

University of Southern Maine Franco-American Collection

Oral Histories

By Juliana L'Heureux

December 6, 2020

**Jean Caron**, b- 1933, in Brunswick, oral history recorded on September 8, 2020 in Topsham, Maine.

She was a registered nurse and the only Franco-American to hold the position of Executive Director of the Maine State Board of Nursing (MSBON).



*Jean Caron and Julie Hennessey  
Sept 8, 2020, Topsham, ME.*

Franco-American Collection Oral Interview with **Jean Caron, R.N.**,

M.S.N. September 8, 2020

A Franco-American, Jean Caron grew up in Brunswick, Maine, speaking French. She was the first and only Franco-American to lead the Maine State Board of Nursing (MSBON).

Jean is a devout Roman Catholic, a former religious Sister of Mercy, and recognized as an advocate and leader for the nursing profession. She was a Registered Nurse who earned a Master's Degree in Nursing from Boston College, while she was a religious.

In her oral history, Jean describes growing up in Brunswick during the Second World War, her decision about why she became a nurse and then a religious and how she taught nursing in Houlton, Maine. Her experience as the MSBON director includes an episode where she had to defend an administrative decision about not licensing Canadian nurses from Quebec, that wanted to work in Maine. The decision was challenged by the Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives, Rep. John Martin, who felt like she was showing discrimination towards French speaking nurses. This oral history is a first person witness to local Maine history, between 1934 through the 1990s, including growing up during World War II. Jean provides candid information about how, as a young woman, she was challenged by social class norms expected of her during her coming of age experiences. Rather than attend school in French during primary school, she attended an Irish boarding school in Portland, thru the ninth grade. Her decision to enter the Mercy religious order was difficult for her and she describes why this was the case.

Jean Caron's accomplishments:

- She earned a diploma in nursing in 1953, from the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. •
- Masters of Science in Nursing from Boston College
- Served on the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.

The following is a chronology she provided about her awards and recognitions:

- 8/1970- The 1970 graduation class of the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing (MHSON) dedicated a yearbook tribute to her as, "one who has understood..."
- 06/1987- Gave the final address to the last graduating class of the MHSON
- 04/1992 – Was awarded membership in the Honor Society of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau,

International, Kappa Zeta-at-large.

- 08/1997- Was recipient of the NCSBN's highest honor, the R. Louise McManus Award, "for a long and distinguished service to nursing regulation and the National Council." The **R. Louise Mcmanus** Medal was established to recognize distinguished long standing contributions to the field of nursing.
- 1997- Honorary membership in the Organization of Maine Nurse Executives (OMNE) •

01/12/1998- A recipient of an Expression of Sentiment from the Maine Legislature.

Transcript:

Good morning this is Juliana L'Heureux. I am the chair of the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn College. I am interviewing Jean Caron. Today is Tuesday, September 8, 2020, it happens also to be the celebration of the birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Which is really special today because Jean Caron and myself are both very devoted to the Blessed Mother; so it makes perfect sense to me that we would do Jean's Franco American oral history on this feast day. So this is a test, I am going to try the sound and then we will use the questions we have as a guide to lead us through her Franco-American experience.

Julie- Good morning Jean!

Jean- Good morning Julie.

Julie- So we are here to talk about your Franco-American heritage and your role as a nursing leader in Maine and your life. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Brunswick Maine, the child of two Franco's, whose parents, both sets of them, my grandparents, emigrated from Canada. I think it may have been in the 1800's the later 1800's, I'm not sure, it would seem to me because my mother was born in 1912, so it makes sense that they came over way long before that. There were six children. (A prank call interruption on cell phone).

Julie- Where in Canada did they may have lived and came from?

Jean- Not sure, I believe it may have been Quebec, of course, but not sure. Julie- Do you know why they emigrated?

Jean- No.

Julie- You really don't?

Jean- My father's father, my grandfather Caron, apparently, his family was apparently a wealthy family because they had a huge, huge house which was really more like a mansion; that was the corner of Cushing and Pleasant Street in Brunswick. It is now the site of the Atlantic Regional Credit Union, which used to be called St. John's Credit Union.

Julie- Did you live there, in that house?

Jean- My father lived there and his five siblings.

Julie- So, they were close to the church?

