:46:20] Ms. Hopewell is still faithful. Coming to church. He would ... That the way he would do it. He would take it.

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Marilyn Hopewell: He would go down to this side and-and-and your dad, Mr-Mr Benedict Hopewell, he's still plowing. He's still plowing the fields. He would say that. Oh, he was something. Oh, I thought I had ... I thought I had his picture or something here. Yes, they wrote ... Wrote about him. Just I have it somewhere.

Alma Jordon: Okay. Well, we're going to end the interview now. And, uh, we may come again (laughs) another day.

MeridethTaylor: Thank you so much, Sister Marilyn for contributing to this.

Marilyn Hopewell: Did y'all see this?