

Interviewee: Mary Caulway
Interviewers: Casey Gurlitz and Amal Khan
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Location: Assumption College, Worcester, Massachusetts
Transcribers: Casey Gurlitz and Amal Khan
Overseen by: Prof. Carl Robert Keyes and Prof. Caryl Nuñez, Assumption College



Abstract: Mary Caulway was born in 1961 and is from Vestal, New York. She is married to William Caulway and together they have three children. Mary moved to Massachusetts in 1988 and currently resides in Charlton, MA. In the early 2000's Mary began working for the Greater Worcester Land Trust, which is a nonprofit land conservation organization, and she now volunteers with this organization. Since she began working in Worcester, she became very passionate about the city and what it has to offer. Mary is committed to the work she does with the Land Trust and speaks highly of what the organization does for the city of Worcester. Mary earned a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from the State University of New York at Oneonta, then earned her Master's in Wildlife Biology from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Mary reflects on the difficult decision that she had to make when she chose to stay home and raise her children, which caused her to put her career to the side until her kids were older. In this interview, Mary discusses her career, family and friends, her faith, and her appreciation for nature.

Quotation: I would say stick with your career. There's got to be a way, because raising the kids is really, really wonderful, but if you can make it so you can do both... that is awesome... whatever you choose to do, do it.

CG: We are completing a city- wide oral history of the lives of Worcester women aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences based on the goals of the 1850 National Woman's Right Convention in Worcester. We are focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work, and politics/community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with how your education lead you to your career. Thank you for your help with this important project. Miss Caulway, do we have your permission to record your oral history on October 12th, 2017?

MC: You do.

AK: Okay, so we'll first start with asking what your full name is, both maiden and married, if that's okay?

AK & CG: [Laugh]

MC: Sure, Mary. My maiden name is Bayer B-A-Y-E-R, last name is Caulway.

AK: And, when were you born?

MC: October 19th, 1961.

AK: Are you married?

MC: I am.

AK: Okay, and do you have any children?

MC: Three children. (AK: and...) The oldest is Alexandra, she is 20 [pause] five [pause] Sharon is 23, and my son, James, is 22.

AK: Do you have any grandchildren?

MC: No grandchildren.

CG: Sorry, I just wanted to--- what is your husband's name? You said you're married.

MC: William Caulway, or Bill.

CG: [laughs]

AK: What cultures or ethnicities do you identify with, so your family background?

MC: So, we are a very mixed family. My father is German, and then my mother is Italian and Irish [pause] a lot of... my mother is from a very mixed heritage, [laughs] [pause] and I was born in the United States, my parents were born in the United States.

CG: Is there a part of your background that you like feel is the most identifiable for you? Like if that makes sense...

MC: We've mixed in mostly I... German, Italian, and Irish, holidays, you know the German food, that's always just [pause] fun and fattening, [AK & CG laugh] same thing actually with the Italian and the Irish, so my parents blended it very nicely

AK: So, could you tell me more about your parents?

MC: My father, is a very bright man. He, he's a tribologist, he grew up an only child in Queens. His father [pause] worked in a thread factory, putting thread on spools, and his mother stayed home. They were very German, [pause] so my father was an only child, bright he went to some-- he went to some very good private Catholic schools. He went on to St. John's University and then Brown. He has a master's [degree]. My mother grew up, different situation, her family was not well off at all, they were--- she grew up in Pawtucket [Rhode Island]. Her father left her

when she was eight or nine years old, and she had an older sister. So, my, my mother was one of those that if relatives didn't help out and feed her and take care of her, things could have been different. So she, she became very strong and independent early on, she was sort of the adult in the family [laughs]. My grandmother is absolutely wonderful, very happy person. She eventually found someone else, and it all ended up working out. But my mother [pause]--- she went to high school and she went to the community college and got a degree as an x-ray technician. So, she did that for a while. They--- my parents met on a blind date, which is really fun and [pause] they ended up marrying. My father took a job with IBM [International Business Machines]. They moved to Binghamton, New York, where IBM was. [pause] I don't know if that's where IBM started or not, maybe Endicott, New York. So, my father had stayed with IBM throughout his career. My mother [pause] had my oldest brother sort of right away, you know, within a year so. She didn't, she didn't work once she moved to New York, and then, my mother stayed home and raised the four kids, and my father [pause] stayed at IBM the entire time. While he was there, he, [pause] he was very involved with tribology groups, then he went on to have a consulting...

CG: I'm sorry

MC: ... organization

CG: What is tribology?

AK: [mumbles]

MC: It's, oh th- the, where [pause] okay, come back to me Mary...

AK & CG: [Laugh]

MC: It's the, physics [mumbles] the study of wear and abrasion on materials.

AK: Oh, okay.

MC: So, [pause] a big part part of that for IBM was, and I could be wrong on that and I helped... (AK & CG: laugh) He wrote several books and I did the figures for them, but I'm just completely drawing a blank on tribology.

CG: That's okay.

MC: It has to do with the wear of materials, so like what he would have done in IBM would've incorporated that sort of thing into those big computers that they used to have and the typewriters and things.

AK & CG: Mhm.