Jean- Yes, I would say so! We lived in Brunswick for, I guess it must have been a few years, and then we moved over to Topsham, where my sister, who was two years younger than me, probably was born. We left Topsham when I was about five years old and moved across the river to Brunswick, on Mill Street, where my grandfather Cloutier -Cu-tee, if you will- owned a two level home. So, both of my grandfathers had a home, and that's all I kind of remember was the big mansion on Pleasant Street and then my grandfather's lovely home on Mill Street.

Julie- Was it a French speaking community?

Jean- Yes, we had a little French ghetto there. Mill Street, Cushing Street, Oak Street, Union Street, you know, from where, I would say where Mill Street ran from Pleasant Street in Brunswick and the other end ended on Maine Street in Brunswick. And, that was all French people living there and then the huge community living in Topsham, which was called the village part of Topsham, a big Franco community.

Julie- And you spoke French?

Jean- Absolutely. I only spoke French. I spoke French until I was in the First Grade, at the St. John's School, in Brunswick, it was a Catholic Church and the Ursuline nuns ran the school. They taught us how to speak English. It was set up to be half of the day was in French and the other half was in English. But, I have to say, that my first educational experience, actually happened, when I was living in Topsham, before I moved at five years old to Brunswick. I went to school in a little one house school house, when I was four years old. Right on Brut Street in Topsham.

Julie- Is it still there?

Jean- The school house, the property was bought, the acreage was rather sort of small and someone built themselves a home

there. Julie- What year did you attend school there?

Jean- Well, I was four years old. So it had to be 1936.

Julie- So, you went to a kindergarten or a pre-kindergarten? You were four years old.

Jean- Yes, it was one room. I remember that vividly. I used to hide in a neighbor's garage because I really did not want to go there. So, there was a garage on the corner of this street where we rented from the Bouchard family. I would play with their dog. Some neighbor saw me and reported me to my parents. Then, of course, I started school at St. John's School with the Ursuline. I suppose, because I had already attended school, let's say for the school year, about nine months, and I was kind of bored in the grade I was in so they promoted me to the next grade. When you think of it, mature wise, it was not a really good thing to do, because, you know, if you are a year older than the kids that you want to play with, it causes a little problem, as you get older. But, I survived it and I learned to speak English. After I learned English, it was difficult to find any French out of me. But, my family had to learn English and in order to get along with me, I suppose. My grandfather was a hold out, but he knew

Julie- Did you walk to the school?

Julie- What was the name of the grocery store?

Jean- Cloutier's Grocery Store.

Jean- Now, I don't know if I should talk about his. But, well, both of my grandfathers' owned a bar. Each of them owned a bar. Both sides. Each owned a bar. My grandfather Caron's bar, it was at the end of Mill Street, where it was closer to Pleasant Street. He had a big bar there. That's how he made his money. My grandfather Cloutier, whose house we lived in, was close to Cushing Street, which is right across the Swinging Bridge. He had a bar. There was also a barber shop was built attached to the house we lived in, my grandfather Cloutier's house and my uncle spent his life doing barbering. It was an interesting experience, on evenings and weekends was especially interesting. But, the most interesting part of it, to me was, my two grandfathers' must have gotten together because now we were in the Second World War and, of course, there was an airbase on Brunswick property. The planes came in and not only did the American sailors come in, but they also had the English sailors. Somehow or other, the English sailors were called "limeees". I guess it was from the old days when the sailing ships, there was not enough Vitamin C and Vitamin D and they couldn't keep food like that on the ships because it would rot in the ships. They called them "limees". Well, my grandfather Caron decided he would take the American sailors, because they would fight, because this is what always happened once they had enough beer in their system. And, my grandfather Cloutier took the "limees". You know, that was a wonderful experience. Because, my family, my grandparents, especially, and even my mother, and my aunts and uncles, took to these young men. They were so nice. They were so courteous and polite. On Christmas Day, my grandmother would invite them to our Christmas, which was upstairs from where they lived, my grandparents, and invite them to attend having Christmas Day and I remember she gave them a wallet, a brand new wallet, with something like

