

August 21st, 2014 – Sister Lorraine Geis speaking with Professor Mary Ellen Lennon at the Convent of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg, Indiana.

Abbreviations

SLG: Sister Lorraine Geis

MEL: Mary Ellen Lennon

MEL: This is Mary Ellen Lenin in Oldenburg, Indiana at the convent of the Sisters of Saint Francis. It is August 21, 2014 and I'm enjoying my conversation with Sister Lorraine Geis. Would you like to introduce yourself?

SLG: Yes. I am Sister Lorraine Geis. I was born into a farming family in a little town about 45 minutes from Oldenburg. My parents, my grandparents, my great-grandparents all were farmers, so we have the farming in our blood. Connersville was a very peaceful place and I had two brothers and one sister. I was educated in a government school for my first three years because there was no way to go down to the Catholic school, but after three years all of our farming parents got together and we would go on our own buses to the grade-high school in the country. We would get off of our buses and go onto one bus and then we would go all the way back downtown to the Catholic high school or to the Catholic grade school for my school, grades four to eight. So I was very lucky then to be at the Saint Gabriel's School taught by the Franciscan Sisters from Oldenburg. Then from my high school, I became an aspirant. Now an aspirant is one who thinks they would like to be a sister, so for my freshman, sophomore year I was an aspirant at our Academy here at Oldenburg. It was an academy at that time only for girls. Now it's a co-ed school. So I was here for the freshman and sophomore year and then the aspirantship was stopped, but I came back as a normal junior and senior and graduated here with the other students and then that September graduated in May.

That September I returned to Oldenburg wanting to be a sister. I was a postulant then, along with about 20 other postulants. On August the 12th, the next year, in 1951, I was invested. That means we walk to church in like a wedding garb and went into church and the bishop was here and we were invested and from there I was no longer called Martha Geis. I was called, Sister Lorraine Geis. Then the next year we were novices after one year of being a Sister of Saint Francis as a postulant and as the name Sister Lorraine Geis, then I became a novice for one year and we were still here at Oldenburg and we prayed, worked, had classes, and enjoyed ourselves together.

In August of 1952, I went out as a second year novice to teach at a school in Bridgetown, Cincinnati Ohio and I was teaching the second graders and they were so cute and so willing, 50 little ones in a classroom it was fun to teach them. Then in August 12, we always had our professions in August, so in August the 12th of 1953, I along with my classmates was professed for three years and then the final profession was in 1956 so then I made my final profession, I was a real Sister of Saint Francis from Oldenburg. I then went to Riverview Gardens in St. Louis and taught there for seven years. So three years I taught in Cincinnati and seven years in St. Louis and again I love teaching grade school. The children were so interested so excited when they could do phonics and understanding or spell out words, big words, and when they could do math, we had a certain system in St. Louis that they could, if they saw one, zero, zero, zero, five other kids would say like fifteen they saw

one and a five. They know it was ten thousand five because that was the Doctor Schaack (unintelligible) Method it was called and so they were very good and it was very interesting.

Our foreign missionaries' story about the third world country, Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific came about because in 1955 Pope Pius XII asked the Capuchin priests in Pittsburgh if they would take the mission in Papua New Guinea. At that time it was called, "The land that time almost forgot." So life expectancy at that time for the local people in New Guinea was 33 years. It was called a "Stone Age Culture." The axes, the knives, the tools were all made of stone or bamboo. The fathers, the Capuchin priests found in their five years of ministry there that they really need sisters to help with the women and the girls especially in some areas they were more, not brought to the forth as in some areas, so they wanted the sisters then to teach the children and to help combat some of the beliefs that they had. One of them is that they had in some areas devil worship. They would make a little shelter they would get shiny black stones, they would put them under this shelter and they would kill a pig. Like if a child was sick or if the too much rain and their garden was not producing well. They would do this to honor the devil because they hadn't heard about Jesus Christ: God, Father, Holy Spirit and so the priest wanted sisters there to help to spread the good news.

In 1960, the Fathers came to America on their first leave. They started in California all the way to the East Coast and they stopped at 100 mother houses to ask if there were any sisters that would go to New Guinea. This convent, Oldenburg was the only one that accepted. So our counsel, our Reverend Mother Mary Cephas and our counsel agreed that we would send some sisters, but in 1960, little Papua New Guinea was not known, so we all got maps and cal-maps and encyclopedias to find out where this second largest island in the world was and we found out that it was north of Australia, so they asked for volunteers and our sisters: Noreen, Claver, Annata, and Martine were the ones that were chosen to go to Mendi. And we all cheered them as they left in October for that foreign mission.

I myself at that time was teaching in St. Louis and I enjoyed it very much and I was happy that those sisters were enjoying their mission in Papua New Guinea. At the end of that year, the school year, 1961, when I came home from St. Louis in mid-June there was a Capuchin here what that was telling us about the mission work and he was showing slides and we had letters from the sisters in New Guinea and it all sounded very interesting and in my diary that night I wrote that the movie had been very good and that the work the sisters were doing was very good and useful. Then this was mid-June, so it was the Pentecost season, the Holy Spirit season when we were praying to the Holy Ghost to help us to decide our lives for his honor and glory. Also it was the time that we were still having Latin masses and so I was in chapel for a morning Mass the next morning and the Agnus Dei was "qui tollis Peccata Mundi." That means, "Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world," "Mundi," "world." I said, I prayed, "Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata Mendi." Now Mendi is where the four sisters had gone. I thought, Holy Spirit, are you telling me something? So then I went up to our Reverend Mother, knocked on the door, and said I would like to volunteer for New Guinea. She was busy doing some papers and said, "Okay you write us a letter and put it on my desk." "Yes, mother." And I left. I thought, What's there to say? I volunteer for New Guinea. There's nothing else to say.

So, two days later I was going through one door and mother Cephas was coming through the door and she said, "We don't have your letter." "Oh, okay mother, I'll write the letter."

And I would love to know what I wrote because by the end of the week, oh by that Sunday my mother always brought a big bag of popcorn, popped popcorn on Sunday and all of the sisters get together and I would pass it around to all the sisters and when I got to Mother Cephas, she said, "I wonder if they have popped corn in Papua New Guinea. I thought, Oh it's getting closer and I had never said anything to my mother, of course, I wasn't thinking about it that long, so I wrote a thank-you back to my mother and told her what Mother Cephas had said, that she wondered if there was any in Papua New Guinea. Well by the end of the week, Sister Thomas Ann and I were going to Cincinnati to get our shots, to get our passports, to get things organized, that's just how fast the Holy Spirit worked.

So Sister—on October 2 was our Missioning Day in 1961. Archbishop Schulte came for the Mass and then Sister Naomi and I had the final Missioning Mass, but we left also with Mother Cephas and Sister Hortense Counselor. They went with us because they wanted to see the work in New Guinea, what our sisters were doing, but they also wanted to stop two other missionary places to see what other countries were doing with their mission work. So we went to Japan. We went to Osaka and Kyoto and Tokyo to visit noodle factories and just all kinds of places to see what the missionaries were doing for livelihood and for spreading the good word. Then we knew Maryknoll Sisters in Taiwan, so we went to Taiwan. And then we knew Maryknoll Sisters in the Philippines, so we went there also. Those were good places to go to, working with the poor people just like we were going to be doing in New Guinea, so it was good that we had stopped there to see their ministries.