MC: You know those little parts would fall apart and his job would be to study their--- come up with the research projects to figure out why that typewriter key failed sort of thing

AK: Okay, where did, where have you lived during your life?

MC: I have lived, I mostly lived in Vestal New York. [pause] We lived in a, in a smaller house initially which was fantastic. There was a creek in the backyard, a nature preserve. Then we moved about a mile up the road to a larger house. So, I lived there. My parents, they just sold their house after a pile of years, must be 45 years or so, nope even longer, about 55 years. They just sold their home and moved to an assisted living type place. But I lived in Vestal New York, and then when I was in school, you know I lived in Oneonta, New York, for a few years, and then when I was in grad school I lived in Newcomb, New York, which is in the Adirondack Mountains, and then [pause] moved out here to Massachusetts.

AK: So, when did you come to Worcester officially, like how old were you, do you know the year?

MC:--- It was 1988. [pause] My husband and I married, and he was looking for a job in New York. [pause] I was looking for a job in Massachu- I was living in New York, he was living in Massachusetts and we were trying to find jobs so we could actually live together [laughs].

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: And it just--- he never found anything in New York, I found something in Massachusetts. So, we came out in 1988.

AK: Okay.

MC: Been here, been here since.

AK: Where do you live now?

MC: In Charlton, Massachusetts

AK: Okay, and have you lived in multiple areas of Massachusetts?

MC: When we first moved here, we lived in--- [pause] my husband lived in Framingham for a while, the two of us lived in Northborough, I guess [pause]. We lived in Northborough the whole time.

AK: Okay,

MC: We just went from apartment to apartment.

AK: And do you have other family members that live in the area?

MC: No, we do not.

AK: No? Oh.

MC: Nope, just us.

AK: And, what's your connection to Worcester basically? [clears throat]

MC: I started working with the--- [pause] when my kids were in high school, I decided that I, I wanted to do [pause] something with people and get back to my career sort of thing. Mostly I just really wanted to be out with people in the woods. [pause]. So, the Greater Worcester Land Trust had a job opening for a part- time position, a volunteer and membership coordinator position, and I fit the bill. So I got that job, so I started with them. I think it was 2001, maybe 2000 [pause]. And I was--- worked with them for several years up until maybe two years ago. I decided to go from a paid position to a volunteer position, so then they could use the money that they didn't have to spend on me for somebody that would be in the office and generate membership better, because I was very good with volunteer projects.

AK: Mhm.

MC: Not as good with database management and membership requests and stuff like that...

AK: Okay, and so do you think this city faces any challenges and would you change anything about it? About Worcester?

MC: I love this city. So, this is kind of fun. So, when we, we, lived in Northborough, my husband and I are not city people, at all...

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: He grew up in Great Neck, New York, and he's--- there was no way he was ever going back to a city where there were trains and noises and he just wanted space, and I just never lived in a city.

AK: Mhm.

MC: So, when we moved to Charlton, we hardly ever came into Worcester because to me it was a big scary city and we weren't going to do it. So, you know, we'd have to come in for hospitals or something like that. But, basically we did nothing in the city. And then I got the job with the Land Trust, and I discovered that [pause] Worcester is amazing.

AK: Mhm

MC: It's not as scary as I thought it was [little laugh] and it has a lot to offer. We've actually talked about how maybe we missed, [takes a deep breath] we missed the ticket and bought the house in the wrong location...

AK: [laughs]

MC: because in Worcester, talking with people I've, you know, discovered there are, there are just so many schools. Your--- you can pick a school that's best for your child. There are music programs, there's all kinds of educational components in Worcester that we didn't have, we don't have in Charlton because it's just a small--- it's a small town. [Takes a deep breath]

AK: Hmm.

MC: So, I, I love that about Worcester, I'm sorry we missed it. [pause]. We, of course, love the restaurants, we also discovered there is really good restaurants here.

AK: Yeah.

MC: And we come in for the ---we go to the Hanover Theater, we go to the art museum, and we're just in Mechanics Hall. So, we're discovering all these things because of [pause] my connection with the Land Trust...

AK: Mhm

MC: and talking with people, and we've also discovered that there are--- (pause) there were a few places that we would go to hike, and we never thought of coming into the city to hike, never would do that. We always would go, you know, Wells State Park or any of the other state parks or head west to The Berkshires. But the Land Trust has miles and miles of trails. We have [pause] over 2,000 acres in the city so we come here to hike. I mean, they're, they're not you know, all day hikes, you could wander around all day, if you wanted...

AK: Mhm

MC: ... but, t- to get in the woods and go for a couple miles on a trail, you can do that in Worcester.

AK: Hmm

MC: And it's kind of, neat because you can do that and then you can get off the trail and go eat [laughs]

AK & CG: [laugh] Yeah.

MC: And, and I--- we've also--- I've also noticed the enthusiasm [pause] of people that live in Worcester. The ones that are out there doing things, I mean they love, they love their city, and I think that, that just brings all kinds of wonderful components.

AK: So, have you seen Worcester change overtime?