a \$10 bill in it. You know, \$10, in those days was what you made in the mill....a week. They, you know, were really very nice. My mother kept in touch with an older one of these men. He was not young. He was older. He had a wife and several children. And, he missed his home very much. He was so homesick. Somehow or other, I guess my mother must have worked, now and then, in the bar helping out on busy nights. She came across this gentleman, he took a shine to her, they took a shine to each other. So, she'd invite him over to have dinner with us. He was so nice. He was wonderful to talk with. He treated myself and my sister with all gentleness. It was just a very nice relationship. So, that kept up after the war. It kept up when he went back home to his family. We would get letters from him about how things were going. And, one year, I still have this, he sent my mother a set, a four piece set, of English dishware, plates, saucers, cups. You know, the whole bit. She never used those, but that was her "little thing". They were in our closet, in our panty closet; no one ever ate from those. No one ever ate from those. And then, one day, a long time after, she got a letter from his wife, telling her that he had died.

Julie- That is a beautiful story. It's very special. I want to thank you for that. That is exactly the kind of story that you would never, ever find anywhere else except from personal experience. It really describes what your family life was like growing up. I also want to focus on your life after you graduated from high school and went to nursing school. Did you go to nursing school at Mercy Hospital, first?

Jean- But, before we get into high school, I would like to just say that I did go to St. John's Catholic School for about two years and then I wanted to go to public school. And, my mother let me go to Hawthorne School, a public school. Then, I went to Portland to stay there for four years, to St. Dominic's School. I graduated from St. Dominic's School.

Julie- Oh, St. Dominic's School? I thought you graduated from Brunswick High School?

Jean- It was St. Dominic's Elementary School. The last four years, from fourth grade to the eighth grade. That was the year when the Second World War started. I happened to be going by, on my way to St. Dominic's, going by a little variety store. I had picked up a nickel along the way. I was so pleased with that. Now, I could buy a bar of candy with it. And, the people in the store, including the owners, were all sitting around the radio. And I heard something about Japan, Pearly Harbor, I wasn't quite sure what was going on but I was 9 years old at the time. That's when the War started.

Julie- How did you get to Portland to go to school?

Jean- I was in boarding school. I was 9 years old. I was speaking good English. So, St. Dominic's was an Irish parish. I met a lot and I got very fond of the Irish people. Some of them became my very close long time friends. So, Brunswick High School, I went to, I said to my mother, "No more Catholic School, for a while. Give me a break, Mom!" I want to be home with you and the family in Brunswick and I went to Brunswick High School for the whole four

years, and I did enjoy that tremendously. I was one of those girls that loved sports. One of those girl athletes that loved sports. And, I excelled in sports. I'm not bragging, but I think it's one of the nicest things that ever happened to me, that I looked at my year book, at the end of the year, where we got our yearbook. I was going through all the superlatives, "the brightest smile" "the nice eyes", you know, it went on and on. Then it came to the best athletes, and I saw my name down there, in that book and I could not believe it! The best female athlete, of this particular class. That, for me, was a very lovely honor because I love sports, and I got my letter in it and I was in the girl's athletic association at that time. I don't know if anybody really needs to know that, Julie, but I've always been very proud of that.

Julie- Well in a day, when girls' sports were not considered to be equal with boys, it was quite an accomplishment. Thank you for that.

Jean - We had to play intermural. That was the only thing we could do. But, we did everything, all the sports but within the classes at the high school.

Julie- You got your nurses training first at Mercy Hospital?

Jean- Yes, I graduated from Brunswick High School in 1950. I didn't know what I was going to do with my life, because I was too happy doing my sports. It does seem that I only had three options. One was going to work in the mill, like my parents, my aunts and uncles all did, my mother, my father. We worked on the mill, which was right on Mill Street, where we lived. Or, I could have been a secretary. And one year, I took that course and I hated every minute of it. I hated shorthand, I hated anything to do with clerical work. So, that didn't work out. So, the other option was to be a nurse. My mother said to me, "You are not going to work in the mill. Never!"

Julie- That was a very important piece of Franco-American history.

Julie- I'm going to let you read the transcript.

Jean- You can throw any of that out, I give you permission! Especially, about the bars. They made their living.

Julie- Well, the fact is, making your own beer is part of the Franco-American culture. And, the holidays, with Réveillon; definitely Réveillon was not a time of abstinence from liquor.