MEL: Sister, how did your family feel about you going?

SLG: My family, when I went to New Guinea, my father had died two years ahead of time in 1959. My brother was married, my other brother was working at home, and my sister was still in beginning of high school and now that I think back it must have been terribly, terribly, terribly hard for my mother. I know Sister Noreen's mother came and was talking to my mother and said something like we would never be coming home again. My mother said, "Oh, no." I said, "We don't know, mother, it's not settled yet, we don't know what's going to happen in the future." But just that thought when we were having, before we had the Missioning Mass must have been a heartbreaker for my mother. And to know it's the other side of the world, where she has never been and oh it must have been very, very hard, but I never, too bad I never talked about it with my mother again later, what she thought in those days and when we would write letters it would take a month, six weeks for the letters to go back and forth, so how they waited for word from us to see and I would love to see some of my first letters, but I don't see any that are preserved anywhere by my family or by the convent, but be nice to see what we thought as we met up with these different incidents.

MEL: And this was your first time on an airplane?

SLG: That was my first time on the airplane and I don't think I was afraid of that, we knew we had Mother Cephas with us, so she would protect us (laughs), but I remember being ready to take a drink of water on the airplane and all of a sudden it went up like that and I thought, Oh my goodness. So I guess I kind of took that in stride. But we had these two older ones with us see, so we were kind of tagging along and they got things organized for us, so we finally reached Port Moresby, that's the capital of Papua New Guinea on the coast. It's a beautiful tropical area of flowers and trees and friendly brown skinned people, but it's hot and it's humid and so we didn't stay there very long because our work was up in

the mountains, so, at one stage though when talking about the history of Papua New Guinea, at one stage the man mass was attached to Australia and that's why some plants and animals are the same as they have in Australia and the Papua New Guinea people, fifty thousand years ago they say were hunters and gatherers and only thirty thousand years ago did they begin to go up to the highlands, the local people themselves and then ten thousand years ago I'm just always interested in what happened before, 10,000 years ago the people traded—the mountain people traded with the coastal people and that's why now they have some, we call them kina shells, pearl shells that they wear around their neck for decoration and other little pearl shells they get from the water because you wouldn't have that up in the mountains.

As we flew up it was beautiful to look out of the airplane and to see the patches of gardens that the lady made, sweet potato is their main food, so you could see all these little round circles from the airplane. You see a little village here or a little house there around the garden little house there in the garden around that and that's the way it was all the way up to the mountains when you got in the mountains from the beginning of it all the way over to where we landed in Mendi. They say that there's evidence that nine thousand years ago the Papua New Guinea people were doing farming and they're among the first farmers in the world and they can be proud of that because in the area where I was they are excellent farmers. Food that they had in their gardens were nuts, edible leaves, sago, coconut, breadfruit, bananas, yams, sugar cane, and of course sweet potatoes and it's stated that sugarcane originated in Papua New Guinea, so that's a good thing for them, although they don't get to eat it very often because it takes a while for it to grow, grow then you cut it off and eat it well that's the end of that it has more has to come up.

In the late 1800's, Papua New Guinea, the northern part, the northern half was governed by German New Guinea and the southern part was governed by the British and the early 1900's then the whole thing was transferred to Australia, the northern section and the southern section.

Of course we flew on the airplane up to Mendi because there were no roads as you flew over you saw only gardens and trees and no pathways, beautiful mountains and the four sisters when we reached Mendi were very, very happy to greet us. In fact, we came up a day earlier than they had expected us. The Monsignor of Mendi was down on the coast to meet us and somehow he got it that we didn't have to go to Australia the other people always had to go to Australia first, we didn't have to. So that's how we got up to the mountains a day earlier than they expected us and the children came running up to the airstrip to meet us and they came down carrying our suitcases and the wondered, the sisters wondered, What's this? What's happening? And then we trailed behind and so they were very excited to see Mother Cephas, Sister Hortense, Sister Thomas Ann, and myself.

In 1940 to 1950 there was a man called Jim Taylor. He did a 15-month Patrol. And he was the first one to see the Huli Warriors over in Tari and that was the area that Sister Thomas Ann and I were destined for over in Tari. The people say that when those big birds, those are the airplanes during the war when the big birds flew over they had no idea that there was a war going on and that was in the 1940's so when we got there in 1960 many of those people still living to tell us that story.

Tari is a wide, beautiful valley, so before we flew Tari we stayed in Mendi with the sisters for about two, three weeks just to learn their missioning life and what was going on then and then four sisters had come in 1960, three of them stayed in Mendi: Sister Claver, Noreen, and Martine. Sister Annata came with Sister Thomas Ann and myself over to Tari. So then there were three sisters in Mendi and three sisters in Tari.

MEL: Do you remember when you saw Mendi for the first time and the home of the sisters, what it looked like or how you felt? This was a big journey you had just taken.

SLG: When we reached Mendi for the first time, I guess it's a little town you would say because it's like the capital and so they had some permanent buildings there and so the sisters lived in a permanent wooden frame house and I guess I didn't think about that much either because we came from a regular home and we were going into a regular home, but as I said we were very surprised to look down out of the airplane and just to see these grass huts along the way and the gardens everything so rustic and so—things that we weren't used to seeing like that crowded America, here it was spacious, so I don't, don't think I thought too much about the house I guess I expected that maybe I saw some pictures before we went you know and so I knew what we were having and then.

So the Tari Valley, which is a hundred miles more to get from Mendi to Tari and it was some years later, 15 years later when they finally opened the road between Tari and Mendi and it would take 8 hours to go 100 miles (laughs). Here in America it takes a little than an hour, an hour and a half or something because you're just going around the circle and when they made the roads, well they had to cut down a lot of trees and all the mud and we have rain almost every day, so you had to have a lot of stones to put on the road, so it wouldn't wash away. So the Tari Valley was 15 miles wide and 45 miles long and that along with Mendi was in the Southern Highlands and that was where we were destined to work. There were 18, like we have 50 states in America, they had 18—first they were called districts and then they were called provinces. So there were 18 of them and the ones that we were headed for were the Southern Highlands.

The Huli people believed that there were only four tribes that made up the world. That was the Huli Tribe themselves and their neighbors the Wahbag and the Doona and the Tugaba and that's all that they thought existed in the world. And that's why when that big huge bird flew over, well they just thought it was a huge bird from somewhere not knowing there were people up there in the airplane.

There's a big difference in the people, the coastal people are tall and thin and they have fish and their diet is different from the mountain people. The mountain people are short, they have protruding extended stomachs and that's because they didn't have enough protein. Coastal people had their fish all the time mountain people only had a pig kill, a pig feast for maybe a wedding or special ceremony so that's the reason and people ask about the languages, well, we always said there were 750 languages on the island, but now you read the records and there are 820 languages on the island, so that's why they only knew those people around them that had the same kind of language and nobody else lived in this world.

So when we arrived in time we were greeted by very friendly people. The fathers of course, the priests had been there before, so they told them, so that Sister Wali, wali means woman

and so they told them that Sister Wali was going to come and sister Wali was going to help them and Sister Wali was going to start a school and so the people were all happy to see us but for many of them it's a very first time they saw a white skinned woman. They had seen the priest, but they hadn't seen any women.

MEL: Were you wearing a habit? A long habit at that time?