MC: I have seen [pause- loud noise outside the room] [laughs]

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: Yeah, now you have that in the background, I don't know how you get rid of it. [laughs]

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: That's funny.

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: [pause] Probably a skewed perspective because I was not a city person, there, there are places that I would have avoided anyways.

AK: Hmm.

MC: But, I mean the Canal District, I can see the changes [pause] taking place there [pause], Main Street and that I-- you know, stART on the Street. It seems like Worcester is doing more and more [pause] not cultural things, more and more, putting together more and more things that attract people to the area. And there are fewer places where I would say, "Oh I don't want to go there." But now I'm willing to [pause] park on Green Street and walk around a little bit, walk around Main Street, wander around where the Hanover Theater is. So, I, I haven't seen anything negative, it seems like everything is going in the right direction.

AK: Oh, good okay. You kind of touched upon this, but what distinct characteristics make Worcester the place that it is? Like, do you want to elaborate a little bit more?

MC: I... well [pause] I think its smaller size and [pause] there's also a, a diversity. I'm--- you have sort of like your Italian neighborhoods, you've got that wonderful historic component and some old buildings. [pause] And somehow Worcester has managed [pause] to keep a lot of the open space. Their parks are amazing and then thrown in what the Land Trust has done, I sound like a commercial for the Land Trust.

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: But, but the, [pause] the, [pause] the foresight for people to realize that those areas are important to cities. You know years ago--- I think that that's incredible that those people came up with that, that the city founders and whoever works in the organization...

AK: Mhm.

MC: You know, that they, they know that that stuff is important, and they continue to know that which amazes me, you know, there doesn't seem to be a lot of arguing about, oh we should put condos on top of Green Hill Park.

AK: Mhm.

MC: You know? They want to expand the golf course a little bit but, in general the city realizes that that stuff is important.

AK: Okay.

MC: And I love that some of the buildings are getting renovated and being used for something useful.

AK: Mhm.

MC: And they, they also have so many organizations, [pause], you know, the going green and growing your food locally, that kind of stuff. [pause] I forget what the question was [laughs]

AK: Th--- just the characteristics that make Worcester...

MC: I think because it is small enough.

AK: Yeah, okay.

MC: And it's not very complicated really, you don't have to [pause] spend a lot of time getting here. [laughs]

AK: Mhm .

MC: You know, there's not a--- [pause] I guess if you're in Boston, you could take a train into Worcester, but you probably wouldn't do that, but Worcester is very accessible.

AK: Mhm, okay, and what do you think women's experiences have been like in Worcester generally?

MC: I think that they must--- well...

CG: [Mumbles] [Phones rings]

MC: Oh yeah, does it run out after a little while?

CG: No, someone is calling me, sorry.

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: It's okay, it will give me time to answer, think of an answer.

CG: [laughs]

MC: [Long pause] Because back in the day we'd have to like a big camera there...

AK & CG: Mhm.

MC: and it would be awkward. [laughs]

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: [pause] I--- so I can't speak for the early days, you know.

AK: Mhm.

MC: For women's rights and stuff like that...But (pause) right now for, for women it, it seems like--- (pause) I don't see much difference between women and men as far as their opportunities in Worcester. I--- it almost seems like there are more women organizing activities and the big events in the city, they're the ones that, you know, maybe keep the libraries going. I know stART on the Street, the organizers I believe are mostly women with that. So, I--- and then there is the art groups. I don't see much of a difference. I don't, I don't seem to ever hear someone complain like, "Oh my gosh, this stinks I'm a woman and someone is not going to listen to me".

AK: Mhm

MC: I don't see that or hear that.

AK: Hmm, that's good.

MC: I-

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: I don't know if I'm just in a little bubble by myself, but the women just go ahead and do (pause) whatever they, whatever their passion is.

AK: Mhm.

MC: I- I don't see anyone saying, "No you can't".

AK: Okay.

CG: I'm going to ask you some questions about your education.

MC: Okay.

CG: Where did you attend school? So maybe if you want to start with like from high school to...

MC: Okay

CG: ... wherever you've gone.

MC: I went to [pause] a small Catholic school in, in, near home and I [laughs] actually went to Catholic school from kindergarten on. And it was fabulous because it was small, you know you kind of got to do everything. You got to know your teachers, well nuns and priests, very well. I-- my high school education was, [pause] well fondly remembered.

CG: What was the name of the high school?

MC: Seton Catholic Central. I was Catholic Central, then we merged with Seton because, of course, there weren't enough students, so we all merged together. But, you know, it was, it was like an Assumption College thing, but smaller. And we were younger, we did mission trips, we would have retreats and they--- I was very good friends with several of the, [pause] the sisters, it was all around a very good experience. I don't know what Catholic school is like now, but my education was very nice. I mean the only thing lacking was a pool [laughs].

AK & CG: Mhm. [laugh]

MC: And then I went from there to--- My parents had a set sum of money that they would--- they gave each of us kids to go to college. And being of a frugal nature, I opted to go to the state school so that I wouldn't have to owe a pile of money, which is nothing compared to now I mean...

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: I think it--- the tuition was was \$2,500 a year so for \$10,000 you know, I pretty much went to college for four years and got a car so... [laughs]

AK & CG: [laugh]

AK: Oh, wow.

