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Pat's grandmother was matron of Bedford Row maternity hospital. The laundry from the hospital was cleaned in the Good Shepherd laundry. As a young child in the 1950s Pat often went with his grandmother to drop off and collect laundry. Here he recalls his memories and impressions of the place.

[Interview begins]

My name is Pat Logue and the connection I had with the Good Shepherd Laundry was my grandmother had been matron of Bedford Row Hospital and obviously they sent their laundry up to the Good Shepherds to be cleaned. When she retired from Bedford Row Hospital she opened up a nursing home here in Belfield Park, a small nursing home, three bedrooms. It was quite well known in Limerick because she was well known. She had fairly good connections. I used to go out with her with the laundry to the Good Shepherds when she was bringing it out. We went to the counter and normally a nun would come to the counter to us. We'd see the girls inside. Most of them, they were all dressed the same way, usually scarves in their hair – scarves on their heads and eyes to the ground. Obviously they weren't supposed to have eye contact with anyone at the counter. They always seemed to be rushing. The place was very very quiet. Nobody spoke anyway loudly. The nun would come to the counter to serve whoever came in and the girls would just keep on doing what they were doing, mostly running through and taking the laundry and bringing it back to where they were cleaning it I suppose, and off to where they were ironing it as well. That's basically all I have to say. There was nobody talking. There was no smiling. The nuns had very little talk to the girls working there.

We used to walk out there sometimes. It must have been in the early fifties. I was born in 1943 – I couldn't have been more than nine or ten. So I presume it was early fifties. But basically that's all I have to say about it, just that it was very very quiet out there and I wouldn't think that there was any great fun for the people working there. They just did their job, do what they had to do, say their prayers and go to bed at night. That was it I suppose. And say their prayers in the morning I presume.

They had scarves. They all wore the same type of uniform, white. As far as I know it was white. But all I can remember is that they were always rushing. I couldn't explain it to you now. They were young women. I was young myself at the time but I can't remember any older women.

I was under the impression that the place was for girls who got pregnant and their parents didn't want anything to do with them and they shoved them in there. At the time I didn't know, maybe the girls might

have been in there if they had a criminal record or if they were up in court. Seemingly some of them were there for that as well I heard afterwards, but I didn't know that at the time. I just thought it was for girls who had babies and that had to go in there.

I think it was a workhouse, an awful place. But I wouldn't have any great proof of that. Obviously the girls had babies and what became of the babies? You know a lot of them were sold to Americans. But what happened to the children that people who came in didn't want? Where did they go? What happened to them? What age did they come out of the place at? How long were they there? Did any of them go back to their parents? There is a whole history to be written about the place.

People don't really talk about it now because most of the people I meet know are actually younger than myself and a lot of them wouldn't know anything about it. The older people would. Most people over fifty-five or sixty would know about it or maybe have some connection with it in the past. But otherwise young people couldn't care less about it I suppose.

It had changed in the last few years from what it was obviously. I think parents accepted that their daughters were going to have babies and in a lot of cases they kept the babies, which they should have done in the first case anyway if they wanted to keep them. I blame the parents for a lot of those cases for putting them in there. They shouldn't have been put in there those girls. You know when I hear people talking about the good old days. I'd say the good old days were a myth. You know you had industrial schools and places like that. There was no such thing as the good old days. The days are better now because everything is out in the open. They were terrible times, punishment in schools and so on – I was educated by the Jesuits myself and there was punishment in the Jesuit schools as well. There was a sadist there, a priest, and he would punish you for no reason at all and we had a class reunion there in the last couple of years and they were talking about him and they were treating him as if he was a figure of fun. But he was anything but a figure of fun. I didn't find him funny at all. I thought it was desperate. And I'm not anti-cleric or anything and I wouldn't be anti-religion.

As a child I was even uncomfortable out there, just the feeling of the place alone. My grandmother didn't talk to me to me about it so much because she would have felt that I was too young to discuss it with but I think she felt sorry for the girls who had been put in there as well. She was well educated and she would have been very broad-minded for the times that were in it. She was the matron of Bedford Row. A lot of people won't remember it. Young people won't remember it. But I meet people now my own age who were actually born in Bedford Row, even people older than myself that had been born

there. It was a maternity hospital. It was just at the corner just down from the Savoy Hotel opposite the church and there is a pub on the other side. It was a fairly big hospital. At the time it was a well-known hospital.

[Interview ends]