SLG: We had changed habits, from the black habit they wore here in America, we wore a brown habit. The long habit yet, a skirt and blouse, long habit and a scapular all the way down in the front and the back and our veil was still black the same as they had here in America, but Mother Cephas thought that that would be good because the dirt of New Guinea wouldn't show so much (laughs). So that's why we wore the brown habits.

When we reached Tari, the houses and the, the house was here, the round grass hut house and the garden was all around that house. In some places in New Guinea they live in villages, but not in the area, not in Tari, everybody was single. My house is here and my garden's here and you're over there somewhere in your house in your garden and only the ladies lived in this house and the little boys until they were about six years old and then they left and sometimes it make their own little house and stay with their own little friends very independent and then sometimes they go live with the men over in another house over there somewhere. So that wasn't like that in Mendi or Tari, or Mendi or Kagua, but in Tari, yes that was very different.

They were subsistence farmers so that's why they needed a garden for the year-round produce and the Tari women, the Huli women were excellent in being gardeners. They were, they would take all the grass, weeds, and everything, put it down and make a big compost and then they would put the soil on top and so they'd have very big sweet potatoes whereas in Mendi those people were thinner they had shorter, smaller gardens and they'd get less sweet potatoes so when people would come from an ecologist or agronomist or anybody interested in gardening and they can't, they would always come up to the Huli area because that's the area that the women were so good making gardens, they just learned that from their ancestors years and years before. It took us a while and we still were always learning their beliefs and their customs and their celebrations different from the other places in New Guinea. As I said the women were very good gardeners, but they were very hard workers. In the morning they get up out of their grass huts and sometimes they would have to walk quite a few miles to get to the gardens where they were going to work. They didn't have a plow or shovels, they just had a digging stick a stick from the tree that they would, used to dig and as I say they made beautiful mounds so that was a lot of digging, just what, three inch width and dig all the soil, but they did have a little help they would take their pigs to the garden, they would stick a stick in the garden and tie the pig, a rope to it and then it would go snorting around so that would help to dig the soil before they got to it, so that was a help. They would put their baby in the string bag and hang the baby on the tree while they were working and they had these prized pigs because they were like money, they didn't have money at that time, no stores, no need to have money, but they did their own kind of trading and it was often with the pigs.

The man's status in Tari where I was, they didn't do any work. They would sit around all day and talk to their men friends and smoke their pipe and if the garden was being made and it had big trees that had to be taken out, they would do that, otherwise they didn't work but

their status depended on how many pigs they had, so the more wives they had they could have taken care of more pigs and so they would get married, they'd have, some would have quite a few wives, but it wasn't like, shall I say in America where you just take somebody, there they would pay from the man's line would receive from the woman, had to pay the woman's line, so many pigs, like fifteen pigs, so if that man was going to marry this woman, then his relatives had to get together fifteen pigs and pay this family for the pigs and that's why, it was decent marriage really, they weren't just taking anybody they had some morality about them and at nighttime with the pigs that they had they would be penned up in the woman's house, so that the pigs wouldn't run away or somebody wouldn't steal them, so they had a little area in this little grass hut where the pigs would be kept during the night, so all those things were things that we hadn't heard about before and we learned about and we appreciated their way of living.

The main food was sweet potatoes for the people and they had a plant that the other areas didn't seem to have, it was called amaranths and I know now in the states you can get packets of amaranths seeds and I've seen pictures about in Kansas as far as your eye can see there's fields of Kansas, fields of amaranths but what they use it for is the seeds and they put it in health food here in America so if you look at little crackers or biscuits sometimes you will see the word amaranths and they have put the seeds in there. Our high school here in Ohio was Our Lady of Angels High School and they had that picture on the front of their school book cover, the amaranths, because it means living forever and so that was the main food of the people in our area and that was one way they got protein, 27% protein in that green and in New Guinea they used the leaves and in America they were just saving the seeds and they had different kinds of native greens.

They had bananas, the cooking kind of bananas, not the type that we had although we brought some trees up and then they, they increased and increased so there were a lot of those and we would give them to that people to plant in their gardens also. They had sugarcane and when they had a pig kill for the special occasions the men in the Tari Valley, the Huli men, would eat the special meat pieces and the ladies would get the little bits of the other pieces leftover. They are the ones who had cared for the pigs and fed the pigs and did all the work, but that was the culture in Tari area. They, sometimes they'd have to have a payback for maybe some killing and so they'd have to pay back the other tribe and that's what they would use the pigs for also.

At the days and after the lady had worked all day in her garden, she would fill her string bag with sweet potatoes and put that on her head hanging down the back over her shoulders then she'd take another string bag, filled it with vegetables, put that on her head, hanging down on the back. Then she would take her little baby hanging on the tree in the string bag, she put that over her head, hanging down the back, then she would get the load of firewood that they had gathered and she carried that horizontally on her head and she had the other little pigs that she had to take home and if she had other little children to take home and oftentimes while she was walking home she was making another string bag as she walked along and then when she got home she had to cook the food for herself for the family not for the men, the men were on their own, for a family and for the pigs she had to get food for the pigs also. So that was the daily life of the women in the Tari area.

MEL: Sister when you arrived there was no convent yet?

Yes, when we first arrived in Tari because they knew we were coming and so they had made, for whoever would be coming, they had made and some of the Capuchin Brothers were carpenters so they had made a house for us and so that first night we got there they had the chairs there they were cane chairs, you know the cane, and regular beds and tables everything was fine, but they had Kagua and Mendi didn't have this, but Tari had a season where they'd have flying ants, little, something like flies, thinner and they would come at nighttime, be attracted to the light and so that first night Mother Cephas, Sister Hortense, Sister Thomas Ann and I, went into our chapel to pray. The windows were shut, no the windows were open and because it was nighttime, it was still not cold, so it was nice, so we had the windows open. Those flying ants came in, came in, we closed the windows. They kept coming in, we had the sanctuary lamp there, that was the attraction, they were all, next morning we found a big swarm of them dead, right around the sanctuary light, so when they kept coming in chapel, we went out to the living room to finish our prayer, sitting in the living room, but of course those windows weren't perfectly tight so the flying ants came in there too (laughs). So that was something else new that we learned that didn't happen in Mendi and that we weren't expecting. I remember writing letters home to my mother and I would put a few flying ants in there and say this is flying ant night (laughs).

When we arrived in mid-November, the next day I was told to go teach in this classroom. It was a bush rectangular classroom and when the rain would come in the kids would just move here and there because the rain would come through the grass roof, there had been a coastal teacher there before me, but he left the day that I came in, went back down to the coast. He had had 27 boys and five girls only in the first grade. The girls were sitting in the last row because this was Tari. When they would come to the blackboard they would just kind of slink along and hold their grass skirts as they walked up to the blackboard and if a piece of their grass skirt fell off, the boys would soon get it out of the way so that was the culture. So in America you bring children up to the blackboard, you have competition, they don't know who's next to them, they're so busy, here it was very hard to have competition for a boy and girl to go to the classroom to be standing beside each other. Now like I said it was different in the other areas, but that's the way it was in Tari.

MEL: Do you remember how you felt, cause you were figuring this out as you went along, so how did you feel about the little girls?

SLG: Yes, oh just felt so sorry for the girls and what can we do to change it and so many boys there and that's why the girls, they were like nothing, sitting in the end of the room and there were many no's that we had to learn in Tari. For instance, the men would walk on top of the road and the ladies had to walk in the ditch. Going into church, if the men were in there already, the ladies had to crawl in church, they couldn't be higher than the men, so all of that really got to us, but what could you do about it? You could just be friendly with both groups and try to bring them together in some way.