MC: I'm dating myself but I--- not that much, it's just like it's become astronomical now. But I went to the State University of New York at Oneonta, and I got a biology degree there, and I was very, very fortunate. But it was a small program, the professors were wonderful. So, again it was one of those where, you know, we'd have dinner with the professors, we'd do things on weekends, it was just--- I, I was very lucky...

CG: Mhm.

MC: ... with the, the path I took. [laughs] And then I, I had one professor there, Dr. John New who--- [pause] he was just amazing, he really inspired me. I, I [pause] found my love of birds when I was there. I was either going to do environmental chemistry or, [pause] or I didn't know what, you know, I wanted to be a wildlife ranger. But anyways, he inspired me and continued to encourage me to kind of [pause] do what I wanted, which was eventually to study birds. And because he was a well- known ornithologist, he sort of helped me get into the graduate schools that I wanted. And he helped me get th, the grants that I wanted--- th--- not that I wanted, but I, I needed in order to go to school. So, he was very key in my career.

CG: Mhm

MC: Sadly, he passed away just before I started grad school because he had [pause] caught malaria and he was a Christian Scientist and he refused treatment.

AK: Hmm

MC: So, that was like a big, a big sadness around that time of my life because I felt so bad and was so mad that, there was medicine available, why would you do this? But.. .

AK: Mhm

CG: Right.

MC: He was instrumental in [pause] getting me on the next step which was--- I went to [pause] I--- because of his influence and his recommendation, I had several colleges to choose from and each one program came with a grant. One of them was either study crows at a college near my parents, study wood storks in Georgia, or songbirds in the Adirondacks and [laughs] I went with that one

AK: Mhm.

MC: So, I went to the college, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and was with them. [pause] I was on the long program for my master's, took me like five years, because I--- [laughs] it was fabulous. That college had a satellite office in the Adirondacks, they had a forest preserve. So, I did three years of data collection and then [bracelets hit across table] you know, I got to live up there and it was just--- the Adirondacks were beautiful, I lived in a lodge on a lake so there was absolutely no reason to rush it [laughs].

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: So, I ended up with a Master's in Wildlife Biology. While I was working on that, I became-- [pause] my [pause] my skillset was li--- closer to like habitat management and habitat evaluation because it was a... Even though it was a forest preserve, it was a, [pause] it was a forest preserve in that you--- we used it to study [pause] forestry techniques and how they impacted habitat and wildlife. So, my big thing was coming up with computer models that would show you how, you know, you take, you take out 50 percent of these trees, what's it going to do to the birds later on? So, we--- that was like the beginning stages of habitat modeling so it was, it was kind of exciting.

CG: [laughs] Okay.

MC: I'm babbling

AK & CG: No [laugh]

AK: Don't worry.

MC: That's what I tend to do

AK: [laughs]

CG: Did you face any particular challenges during your education, would you say?

MC: [pause] No, [pause] which is kind of weird because since I, I got the call to do this, I was trying to think like how, [pause] as a woman, [pause] like, did--- did I have any troubles along the way, and I, I didn't. And I don't know if it's because I mean, of course, there were more men in the field because I went to the forestry school, and most of the foresters were guys. But there were also women, and even in my undergrad, it was, [laughs] it was the women, we were the ones that organized the ornithology club, we were the ones that organized events. I don't know where the guys were. [laughs]

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: But, I was never--- it was never [pause] like, a “I can do this because I’m a woman.” I was just surrounded by women that were doing things anyways. So I, I think I was a little sheltered in that because even when I went, you know, to grad school, [pause] we were not treated any differently, housing of course the women were separated from the, the men. But, [pause] we weren’t--- it didn’t seem at all different [pause] and even when I was working, I never ran into a [pause] “she’s--- we don’t want her on this project because she’s a woman.” I mean, I was, I was nine months pregnant and I was still doing fieldwork for consulting organizations, and I don’t remember anyone ever looking like, “Oh my gosh, I don’t know if she can do this kind of thing.” Course they were worried what would happen with the project for maternity leave, but I was very lucky.

CG: Mhm,

MC: I hung out with the right women I guess, I don’t know. [laughs]

AK: Yeah.

CG: [laughs] Upon finishing your formal education, what did you see as your options?

MC: [pause] [sighs] I had--- [sighs] I was torn between [pause] wanting to be a real naturalist you know, and study birds and end up in a probably a remote part of the country, just out in the woods, and doing the things that I love, versus getting married and, [pause] and knowing that I would have to give some of that up, because my husband would not be able to find a job where ever I wanted to go. So, the biggest challenge was making the decision to compromise a little bit and skip the living in the woods kind of thing and go with something more normal sort of, that’s what I opted for. Well, that was the biggest challenge

CG: Yeah

MC: Why couldn’t I have done both?

AK: Yeah,

MC: And I suppose some people could have,

CG: Mhm,

MC: But in our situation it didn’t seem like it would work that way.

CG: So you had spoken of a professor who was a big mentor to you

MC: Mhm,

CG: Did you have any other kind of large support networks that were important to you or any other types of mentoring that have been important to you? Through your education or in general...