Jean- It also shows that not all Francos were poor. They did not all work in the mill. Now, when you have children, you have to have work. And, most of my aunts, and uncles, including my father and my mother, never graduated from elementary school. Once they were old enough to work in the mill, they had to go and work there, in order to help support the family, on both sides.

But, my mother said, "You are not going to go to the mill". After all, my grandfathers each owned their bar. They were good workers and they knew how to make money. During the

Second World War, that was an important place to have. Because, it made a lot of money. Of course, it became a variety store after the war, when my grandfather Cloutier, my mother's father, turned it into a variety store and that made good money.

Julie-Did you want to talk about when you decided to join the religious order?

Jean- I was wondering when you were going to get to that, because it's not written down here.

Yes, I graduated from Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, which was a diploma program, always, a three year diploma program. A very good diploma program, I might add. It was owned by the Sisters of Mercy, of Mercy Hospital, so it was Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, attached to Mercy Hospital. And, we had wonderful teachers. There were lay people teachers and there were religious teachers. It was a wonderful experience and we felt quite prepared to go out there and practice nursing when we graduated in 1953. And, at that time, I had decided that I wanted to be a religious; that I wanted to be a Sister of Mercy. It was not an easy decision, because I liked dating. I liked having fun, having groups of the boys and girls together, a little beer on the side, little bottles of beer. The girls bought the Italian sandwiches. And the guys, a lot of them were from Canada, that school that they all went to....? Maybe it will come to me. Oh, Cathedral High School and we would go to the Portland Oaks Park, where you could rent a boat, a paddle boat whatever you call them, and we would eat Italian sandwiches and bottles of beer. I like that a lot. I really did struggle with my decision, and I finally made it and I became a Sister of Mercy. For 17 years, I did practice nursing, but most of the time, I was a teacher. Then, I left 1970, and I went home to take care of my mother and my sister. I forgot to say that my sister was born with Cerebral Palsy and she was totally incapacitated. She couldn't do anything for herself including blowing her nose. My mother took care of her. My father did leave us. He didn't leave us, he was asked to leave us when I was about 7 or 9 I think. My mother had to struggle to try to raise the both of us, at that time. I decided, if I was going to leave the convent, I would go back home and take care of them. I went to work and my mother took care of my sister and she cooked the meals and it was a good arrangement.

Julie- At some point you received your Master's Degree?

Jean- Yes, it was during that time, because the Sisters of Mercy had sent me to Boston College. Because, they wanted me to teach. In those days, it was getting hard to teach with a diploma and the National League for Nursing did want the teachers to have, at least, an undergraduate degree. So, one day I was told I was going to Boston College. I said, "Really?" They didn't tell me why, but apparently they wanted me to teach. I don't know how they came to that conclusion but considering that I always wanted to be a history teacher anyway, that was not bad news for me. I loved history in high school and I sort of hoped might have happened after I graduated from high school, but you had to have money to go to college and that was not doable, at that time, for my family. So, anyway, I became a teacher there and I taught at least 10 years, maybe even more and I was also sent to Houlton, Maine, which had a hospital called the Madigan Memorial



Hospital, it was a Catholic Hospital. I went there to teach the students, the Licensed Practice Nurse students, from Presque Isle, who needed to have clinical experience. And, when they came down, they stayed with me for one entire year. And we found boarding places for them and it was a wonderful arrangement. I was still a nun and most of those students lived in Aroostook County, being more of a Protestant kind of area, I don't know how to say it, that it was a very "non-Catholic", shall we say; are, and when I opened the door, to let the students in for the first time, and I'm standing there with a veil on and a long dress, and I thought some of them were going to faint on me. But, by the end of the year, they did not want to leave and they were sorry to leave by the end of the year. It didn't take long for them to get over that. And, it was wonderful, I just loved those kids. I was used to teaching people that were going to be registered nurses, but, these were wonderful, and most of them were older ladies, who worked on the farms. Who were farmers, who got up at 4 o'clock in the morning to feed the cows, and milk the cows and do all that kind of stuff. Then, they had to drive down from these other places in Aroostook county, to come to Houlton, every day! It was challenging. I had to teach everything. Not just what I like, that was obstetrics (OB) and pediatrics. I had to teach medical, surgical, what else was there? Oh, I had to teach psych, too. I did not have to teach diet therapy or chemistry or any of those kind of course that were related to nursing but were not nursing courses. But, that was a big challenge for me. I had never taught those courses. I was strictly a maternal-child teacher. So, it was challenging for both of us. Both groups. But, we made it. I had two years – two groups, and every one of them passed the state boards in those two groups. They were wonderful. Some of them should have been in a registered nurse program. I was able, by talking to what had been the director of the program, Sister Mary Consuela White\*, and everybody in this state knows who Sister Mary Consuela was, and I called her and said to her, and said to her, you know I have an exceptional student here who would make a very good R.N. and she said 'send her down' (to Portland) and she graduated as a Registered Nurse. That was a good thing. I wish I could have done more than that but, you know, the school could not afford to take on any more than they needed to take on.