MEL: Did the men respect the sisters?

SLG: Yes, they were always good to us, the men, we were Sister Wali, we weren't just wali, we were Sister Wali, so yes and the priest had you know like I said introduced us to them so they were always good to us, yes.

MEL: Do you remember the children in your classroom? Like do you remember your first class? That was a long time ago.

SLG: Oh yes, these, the five girls—

MEL: And the little boys—

SLG: And each one—not little boys. In my classroom I would have them from six years old to twenty six years old. They didn't know their age and it was their first chance to come to school, so they just came in the classroom and, and it was just very, very different and you couldn't call the father's name. I remember one time I asked—this boy his father's name because you keep records. I have Ibey 1 and Ibey 2 and Ibey 3, they have the same first name and so I asked his father's name and the other boy told me his father's name outside at recess there was a fight because if you called the father's name then they had some kind of power over you and so you weren't allowed to do that and so that was another no-no that we learned about. And when I went there the next day to teach I said, like, "book, pencil." Oh yes, they climb like little monkeys up on the wall because it was a mat wall and they all had their little hiding place up there where their book and their pencil was because their desk was just a long rough wood desk and the seat just a long one where they all sat together in a row like that.

And so the teacher not having a syllabus for me to teach by, what am I going to do? What am I going to teach? And the teacher had a lesson plan there and all I can remember that it said was for music, "Teach, sing, 'Oh My Darling, Clementine' and other love songs" (laughs). Now the children wouldn't have known what those were because that morning when I was taken over to school and the other three sisters came over and we were fair—we were bid welcome and so here's these six to twenty-six year old kids singing 'Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie, kiss the girls and made them cry.'" Our sister Hortense said she was ready to cry herself, those big guys singing that song. They were just happy because they knew some English, they didn't know what the words meant at all (laughs) so that was the very beginning.

We used to walk down the road to meet our neighbors or see if anybody was on the road because travel was restricted, you couldn't go more than a mile down the road by the government because it hadn't been opened up in those areas yet by the government and so it was a very restricted area and if we walked down the road with our girls, they had never been down that way before to the right, they only lived here to the left, so they didn't know anything about going there to the right and also as I said there weren't really there were no vehicles to travel by so you didn't need a big road, it was just simple roads that you would walk on.

MEL: So you would walk to school every day, and how far were the children walking to school?

SLG: We had boarding students because they wouldn't know the time, they lived by the sun and if it was a rainy day, they would have all been late for school, so for my forty years in Papua New Guinea, I was at a boarding school (laughs).

MEL: But the girls and the boys?

SLG: Girls and the boys, the boys had over by the Father's house on the other side of the road and the girls had a dorm behind our convent there and I'll talk about some of that in a little bit.

The clothing that the girls were and the women wore grass skirts, but they had to do a lot of work to make those grass skirts. No place to buy any material things, so you know what an onion is like and it's hollow on the top, the green part is hollow something like that grew down in the ditch and so they would pull that up piece by piece and then they would have to flatten that, each of those pieces, and they would get a bunch together then they would tie it together and that would be one part of the skirt, then they'd make another, and they'd have many parts of the skirt like that and then a little bit open on the side and then in the back again and even when the little ones were born, as soon as a little girl was born she had a grass skirt. In Mendi, different. They might be without clothes for years and even their little boys would come to school with no clothes on in Mendi, but Tari was different, the little boys and girls from the time they were born they had the clothes. The women also made the clothes. When they would walk it sounded like they were walking with silk because all of this grass would just rustle and they had good ones, Sunday ones, and work ones that they would wear and take it off so they'd have a nice one for Sunday. The men had a net that hung down the front on a waistband and that hang on the front and then in the back they just picked some leaves along the way and stick that in the back belt for the part of their trousers in the back. So we'd go along the road we'd say, There's the trouser garden, see those plants growing in the garden.

The men, or the most famous men in Papua New Guinea, they would make the wigs and they would use their hair and other people's hair that had been cut and they would make the big wigs then they always had the yellow straw flowers, they would have bird, they would have birds' feathers especially for dances they would have the "bird of paradise" feathers which went up like maybe two feet and when they would dance then the feathers would dance up and down also and was a big attraction. So that was, but the men dressed like that all the time it wasn't just a Sunday affair, they were always looking fancy because they didn't have to work and when they had their dances, oh they would have a ring in their nose maybe and in their ears and they had that kina shell that I said had come from the coast. They always had their bow and arrow, which took work to make those also and their colors for their sing-sing dances were red and yellow. Now no ladies were ever allowed to go watch them. The men paint up for the dancing, they'd be back in the bush somewhere, but one year, Brother Mark said to them he would give them the paint free that they wouldn't have to buy it or make it, they used to use the ground, the red ground and the clay ground but then you could buy it in a store later on. He told them that he would give it to them if they let the sisters come and see it, so we got to go back in the bush and see them painting five hours for the men to paint up for a dance, you think the ladies in America spend that much time? Anyway they first put on a coat of paint that they have to let it dry like you would on a house and then they put on the second one. Meanwhile they're finding leaves to put in their arm band, they're finding leaves to put in their leg band, they're seeing that their drum is the right, gonna beat correctly, they put on the yellow paint and the red paint and well they have to let it dry so that's why it takes five hours then they have the feathers that they put in and when they come out, right before noon, the blazing hot sun they only dance for a half hour over in the other areas, Mendi and Kagua, they can dance all day, but they have all this oil on and all of this paint on and pretty soon the paint would start running in the heat

of the sun, but also they could keel over in that hot sun because they don't smile, they don't laugh, otherwise they would break the paint on their face, so they have to stay very solemn when they're doing their dancing and as soon as the people hear the drum drum drum they all go running to that direction, there will be a few girls that got dressed up over here somewhere not married girls, not mature girls, but just little girls that their mothers would have dressed them up in special skirts and then they would have crinkled up the grass skirts a little bit so it looked a little fancy and they would hold on a stick two or three girls in a line, they'd hold the stick together and they just danced up and down and that's what the men do really too, they just dance up and down and travel down the line and then they stop and then they do it again and as I say there's no singing in some places you hear the singing, but not in Tari because it would break the paint on their faces.

In 1962 we tried to get more girls in school. Every time we would approach a mother, they would put the little girls behind them, behind their grass skirts, you know, "Get back there, get back there, we don't want to, we don't want you going to school." Because they wanted the girls to help them in the garden, help take care of the pigs, take care of the little babies, collect the firewood. It was true they had a lot of work for them to do, so it was hard for us in the Tari area to get girls to stay in school.

The people of course, children coming to school, didn't know any English and I didn't know any Huli and so I would say, "boy," "iiggity," "girl," they'd say "wondadi." "Tree," "idia." "Sun," "nee." We went back and forth like that with words, but there were some words or some pictures you wanted to show them they had nothing to say about it like a car they never saw that before they had no word, a mirror, a towel, they had nothing like that so they had no word to match up with it. I remember when we were in school and the people in America would send us puzzles like these 15-20 piece puzzles for little children and so they would put it together and then they would make an English story about it. So here the puzzle was, after was put together, here was Pluto you know the dark Pluto sitting in a car he had a bow tie, he had his jacket on, he had his ears flopping down, his hat up here and so the little boy that had made that, said, The man is in the car. I guess they thought it's a funny-looking man, but it's a car so must be a man he's got clothes on must be a man.