MC: Well i- in high school, the you know--- [pause] Sister Mary Ellen Doyle was amazing and I can remember Sister Joan like sixth grade, you know at that time it was--- you never wanted to be real smart because the boys--- [____? , bracelets hit the table] it was just weird to be smart and, and I was dumbing myself down. I can remember this because she took me aside and she, she talked to me and said, "You know, I don't know if basically you're being an idiot."

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: "I don't know why you're, you know, pretending not to be able to do this stuff when you are able to do this".

CG: Mhm.

MC: So, she maybe is the first one that put me on the right track, I mean maybe it would've come to me eventually, but if she hadn't [laughs] taken me aside, mortified me...

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: you know, by taking me out... Because I can still remember it, but it was Sister Joan that said you know, "What are you doing? You don't need to be stupid"

CG: [laughs]

MC: So, I don't know if I eventually would've figured it out, but I think she had something to do with it.

AK & CG: Mhm.

MC: Then in grad school, [pause] I think it was the other graduate students, because we all worked well together, we all--- you know, if someone was interested in deer populations or tracking moose, it was exciting stuff and it all, it all went together. So, if you were having like a down day and thinking like, "Oh my gosh, my research is going nowhere," there was--- there were grad students to say, "Nope, it's alright."

CG: Mhm.

MC: And, so I think it was the other grad students...

CG: Okay, I just want to ask--- so you talked about your interest with birds. Is there anything that sparked that interest or just something you always wanted?

MC: I- I remember two instances like when I, when I was younger there was--- I heard this meowing you know in th,- in the woods, and I thought it was a cat. And I thought, “Well if I can get this cat or kitten to follow me home, kind of then my parents will let me keep it.

AK: [laughs]

MC: So, you know--- and it was different then because the--- like I said, I was--- I had a nature preserve behind us and there was a lovely creek. And it was a little different in that we were all very comfortable in the woods and our parents--- it was a different time, so we weren't--- we didn't have cellphones. Parents weren't worried that someone was going to take us, like we were just totally free. So, I remember going through [laughs] the woods, all the brush and everything, and I finally find the source of the meowing and it's a bird, which just shocked me because I--- well it wasn't my cat that I wanted. [laughs]

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: And I was just amazed that it was a bird and then, [pause] another time I was--- I had gone wandering around the nature preserve and I decided to just sit down, probably snack or probably smoke a cigarette.

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: Yeah, maybe, but that was also a place where you could smoke cigarettes was in the woods. But I was just sitting there and a chickadee came down. I didn't know it was a chickadee, but--- or I was singing, I don't know, I just know this chickadee came really, really close to me and it was so much fun to watch. And I think it was more the chickadee that sparked my interest. And then, Dr., Dr. New--- I mean he showed me this world of birding that I had no idea existed because nobody in my family did that kind of stuff. My friends weren't into birding, I didn't have any--- [pause] I didn't know about organizations, you know, that would go out birding. I didn't know there were [pause] groups for kids that liked to bird, and maybe there weren't I don't know.

CG: [laughs] Okay.

MC: But, it was just another one of those little steps and then when they combine the birds with like the forest

CG: Yeah.

MC: it's like wow this is a great few years in school [laughs]

AK & CG: [laugh]

MC: How can you go wrong?

AK: Right.

CG: So, I am going to move on to some questions about work.

MC: Mhm

CG: What was your first job?

MC: My f- [pause] related to my career or just like the first job out of college?

CG: Either? Both?

AK & CG & MC: [laugh]

MC: First job out of college...So it took me forever to find something in--- related to wildlife, so I ended up--- I was about to give up and then I, I had to move back to my parents'. I had gotten my master's, defended my thesis and stuff, and I didn't have a job. So, I lived with my parents for a little bit, and I worked with a tech agency and they--- I ended up working for Universal Instruments in Kirkwood, New York maybe? And it was something I had absolutely--- I was clue, I was clueless about most things because I was very much science and biology, so I didn't know what was going on with the rest of the world. So, I have this temp job and I processed orders for these big huge machines that this company made and they'd ship all over the world. So I was talking to people from Germany, Siemens organization and it--- they were machines that I didn't even understand what they were, but they were big, big machines that you'd put on like a production line and then, you know, then they had to be transported by air. And it was phenomenal because there were so many regulations and there were so many little parts to all these machines and it was very, very interesting. So, that was my first job and I almost kept it because they wanted to hire me [pause] because I, I also had an affinity for that probably because it was a little bit like a physics, math kind of thing. You had to match stuff up and it was interesting. You're talking to people from all over the world, [pause] and my husband interviewed there but they didn't have a job for him. So, at the same time [pause] I found a job in Massachusetts, so I had to let that one go, but I almost ended up as an order processor at Universal Instruments which would have been different. [laughs]

AK: Yeah .[laughs]

MC: I was about to settle basically.

AK: Yeah.

CG: So, what other jobs have you had and then maybe leading up to what your current job is?