Julie- I want to finish up this interview with the history of your time on the Board of Nursing and your conversation with House Speaker John Martin, from Eagle Lake, Maine.

I want to share with the Franco-American community your unique experience with the Maine State Board of Nursing, where all Maine nurses receive our license to practice. Your experience told to me many years ago about how you went to speak with House Speaker John Martin about hiring Canadian nurses. The reason I think it's an important story is because in the Franco-American experience, there is this feeling that the Franco-American's are faced with discrimination.

Jean- The Board of Nursing had its own exam, that all graduate nurses had to pass. The exam was only given in English and a lot of the Canadian graduates were unable to speak English. John, Rep. John Martin, a very good man, by the way, from "the County", he didn't understand

why they couldn't just come over here and practice, because they had passed their exam in French. The Maine Board mandated that everybody licensed that came into Maine, that graduated in Maine and wanted to take the exam, could do that. They had to, in order to practice in Maine. They had to have taken that exam, which is given throughout the country in English. No matter where the exam was in the United States, it was in English. And, these poor French Canadians who couldn't speak English, they passed their own exam, but, you know, there was this issue about meeting our standards. The fact that issues like medications, there were so many issues involved in their practicing, not speaking English. So, the Board chair and I asked Rep. Martin if he would talk about this. We met with him in Augusta. Right away, "How come, you folks can't let those poor French girls can't come in here!" And, I responded to him "in French"! And he just looked at me. I think, thought, being a Franco himself, he knew that any Caron he would ever come across would, of course, be a Franco. I was nervous because I had not spoken French in a long time. Although French was my first language. But, I was able a few things to him in French. He just kind of chuckled. He said, "Okay, you win. You win!" Finally, the Canadians, themselves, put an exam together, themselves, in English, so that the Canadians could take the exam in English. They had to meet some other requirements, but basically, it all ended up okay. Nobody was discriminated. You have your own standards. Each state has its own standards of practice. You have to go along with that and find some other options. And that was the thing, let's find some other options besides just let them come into the state, not just because they spoke only French, but because they were going to be practicing nursing. Medications, for example, just reading doctor's orders. It really was unreasonable, actually. But, Rep. Martin was a person who was good to the Francos, being one himself. You know, he probably had relatives in Canada. You know, he did hang on to it. Other legislators, probably, would have made it very hard for us to keep to our standards, but he did not do that. He just smiled when I spoke in French. And, that was the way it was. He said, "OK".

Julie- Talking about that, I would like to just go back and say, what's your feeling about growing up Franco?

Jean- Being a Franco all my life, growing up, we were in a little French ghetto, as I said. We all knew each other, we all played together. We were in school together. But, I was different, I didn't go through St. John's School, went to Saint Dominics. I was coming home from school one day, and it was dark out. There was this little restaurant that was, maybe, just right next to my grandfather's variety store with my uncle having his barber shop. There was this little restaurant, run by French people, actually, they were both Francos. I heard a voice, I was just approaching my driveway, and I heard a voice saying, a young man saying, "What are you doing on this side of the street, anyway? Or, on this side of Brunswick?" That hit me like a ton of bricks. I was so embarrassed. He was saying that to one of my high school classmates. I knew it was her, I could see her. So, I was embarrassed. I think she might have been going to that little restaurant, but I don't know what she was doing there, either? She was a member of a wealthy family that were on the other side of the railroad tracks. Brunswick was divided by the railroad

tracks. I was so embarrassed, being a teenager; I went into the neighbor next to my house, driveway, so she wouldn't see me. I never knew that there was a difference.

Julie- Was that your first experience?