They, we three sisters would go along to the with the fathers to the bush church stations a lot of time to try to meet the people and try to encourage them to come in and a lot of times Father after his Masses would bring the people in to the first grade, but like I said before many of them were 6 to 26 years old and the third year that I was there I had 48 students had come from the bush some of them if they'd have been at our school they had like kindergarten-preschool, but these children had had no preschool. Forty-eight students coming into the classroom not knowing a word of English and this, we had all the decorations the posters and things in the classroom, nice wooden desks, all painted blue everything's so nice. They'd come in dumbfounded. I remember this Hulaba, he came in a big guy like about 18 years old, he sat on the desk and put his feet on the chair and he was all looking, I couldn't say, hey you, turn around. I had to go turn him around physically, so everything was brand new to them.

Boarders, well like I said, we kept them all the time otherwise they would have been late for school, but it was hard, hard, hard to keep constant attendance. A few examples: Nebulous mom threw stones at her, at nebula. She wanted her to stay at home like I said she needed her to help work in the garden. We had a spell when the girls would run home five miles

away was their home, they would all run home. They were just homesick, they were in this place that they weren't used to.

Hangadine Kongalu, they were two girls and they were from the same village and they were afraid of a payback, they had heard some killing in their village and they were afraid that they would be the ones that would get payback so they ran home again. So we were often having missing students in school, although we had boarders, they would get away little Paju-Boo she was a sweet little girl and I had her sitting in the desk with the boy just on purpose just trying to break this and she would sit way over here and he would sit way over there, but that afternoon she ran home five miles away, she just couldn't, that was against their customs, she just couldn't do that.

MEL: Did she come back?

SLG: Yes, later on we got her back again then, yeah, and the parents if they were out in the bush and they got an offer like I said the men had nothing to do but sit around and talk and talk so if they got an offer for their daughter to be married they wanted her to get married so I remember this Khumbamain she was about 14 years old and in the first grade, she saw her father coming she ran way down to the end of our pineapple garden just to get away from him. So she was safe for a while, but not long, soon she was, had to get married.

Kili on the other hand wanted to stay at our mission on the weekend, sometimes they could go home on the weekends, because she was afraid she was the next one in line in their family to get married and she wanted to have school, she didn't want to get married. One student from the village ten miles away, he went away so the others went away also from his village and they said they were hungry after a while they came back again, but it's hard to teach when you trying to teach something and it's not a carry through.

MEL: Sister, do you remember when you first came and they were telling you, you were going to teach. The Fathers were telling you to go to the—to teach the next day. Did they, did you ever talk about what you wanted to achieve by education or what you wanted for these children who turned out not to always be children. Did you think ahead or you just thought about each day.

SLG: I think we thought about each day because we would have the letters from the sisters and they would told us I guess a little bit about what they were doing and I know myself I didn't think that. I was going to be a teacher so I was going there to teach.

MEL: But did you think about what you wanted the children to achieve in the classroom? Like what did you want for them? Do you remember what people told you? Did you want them to go to college? Or, I mean you couldn't think like that.

SLG: That was way out of the mind not even a high school was in mind.

MEL: Right, so.

SLG: So, so we just didn't think that far, I guess, we like, the Fathers needed sisters to come and help break down the barrier with the women and the girls so that was our aim we weren't really thinking about what school we were going to how far we would reach in

education, we were just coming to help break down the barriers, especially for the Huli people. So that would be our aim.

This little friendly Tendabay, he returned his lap-lap, that meant that he just wanted to be a nature boy, he didn't want to be back in school anymore. A lap-lap was just a piece of material that we would give them like this, but they would just tie it around and stick it in the belt, and that was what the boys wore and the girls would wear something like this, a skirt that we had made. So when they brought the lap-lap back then they were finished with school and none of their parents were educated before of course so they didn't know what was going on and we sisters used to walk to different areas to retrieve the students. Some we could get back again and if the students didn't return the lap-lap we would go out for the lap-lap (laughs).

That happened from 1961 to 1965 at least I mean that wasn't just the first year that that happened they would come from these distant areas and if they heard something going on at home like if there was going to be a pig kill. Of course they had to go home. Or somebody was getting married and it was going to be a big sing-sing dance they had to go home they—and if we told them no well that didn't matter they'd sneak away in the middle of the night.

Now, Polkajus' father, he said that he put his child in jail if it ran away because he realized the value of education, somehow. So, but Homaco, he wanted his son, Ontanay, now Homaco lived right behind the mission and he wanted his son, Ontanay to be a student, but Ontanay didn't want to be a student and his father caught him and tied him up in the house with the rope, but Ontanay chewed out and he got away, but years later he came back to school then and then we had his children in school, years and years later, so boys were used to doing what they wanted, not the girls, I mean they were with the mothers and they had to keep safe and, but the boys were just little nature boys and did what they wanted. Some parents were insistent and they learned that if they kept the girls in school then they could get a higher bride price, so that's a good reason to keep them in school, you know.

In 1970 the government was saying—so they were still running away [19]65 up to [19]70, but and still there is no required education. But in 1970 the governor was saying, if they ran away three times, the parents would be put in jail. I don't know how that worked out, but by then we were getting out of grade school, but, so there were so many first in those years everything new for them everything new for us, like with the gave them a blouse, oh it was like a million dollars to put this blouse on and "see how pretty I look" and the boys with their lap-laps too and when they wrote their name for the first time that's their name, that's their own, had never seen it written anywhere before that was a thrill and they didn't understand what towels and soap were for, you had to teach them, everything. They learned many things from us and we learned many, many things from them. Very friendly people, very generous, with the only thing they had was garden produce, but they were very generous with their garden produce.

I remember 1964 sitting in this classroom and all the students all of a sudden their faces and their eyes and their ears pricked up and they were hearing a sound they'd never heard before, here it was a helicopter, had never come into the valley and they could hear that they could hear something different and so it flew over our school area so Brother Mark got on his bike and flew up to the airstrip and asked the helicopter driver, when he'd left would

he please pass over our school? So we got all our students out we have four classrooms we got our students outside standing there in a long line waiting for him to fly over and what do you know, he landed right down in between all of us, so they were so happy to learn something else knew that they had never heard about before, they had seen planes of course we were coming in on planes, but.

To try to encourage them to speak English all the time when they began learning a little bit more because that's the only way they were going to really get to know it well they would, somebody taught them to carry a stone, so if I spoke language I had to take this stone and then if I heard you speak language I give it to you and you have to carry it two years, no I didn't say that, so that's the way, one way when tried to increase the English language because we were up in the mountains, but down on the coast they had had education for decades and we were up in the mountains just trying to learn it and there was a radio program every day at nine o'clock it would be 15 minutes for the first grade, at 9:15 am for the second grade, 9:30 am for the third grade, so the whole country was hearing the same sentence pattern for that week because later on we got a syllabus and we would be teaching the syllabus and we were all learning like maybe "-ing" words: he is running to catch the ball and now he is falling down, you know the "-ing" words. So the whole country was learning that so the children were very eager to hear, that was another voice for them to get used to and to learn something then they would use that in their day the way they were speaking.

MEL: How many sisters taught how many classes? Because there were, how many of you were teaching the first, second, and third grade?