MC: So, then the first job I got in Massachusetts was with Wetlands Preservation. It was a consulting firm in Georgetown, and I got really, really lucky because I graduated in 1988 or '87, one of those. And in 1988 the Wetlands Protection Act had an addition, a new regulation added that habitat evaluations had to be done by certified wetland- [corrects herself] wildlife biologists, and that was me. [laughs] So, I was freshly trained, inexpensive, and I with this job with a small group, it was the owner and a PhD [pause] plant person. That's the wrong, that's the wrong title [laughs]. So, it was just the three of us. So I was there for maybe a year or so, and then it got--- I sort of felt like we were going in the wrong direction [bracelets on the table], because it was just three of us. So, we were always doing everything the way we thought it was supposed to be done, [bracelet hits against the table] and I wanted to get more knowledge and find out whether or not what we were doing was correct. So, then I got a job at the BSC group in Boston and [pause] commuted from Charlton, I would travel forever because I would get up at like five, get on the train for a couple hours, then walk to the office. And it was really good experience, it was just what I was looking for and I must have stayed there a year and a half or so, maybe less, because about that time there was also a downturn in development, so my hours were reduced to part- time. So, itI was a good opportunity to find something else. So, then I ended up with a great organization called IEP, in Northborough. It was right down the road from our apartment. It was a company that was owned and run by four or five friends. A hydrologist, a biologist, a wetlands biologist, a geologist, maybe one other person, [pause] anyways they were a great group. They did things very, very well. So I stayed with them until I left when my oldest daughter was born. And then I went back with them a little bit part- time after Sharon was born, but it was really hard to do both. And I was able to manage the projects very well. So, I said no to that because I didn't want to leave on them a really sloppy side. [Pause] So the wetlands career, wetlands wildlife career ended for a little while. Then I did invoicing for them from home, from the mudroom (laughs), and I'd have to go in every once in a while at night. So I'd go in from like 8 to midnight and do my stuff. And then you know with all the advances in technology and computers, I never had to go into the office. I think I did that for like 15 years part -time. And it was kind of fun because the person that--- [pause] one of my best friends from that time, and I'm still really, really good friends with her, I used to be her boss, Jan, and then it switched roles, she became my boss. So it was really kind of cool. [pause] And then, and then I overlapped with the billing a little bit with the land trust. Because it was about that time towards the end, where you know my kids were all on with their own lives, that I really wanted to get back into the wildlife stuff again and the land trust job was open. And it worked out really well.

CG: Ok. So ,what has this work meant to you? I think we can talk about your current job at the land trust.

MC: It's been fabulous. [Pause] I work with volunteers and volunteers are amazing, enthusiastic,

and like your passions are the same because they're volunteering for the organizations that you're helping out. Working with the land trust I think has rejuvenated me, because I didn't--- I sort of thought that that part of my life was over and I'd be back to you know the regular life. But it's kind of given me the opportunity to get back on the trails to do something really, really useful, and organizing volunteer groups, being part of conserving land and then stewarding, helping to steward the land that's in Worcester. It's been wonderful, because I'm not--- I'm no longer paid for it, so it's not that it was a high stress job anyways because it was really more about making sure volunteers are happy, being out in the woods, but now there's more time to--- while I'm out in the woods with everyone, look at the birds, point out stuff that I used to know... So, it's all--- everything that had disappeared in my head is coming forward again, and it's great because I can kind of share it with the volunteers, and I can use that skill a little bit to maybe do something useful with the land trust.

AK: Could you like just summarize a little bit, like what the land trust actually like is like what it...

MC: Oh! Sorry!

AK: It's okay.

MC: It's the Greater Worcester Land Trust, and it's a land conservation organization. It's a very-- it's a small nonprofit organization. There's one and a half staff members, the rest is done by volunteers. It's 30 years old, it was started 30 years ago, by--- [pause] the idea was from a couple women actually...

AK: Oh wow.

MC: who were [pause] moms, and I don't know if they had other jobs as well. But they saw the land disappearing very quickly in Worcester and they didn't want that to happen. They wanted something to be left, so they met with some other people and the others thought it was a great idea. So, they've been conserving land for that long, and once it's conserved, the land is open to the public. So, it's kind of a win. And then what we try to do is, we try to put trails on the land so that people will go in the woods and kind of learn to love the land. So that once somebody finds a loophole in all the regulations and they decide that oh wait you missed this, we can actually put condos up here, that somebody will still care kind of. And we really, really want families and kids, we want kids to be out in the woods...

AK: Yeah.

MC: ...and be comfortable, because it's--- you kind of need that [pause] little bit of green space...

CG: Mhm.

MC: ...so that's what that organization does. And it's run by the board of directors [who] are volunteers. It's a really--- it's a great organization. Most towns at this point have land trusts because it's a way of trying to set some land aside before it all gets taken.

CG: So, it's a little bit of a shift in topic but, you touched upon it a little bit..What were your primary responsibilities in terms of housework and childcare, when you were working?

MC: [laughs] Well [sighs] my husband's job, well it was kind of funny we battled a little bit, I shouldn't say battled.