Jean- Well, I think my first experiences, going to high school, the thing that I noticed most, was I had nice cloths, but I didn't have a lot of cloths. My mother would bring me to a sewing lady who would make me a dress or make me a suit. If I needed a suit for something, like I did for graduation, she had a woman make it. I don't understand how that could have been less expensive than just going and buying one. But, I noticed they had a lot of change of cloths and I did not. My mother just washed them and I wore them. I noticed that. But, it was okay. I was clean, you know, I always had my hair cut because my uncle was a barber. And I had that for free. He would do the Joan of Arc haircut for me. In those days, Joan of Arc, of course, being a Franco, was very popular with the French people. So, I would go in there, I would get in line with the men. And, when he was ready, he would give me my haircut and it was always the Joan of Arc haircut.

Julie- You were elected athlete of the year so you were very popular.

Jean- With my own group, yes. I did have my beau and one that wanted to be my beau. But, he was two years younger than me.

You don't do that when you are a senior in high school. You do not do... go out with a sophomore. Well, I don't want to go into that. But, I did have a beau that was a member of my own class. As well as several others, during nursing school. Some wanted to marry me. I loved these guy. They were lovely guys. And, when I had met on a blind date from Dow Air Force Base. I have to tell this story. I was in nursing school. I must have been a senior by that time. I answered the public telephone in the dorm. I said, "Hello?". He said, this is 'Colonel....' I don't remember his name, from Dow Air Force Base. Now, we are teaching our men how to dance and we need some ladies that they can dance with? Do you think you might be able to that for us?" And I said, "I sure can do that!" And, so, I got a group, they sent a bus down and we got on the bus. We had a wonderful time that night. I did meet this one young man who was "wow" he was handsome, blond and blue eyed. We said our goodbyes and we came back home on the bus and it was a fun time. Then, I got a call one day, "Do you suppose I could come down and take you for lunch, or dinner or whatever it was. That's how that got started. I still have his huge colored photo in my photo book. My mother liked this fellow. He was a Sheehan, his father's Irish as you can ever get, Robert Sheehan, and he was from Nebraska. But, you see, when we sat in a restaurant, where they had those little music machines, in those days, that you could just put a nickel in on the songs, he always wanted country music and I only wanted Chopin. And I said, "This isn't going to work. This is just not going to work!" You know, isn't that stupid, huh? But, he was a very nice guy. My mother liked this young man. Unknown to me, after I told him that I had other plans and that really upset him a lot because, "I wasn't that kind of girl that becomes a

nun?" That's what he said to me. I don't what that meant, exactly. Well, I think he meant that in a nice way, because he knew me. He knew me. Nothing ever...it wasn't that. But, anyway, she had taken one of my pictures as a younger person and put his picture, big 8x10 behind it and hung it up at the back of the house. She never told me she did that. One day, later one, she took that down and showed it to me. And I just couldn't believe it. And I still have it. I had it in my prayer book when I was in the postulency and I prayed for him every day that he would find a very nice young woman to marry and have children with. I was really very fond of him, because he really was a lovely, lovely man. I was very fond of him. But I had this other thing that had to be done. So, on the day that I took my final vows I went down to the basement and I put his picture into the furnace, that I had had for three years.

Julie- Well, that's it Jean!

Jean- Well, thank you Julie.

Julie- Your stories are very special.

Jean- You can take anything out of it you want to.

Julie- What I'm going to do, I will transcribe these and then I will let you read them.

Jean – I tried not to talk too much.

Julie- No, that's what this is about. It's about your talking. It's not about me talking. It's about your talking.

This is a picture of downtown Brunswick where her family lived when she was born.



**\*Sister Mary Consuela White**

<http://mercyhospital.mainememory.net/page/4526/display.html>

**Maine Historical Society reference:**

Sister Mary Consuela White was another major figure in Mercy history and a Franco-American. A native of New Brunswick, she enrolled in Madigan Memorial School of Nursing in Houlton in 1937 before taking vows in the Sisters of Mercy in 1944. As a Sister, Mary Consuela studied at St. Joseph's College, Catholic University in Washington D.C., and earned both a B.S. and M.S. in nursing at Boston College. Sister Mary Consuela was Director of Nursing at Mercy from 1952 until 1974, and named Acting Director of the hospital in 1972 for a short time.