SLG: That's all. We only, and first, in the beginning we only went to the third grade and then we sent them off to higher school. We had another place called Arrave that was down past Mendi and we'd send our students down to Arrave and then our girls, we would send over to Mendi because they were getting more education, we had local teachers with us too, some native teachers taught and so like at our school, we just had we three sisters, but we had that one year when I had 48 children who didn't know a word of English we had two other classrooms of first grade and Aloysius taught this room with about 35 and another Aloysius had another room with about 35, so we have a lot of first graders and they had been to kindergarten already, those two rooms and so they knew more English, but my students didn't know a thing.

Although they were wearing dresses and clothes by this time, they were still all barefooted and that lasted for 10, 20 years. Many people now, still barefooted and we became great friends with the families the children we had taught and then I'll tell you more later, but generations to come we had their children than their grandchildren in school.

A sad thing came to the country called the cargo cult. Now that didn't really come up in the mountains with us, but we heard about it and we were very worried, worried. It was down on the coast in the 1960's and they, the people, believed that their ancestors were sending all these things that would be coming into the country like food and clothes and cars and just everything that would come down on the coast these people believe that that cargo was for them and so they were, a lot of sad happenings of people getting killed and things, thinking, stealing those things and thinking that was theirs and the way that I guess it was stopped is they took some of those men down to Port Moresby to show that where it was made and

how it came to be. It wasn't their ancestors that were sending it to them, it was being made, so that kind of squelched that cargo cult. But that had happened even before the 1960's it sounds like, but like I say down on the coast they had stores and education and everything down there; it was a different place.

After, our children, finally we built up to the sixth grade after some years and then to get to high school they had to take a national test you know our little children up there competing with the people down on the coast because it was all taken someplace and graded by the officials and from there you were told how many of you were allowed to go to high school. Not everybody could go to high school only the grades and we called high school what was really only seventh grade, but we called it "Form One."

Now, in 1970 all of us sisters were no longer allowed—more sisters had come in between there up to 1970 we had maybe 10-12 sisters at least by that time teaching in our three schools and then we weren't allowed to teach anymore because there were enough national teachers that could teach in the grades. So we went on to many different ministries like pastoral work, curriculum supervisors, national positions, youth leaders, teachers in college, catechist trainee teachers, members of the House of Prayer down on the coast, vocation directors, and our sisters in Kagua started the first community of national Catholic religious sisters called the Franciscan Sisters of Mary that was the only community that was started in the Southern Highlands and still is the only one in the Southern Highlands.

But for myself, Sister Mel Hoffman had been asked in the, 1971, 1970 to begin the Catholic high school. Still it's the only Catholic high school you could say like in Indiana, so it's the only Catholic one in the Southern Highlands. So we asked her to start that and it began in 1971. They had to choose the area; it was way out in the bush. You can imagine no buildings just a swamp area. People, nobody wanted it, it was swamp, so it wasn't good for gardens. So lots of work was done to dig ditches and to make it habitable. It was completely bush. All the buildings then were made out of reeds and out of mats, you get them and you beat them and then you weave them and so it was lots of work to make that so the first year, Sister Mel stayed in town seven miles and she would drive out every day to the high school to the bush areas then I joined her and Sister Patricia Ann was with her that first year, then the second year I that staff at the high school.

We had no electricity so again that year we stayed in town and we had 21 girls, but we had them stay in town with us and they would have to crowd on the truck every day and we'd bring him out to the high school that was like seven miles out in the bush so that's how that high school was begun. We followed the Australian education system and they were very thirsty by that time, thirsty for education, to get all the English that they could get and to just learn anything about the world, they were very interested. As I said before we called it Form One, it was grade seven, we called it Form One and they couldn't advance to Form Four and then that was the end of the education.

So our boarders for the high school came from 200 miles away on the other side of Mendi all the way from Kagua and they had roads there so they would get to go all the way to Mendi a hundred miles they would find a truck or something to take them, but once they got a hundred miles from us they had to walk. They had to walk a hundred—the girls would come with their legs so sore and sleeping where they could along the way, but there would be some missionary walking with them along the way so they would be safe and of course

they all came from different languages then, from Kagua and Mendi and along the way and they all had different cultures and so it was good for them to learn about other places and we had, wasn't just—it was a Catholic school, but we had children from different religions also and that was very good for everybody become acquainted with the others.

When I went in 1972, I became part of the staff and I taught mainly math and agriculture. Now there was still the cultural differences and like I said before I put the name on their desk because you had to learn all these different people with different names that you had never heard before and you couldn't say "oh the blue-eyed girl: or "the redhead girl" everybody was the same and the boys and girl's haircuts were all the same, everything was short, you know, and kinky, and so it was hard learning all of their names so I put the names on the desk, but the father's name was torn off of the paper because don't say my father's name.

So it was good for the Huli's to get acquainted with these other people from the other areas. In 1973 we had permanent buildings then from [19]72 it was all grass buildings that we were teaching in and we had six dormitories, we had 24 classrooms and the latest classroom was made right before we left in 2001 and that was a computer room. We were catching up with modern technology, starting all the way from those little grass huts and that was in 2001. We had a lot of help. Lay carpenters, they came, teachers they helped with the farm workers. We had a hundred and eighty acres for our high school and so over the next 30 years we got hydroelectric scheme, so we couldn't bring it from town that was seven miles away, so we had our own. We had the cattle project of 80 cows which came in handy. The carpenters also made our staff houses because we had many teachers so they'd make all those the mess hall, the social hall, the clinic, the chapel, the canteen, the workshops, so we were like a little town sitting way out in the bush surrounded by nothing but trees and grass and people's little grass houses and gardens, but nothing else around us just God's nature. It was beautiful.

I remember in 1974 the fees for high school were 40 kina. Now they had their own money so it was 40 dollars and I remember this little boy coming with this bag and it was filled with what shall I say nickels and dimes that kind of money that his mother had been selling sweet potatoes selling, selling at the market for some years to have enough money to send her boy to the high school. Yeah.

And in late 1973 self-government began. It was it was hard for the people. The languages from all those different provinces were all different and people had different opinions in all those places and the coastal people didn't know what the mountain people were like and vice versa, so it was hard for them to hear about self-government and they heard about it for the first time and then they had to vote for a representative, which they didn't really understand, of course they would vote for their "one talks," that means your relatives somebody from your tribe and so that caused commotion also, but after self-government they send somebody from Mendi down there and he had to take along somebody to translate for him what was going on at the assembly because he didn't know the language down there.

Now besides 820 languages there's also Pidgin English which is like a simple English that a lot of countries have, but our people over in Tari didn't know anything about that either, so they were the "Last of the Mohicans" on many things.

MEL: Um, in this high school were getting students from 200 miles away, had they gone to school before you were getting students who had gone to school before and coming to your high school?

SLG: Right, they had to finish grade school and as I said we weren't allowed to teach in grade school, so that was everywhere, nobody was allowed to teach in grade school anymore so then they were allowed to come to high school from all of those places so that's when we had a high school and they were all coming to our high school and a lot of them were Catholics, the priests from those places were sending them to our place and of course from Tari a lot of them were Methodists and Lutherans and different religions and that was good they and we still communicate with some of them too.