CG: [laughs]

MC: But when our Alexandra, our first daughter, was born, I had a really good paying job and I was on the--- I was--- it was a small enough organization I was headed toward being manager within my group. So, I was paid much more than my husband, but my husband worked for EMC Corporation and he was doing well there. My income was higher, but his potential, I think, was a little bit more, and also there was starting to be another downturn in development. So, the chance of my job sticking around as full- time was a little more slim, and EMC was doing very well. So, I got to stay home [bracelets hit the table] [laughs]. And my husband's career took off, so he, he, travelled a lot. So, the kids were mine and pretty much the house was mine. But we, we did all right. We had planned it so we only needed one income to live on [bracelets hits against the table] and I, as it turns out, I think that I would've not been as happy going to work all day and then coming home, and missing out on what the kids were doing...

CG: Mhm

MC: because it was really, a blast. I mean it was hard work, but it was so cool to be able to see them when they discovered reading. You know, it was just absolutely tremendous. But we would go on hikes and I would take them fishing and we would do all the things that I like to do until they discovered they didn't like it as much. [laughs]

CG & AK: [Laughs]

MC: So, a lot of the first time respons--- the home responsibilities were mine, because he, my husband, had the job that required more travel, more office hours.

CG: Mhm. How have you balanced different priorities, responsibilities, roles and interests in your life?

MC: We're finally figuring that out. [Laughs] I'd say it was definitely a little unbalanced, unbalanced initially, when the kids were younger because you know there were times where I was like, "That's not fair because i'm still home with the kids and you are, you know, at a

conference in Texas.” That’s not as exciting. But, somehow we learned to balance stuff, I think. What we--- so we pretty much spent our entire lives around the kids, because they were both our priorities and we both agreed on that. So, our weekends, you know, we’re doing kid things, we thought it was very important to have our families involved. And nobody lived around us so that was either travelling or [pause] relatives coming to stay with us so they could be with the kids. So, we emphasized being with the kids and making sure that they had connections with our families. So that took up a lot of time, and then as they got older, things just got busier. But we somehow managed to involve our interests with theirs. So, I got very involved with the Cub Scouts and then the Boy Scouts, which was maybe weird for a mom to do but I was the one that liked hiking and backpacking. [bracelet hits against the table] And I could take it, so I was the chairperson of that for a while. [Pause] I managed to jump in on like the--- there’s a small nature preserve in Charlton, I was on that board of directors for a while. So, we managed to kind of slip in things that we were interested in, yet still while keeping the connection with the kids.

CG: Mhm.

MC: And now that our kids are older and on their own, now we’re really finding--- going back to our original interests. Like I was able to volunteer with the land trust now, rather than being paid and being very fortunate for that. And that’s because of all the early years of being frugal and my husband picking the right job kind of thing. So, now we’re trying to get back. My husband’s involved with the Green Mountain Club, and we’re trying to really find the volunteer things that mean the most to us, instead of kind of just hopping around.

CG: How do you feel about the choices you’ve made in your life? Do you have any regrets?

MC: [sighs] I still want to be that ranger out in the woods, you know. [laughs]

CG & AK: [laughs]

MC: I--- [pause] we’ve certainly--- I’ve certainly made mistakes as a parent. I’m like, “Ugh shoot, I missed something, I made the wrong decision there.” So, there are some parenting decisions that I regret. [Pause] and I, [pause] I sometimes think I regret not keeping my career, [playing with her bracelet] not going back to work at least part- time and figuring out how to balance a career and raise the kids, because I think it would have been more helpful for my daughters [pause] and James to see that mom can do this. And mom [pause] mom is actually smart. You know, instead of --- [pause] I mean they could see me doing all the PTO [Parent Teacher Organization] stuff, but I’m, I am sorry, [bracelet hits against the table] pretty sure I’m sorry that I didn’t keep up with at least part- time work [pause] because I--- and I think that would have given them time away from me and time to [pause] form their own group, [pause] you know, the three of them together. And I think that they would’ve, they would’ve had more responsibilities. [bracelet hits against the table] You know, they probably would have had to cook their own dinners at six, so maybe that.

AK: Okay, so now moving on to kind of like politics and community involvement. Do you consider yourself active like politically?

MC: [pause] I am not.

AK: No?

MC: I'm one of those people behind the scenes. I'm [pause] I'm not very good with that at all.

AK: Okay.

MC: Like I will, I will quietly join like the Charlton Land Trust [bracelet hits against the table] and if need be, I'll get up and speak about something, but in general, [recording device static] no.

AK: Okay. And you obviously have been involved in a lot of community and volunteer work...

MC: Yup.

AK: ...like the land trust

MC: [mumbles]

AK: So, have you done more that like just the land trust? Are you doing other community groups?

MC: When the...

AK: Or volunteer groups?

MC: ...when the kids were younger, I did PTO. You know, I ran the school store, did the library, did all those parenting things. [Pause] So now I'm getting back into bird watching. I'm trying to do more citizen science projects. [Pause] I've been running up to Mount Wachusett to help count hawks, do [pause] bird feeder watch stuff. I'm trying to get involved with more birding related things.

CG: Okay.