In 1975, oh about the money, first they had no money and when we would buy sweet potatoes for our little primary school children in 1961, we would give them some salt because they loved salt so that was the payment for sweet potatoes, no use giving money, no stores, or if we had newspaper, we would give that to them and the men would be very happy with that be, not reading, smoking (laughs) of course they couldn't read it so they put it in their bamboo pipes and that was good smoking for them and later then we had shillings like Australia had and shillings and pence and we used that to buy sweet potatoes and things and finally the Australian dollars and cents came in so it was gradually changing over and over.

In 1975, Papua New Guinea received independence from Australia. 1975. We went in 1960-61, so it was 14 years later when independence was coming and Aus—then New Guinea got their own currency was called toea and kina now this was called a kina shell, it was precious, so they named their paper money kina because that was precious and on their money they would have a picture of a pig you know here in America we have presidents or somebody like that, they have a picture of a pig that was something important. And we had Papua New Guinea, but they took away the comma before it was Papua common New Guinea but when we got independence they wanted to show that the northern and southern part were all uniting together so we were to take away the comma of Papua New Guinea.

The high school students, I might want to, the students were eager for school when they came to high school they didn't have the distractions like here in America. All the outside, the family, the TV, the ballgames, everything that happens here in America nothing like that in New Guinea so they were very eager and if visitors came they always wanted to come and listen not to be nosy, but just to hear the English and hear somebody else speaking and see how much they could understand, just like if I hear Spanish, maybe I know a few words and I'm glad that I know a few words, so they were very eager to learn more and they always had a welcome for any visitors that would come they'd have dance and music and welcome them and put flowers in their hair and they were always good.

We, for our religion classes in the high school we would have the preachers from the other churches too, the Seventh-day Adventists, the Methodists, they would all come to teach their own children, we would have ours they would teach theirs. On Sunday they would come to have their prayers with their children and we would have ours so that was good nobody tried to push anybody out.

When we had art classes in school, in grade school and high school, they were very good. Here in America you know, "I can't, I don't know how to draw, I can't do that," but they seem to be able to because from the time they were little they were working with their fingers making bamboo things or making string bags or doing the sweet potatoes or whatever used to their fingers, so they were very good and nobody ever said, I can't do that, the first things they would draw in grade school were always the men in their wigs because what else did they have to draw you know, trees and houses that's about all they knew and the, so that was that they were very good at doing that. English they were excellent. Other people and other provinces would tell us that they could tell if our children came to their areas that they were taught by Americans because they could hear our brogue if you want to call it that because in our children had to listen so hard from one classroom to the next because our teachers were from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Switzerland, Ireland. Coastal teachers, mountain teachers. So they really had to listen to be able to understand what we were seeing. They loved to read, they loved to go to the library, they loved to see the pictures, so like I said they were just eager for education.

MEL: Is there a difference between the girls and the boys in high school?

SLG: I think probably about the same. The girls caught up, the girls were very good, yes and they learned to respond not to be behind, well when they graduated they, one of the girls became a doctor and all kinds of things, anyway in 1999, there were, there were 158 high schools throughout the island, throughout the island. Now we had, they had one in Mendi, one in Kagua. Those were government ones. One in Lalibu and different areas. We had our Catholic high school, Koroba on the other side had another high school. So throughout the whole island there were 158 high schools and when the students would finish they came in grade 7 or Form 1 and then Form 2 then after that Form 2, grade 8, they again had to take a national high school test to see if they could go on to grade 9 and then after grade 10 they had to take another one to see if they could go on to grade 11 so they really had to, and the mountain people competing with the coastal people whose parents and grandparents had already gone to school, but in 1999 they had this company, this test and we found out that our children ranked 49th out of 158, that's the top one-third so that shows that they really were working hard on their own on their schoolwork and trying to learn and our Saint Joseph's Tari High School, in 2000 became what was called the Tari Secondary, it was no longer Tari High School, Tari Secondary, meaning by that time we had 9, 10, 11, and 12. So we had started with grade 7 and grew up and went up and went up and now we were at the final stage all the way that was the year before we left that we reached that grade 12.

Few parents had gone to school even of these children. I took a survey right before I left 120 seniors and only five could say that both of their parents had gone to grade school. 120 seniors and only five had gone to grade school, 45 had one parent that went to high school and still 65 out of the 125, that's like half of them, their mothers and fathers had had no schooling. They came from way back there in the bush somewhere and their parents had had no schooling. Then when I think to America you know back at the beginning of the 1900's my daddy only had three years, my mother went to the eighth grade, so I know what it's like to have beginnings and so these children and now when we left we had, as I said, generation now especially the Tari people. We stayed friends with them all the time. I could call all of their names, all the girls that we had, and their children and their children, so it's

good, it was like family, you lived with them, they lived with you day and night. So you got to know them well. Education still is not compulsory, so I guess many of them probably still don't have an education back in the bush. When I talk math, that was like Greek to them at the beginning. They had no need for it. If they were carrying something heavy they didn't have to know how many pounds just put it down, take half of it out, or something. If they were walking a distance they didn't have to know how many kilometers and meters because we had the metric, we had to do the metric system, so they would just walk so far and stop and have a sleep or something along the way. For time, just look up the sun and see what time of the day it was, they didn't have to know the hour. So to get a clock and to have to know what time it was—like I remember this one boy he said, it was time, he was going to Mass and he said, "I ate after the rooster crowed." or "before the rooster crowed," or something, "can I still go to Holy Communion?" Those are the days when we had that way, so they went by the crow, time to get up now, or suns, whatever that was their way of living and telling time.

When I taught math, they—every time we taught a new topic they would put the topic in their book and just a sample of it and years later one of the boys came back, he was in to work, like installing telephone poles and things, and he brought that book back to show me this is what he was using, he found it useful, so that was nice. And in science you can imagine how many things were new in science to them that they had been afraid of before and didn't know like in 1962 there was an eclipse and I was, well I just went in [19]61, so in 1962 and the different religions the local people were telling the people this is the end of the world, so I don't know if they were scaring them or what and "it's going to be black and it's just the very end of the world" so the stores by that time had all the—lamps were bought out and the matches were gone and the flashlights were gone and from the trade stores, so Father Paul told the scientific reason for that eclipse and it was so beautiful, the people, the native people ran in my classroom hid under the windows, had their blankets. I opened the window I said, "Oh, honda, honda, pachalay" That means, look it's beautiful. No no no, it's the end of the world, they were scared to death, and when it was over, they came out and they said, "Believe, Father, now we believe Father. He's the one, you know these other places were saying it's the end of the world, it's not the end of the world. So that was just one scientific idea that they knew nothing about. So Sister Ruth that you will be speaking to, she taught them science and she was excellent for that.

Agriculture, agriculture was great they were already subsistence farmers. They already knew how to take care of the soil. The area that we were in Tari had been volcanic area. A mountain had erupted and big volcanic rocks all over the place. We have taken those to make our first pathways instead of walking in mud all the time, we broke those up a little bit and made the pathways. So that was good for the soil and it had broken down over the years, we have 365 days growing season, day in and day out, rain almost every day. Sun, almost every day, so you know how the things grew. All 500 of our students had a large plot to care for because we had boarders, we had to feed the boarders, we had to learn things in agriculture. So they had maybe half the size of this room each student would have and when we would go out through practical agriculture, they would bring their mulching compost. Limestone they go to the road, get the lime stones, break them into powder because that was good for the soil, they would have ashes if they were day students, they had ashes to keep him warm at night in their huts, we had it in the mess hall when they would cook the food and the cooks would put it outside so they could get that and we had

eighty head of cattle so they had to get the manure and bring that and so they learned which plants need what enrichment as we had agriculture classes.

And this one day this girl was late for assembly and she—and I was in charge of assembly and she wrote me a note and she said, "Sister, I'm sorry I'm late for assembly, I'm a day student, I had my mulching compost limestone everything except manure and so I went to the paddock it was all gone, I had to sit and wait for it to come." So when they come back years later they would ask, you know, "Sister, who's got my garden now?" In other words they really owned it as they worked there and some, even the boys, they'd have their bag of mulching and compost and manure maybe this was chicken manure because they were a day student or pig manure because they were a day student. They'd make little cards and put it on there what it was so that I'd go around and give them points for that because that was their homework, you know, and that was a lot of work for them to get that all together. So they would have it written down what it was and I'd give them points.

When I taught them the topic about bees, aw, they could, they hated, when the bell would ring at the end of class, they hated to close the little book and go. It was so interesting. I took them down to the hive to show them. One of the boys said, "Sister that's so sad. Last year, Christmastime when I was home, we had a beehive hanging by our grass hut and we got firewood and we burned him out, we smoked him out" because they thought they were just pests there. No idea the good that they were doing for their gardens, so they'd loved to stand there and watch the sunflowers and the things, the corn tassels and see the bees at work and see the bee, the pollen on their legs. We had made flower, we made corn flower because we had the corn. Taro flower and then I'd make some kind of little cakes or things out of the flour and give it to the kids in agriculture class and they liked that, sweet potato flour, that was nice projects. We'd just get tin cans and make holes in the tin cans and use that for our graders so we, for the sweet potatoes we really made that a project, we got ten pounds of sweet potatoes and we washed them and then we peeled them and so we had six pounds left and then we graded and we dried them and we only had a half a pound left so that shows, you think sweet potatoes are so starchy, but they have a lot of water in them too. And we had a plantation of pineapples, plantation of bananas, so we had plenty for the children and they were, they had good green thumbs as I said before amaranth was the main thing, but if we had winged beans, I don't know if you winged beans? That's very good protein also. It opens up like a pea and each little being is sitting in its own little cell, so all that was new for the kids to learn and not to give this to this leaf plant, but to give it to that kind of plant and you don't know how much they carried on you know after they went home.

At the end of class the students would say, "Time runs like water." We had double periods out there I mean 80 periods working in the garden, but they still weren't ready to go they were harvesting or weeding or whatever, applying the, what they had.

We also had a project of guinea pigs and we thought that that would be good meat for guinea pigs. So we had it, ah 40 of them at one stage and we had a cage on the ground and you have to move them because they eat and eat and eat, so you had to keep moving around and if we would've heard the girls scream at the dormitory we knew what happened, the guinea pigs got out because the ground wasn't flat and guinea pigs got out and then the dog be chasing them and so they've run and get the guinea pig back where it belonged and the one night we had a heavy rain and they hadn't been put in dry area so they really got drenched and we came out and got them and put them in the tool shed overnight and there

were nine little ones there when we put them in. The next morning there were eleven little ones, so the girls call them "tool" and "shed" because we had put them in the tool shed. They were good at think of cute little things like that.

We had cassava which is tapioca for America, couldn't believe that that hard tubular plant could turn out to be something so soft and delicious as the tapioca that we have in America. We had two kinds, the white kind and the yellow kind. The children liked the yellow kind the best.

MEL: Did you cook, Sister? Did you learn to cook all of these different things as well?

SLG: Oh, yes, yes.

MEL: Do you remember what it felt like to learn or like learn all these new recipes and techniques?

SLG: Well, their green vegetables were like a—a spinach recipe we would use it like amaranth is used for things like spinach recipes and they would have a lot of nice green vegetables and the cassava, they would just put it in the ashes and cook it that way or they might boil it in water, that's what we had to do at school because we had big vats for four hundred, five hundred students you had to have big vats to cook the things in and we also had a project of silkworms because the country was going to start that and they were going to make a factory in Tari and they were starting to make a factory so a lot of the local people were starting the silkworm and we had it at school, but if you have silkworms you have to feed them at a certain time and you give them mulberry leaves and they had to go out, now New Guinea people aren't used to being exact so if something comes along the road and it sounds exciting, go join them, forget about the silkworms, and we'd find the silkworms crawling up the poles and everything, but it never did turn out the, they, besides the poor people who tried to do it the factory never did come to be so that was lost down.

Then they had a lot of people do coffee, so that was better. That they planted coffee trees and they can take care of themselves and then you'd pick them and on Saturday you would take it to the market and they would sell it you'd get the money for that and we had a project like that at school for the children to learn, so when they left school then they could do the project at their homes and get some money that way. So they were excellent gardeners they were good working with their hands.

In the morning the children, it was like a home, the children had chores to do, cutting grass or cleaning classrooms or preparing the food or something and sports had not been their culture, but they caught on to that very quickly, kickball and volleyball and what the Australians played,

MEL: Soccer?

SLG: Soccer, soccer that was one of their main things, yes, so they enjoyed that there very much. Nation wise things changed over the years and they found natural gas and there was a gold rush not too far from us up in the mountains and that was hard when Sister Mel was on leave and I was taking care of the school and this boy came and asked if he could go you know for gold rush and get some money and I said, "Wait till after dinner and I'll see."

Sorry, he was gone, couldn't wait you know gold sounds like gold in your fingers, but this one man he had filled a jar with gold and he went to Port Moresby and he got twenty-seven thousand kina. Twenty-seven thousand kina for that jar of gold, so you can see, and then of course prices went up, if you try to, up there, if you try to buy a little packet of biscuits which should have been like one kina it would have gone up to twenty or something and they just too much materialism out of that.

Many students that we taught, now, their fourth generation is going to high school and our school grew in five hundred students we had four hundred students and one hundred days students four hundred boarders and we had over twenty teachers. When we were leaving Papua New Guinea in 2001, Sister Mel and myself, we met one of our students who had graduated in the first class in 1974. We met him at Mendi and he was telling us what happened in his life since he left us. His parents still were up in the grass hut no running water, no electricity, he left us and went down to the coast to the college in science scientific medicine and then his grades were so good he was taken down to Port Moresby at the University. Now he couldn't have paid for that, so somehow the country must have paid for it. His grades were so good he was taken to Oxford to continue in schizophrenic medicine and so he said that he had just come back from America. We said, "You did? Where were you in America?" He said, "Indianapolis. Do you know where that is?" So the students who have had a chance at education have really had a chance to get around the world. I could name other ones also that they've been down in Florida with business and different places so they were lucky to get an education.

So we sisters went to New Guinea to carry out the good news like our Mother Teresa had come here from Austria to begin education over here so we went to New Guinea to begin education and carried out the good news to all of the people in the area where we ministered. A sister from India is the one that took Sister Mel's place as headmistress and in 20- now 2014 there's still some of the same teachers that are there and I correspond them with them in email and they tell me what's still happening at Tari High School. So when we left in 2001 they had a huge enormous gigantic farewell. They even called the prime minister up, of course that was good for the people to say that they had the prime minister in their area, so it was, it was 40 years of my ministry in Papua New Guinea was a blessing one to be remembered and retold many times and I'm grateful for that.

MEL: Thank you, Sister. That's beautiful.