MC: I got a slight pet peeve about solar fields [laughs] all over the place and on old fields. So, I'm kind of thinking of becoming political about that, and jumping in and saying stop, but it needs--- I need to be more educated. And I need a lot of energy for something like that. So now it's just kind of smaller things. [Pause] And I'm finding that I'm doing more because I have more time. We've had a lot of, a lot of deaths in our, among our family, in our family and among our friends. And I'm realizing the value of just communicating one on one with a friend, actually

spending time chatting with someone. And it, it's not a huge thing, but I like that I have the chance to talk to someone in the grocery store, if they feel like talking. You know?

CG: Mhm.

AK: Yeah.

MC: I think I've finally realized the importance of people [laughs].

AK: So, like your organization's main goals would be like to preserve wildlife but like do you specifically focus on like birds, with your organization?

MC: I didn't originally, because my job was more to organize volunteers for trail work and clean up and stuff like that. I am interested in the birds on the properties, so I've sort of been thinking about surveying each of the properties in the spring and in the fall, and bringing out groups to see if anyone wants to bird watch with me I just need to up my skills a little bit.

AK: Yeah. And what do you think you've accomplished? Like what are your group's major accomplishments do you think?

MC: [Sighs] [pause] Besides the quantifiable acreage that they've conserved, [pause] allowing people to become involved and connected with the land is huge. I think that's one of the things they're really good at.

AK: Okay. And so, what do you think religion has done for your life? Like what role has it played?

MC: It's been a huge, huge impact on my life. [Pause] If I hadn't gone to the Catholic schools, my experiences, I think, would have been totally different. I mean I would have gone to mass and I would have done the regular thing that you're supposed to do as a Catholic. But I probably wouldn't have found as much meaning. And then just the opportunities, [pause] the mission trips that I used to do really showed me how fortunate I was and that I know I just mentioned it, I finally discovered people matter. But I think I have known that all along. [Someone walked by and distracted her] Dog? [laughs]

AK: I don't know. [laughs]

CG: [laughs]

MC: We're just talking too much. But I've always had faith. So, in times of trouble or in times of amazing things happening, I've either begged for something or I've been thankful for something. But I've always had faith. And that's just been a huge guiding force...

AK: Mhm.

MC: ...and strength all along the way.

CG: Yeah.

MC: I'm not as good about, I am like your backseat Catholic now. I am not as good about keeping up with the traditions that I used to love. And I think because I am going back to where I see God in other things not just the church, like the building.

AK: Okay and now moving onto health. How have your health issues impacted your life or those in your family?

MC: So, [sighs][pause] the last few years haven't been great. We've had people die young. My parents are doing well which is great.

AK: Okay.

MC: My sister has had health issues. My sister-in-law was just diagnosed with stage four lung cancer, and like she's our age. She's completely organic, it doesn't make any sense at all. So, that's where faith comes in.

AK: Yeah.

MC: So, all those things, other people's health problems have made myself and my husband realize that life actually is short, so we've got to make the most of it now. So, we've been, we've been fortunate that we're on the healthy end and we've sort of been given this continuous reminder it can be over at any moment, so do what we can now. So we've been--- (pause)(bracelet hits against the table) that's kind of where we're headed. Actually, not even headed, that's where we are now because we really are making the most of the day. My husband's health is good. My, [pause] my son was in a bad car accident last year, just a year ago, a horrific accident and, you know, [pause] he was in the hospital for a while and he's had some health issues because of it. Sharon was in the hospital, she was sick most of last year because she has Crohn's and that's just a chronic annoying disease. So, I sat in a hospital last year from Labor Day to just about Christmas. And it was, [pause] it was hard, but they were doing okay. Like they were both going to be okay, thanks to the genius of doctors and, you know, people like that. So, it took a little while to recover from that, but again it was just like every day we're thankful that they're both alive. So, we've been given this weird gift in a kind of a horrendous way.

AK: Yeah.

MC: And now like, I have very bad arthritis. [Pause] But one of my--- both of my brothers have

rheumatoid arthritis. One brother has it very bad, so I feel lucky that I'm not bad. I don't know why I don't have it. So, whenever I complain about the arthritis that I have, [bracelet hits against the table] I'm like now that's ridiculous, I can just get up and move, that's all I have to do. So, we've--- and I don't know sometimes, I feel like I've been blessed a little too much.

AK: [Mumbles] What are your experiences in accessing quality, affordable healthcare?

MC: [Sighs] So my husband retired two years ago and our biggest concern was healthcare. And at the time Sharon had to be on our healthcare because she wasn't employed yet. So that was a huge, huge factor. So, we made sure that we would have enough money to be able to afford healthcare. And that's our biggest--- we planned on our biggest expense so \$1500 to \$1700. More than a mortgage, [laughs] but it's, it's so important. The healthcare now we have Mass Health Connector, and it's worked out really, really well.[recording device static] We're fortunate with that, but we have to make sure, it's a little complicated because we want to make sure--- [pause] it's weird, if you don't make much money, then your health care--- like even though Mass Health Connector takes care of you, your level of care is not great. So you want to make sure that you make enough money, so that you can be on the Connector but you can be on the connector at a different level, so that you can [pause] see doctors that you want to see, if anything goes wrong. So, we struggle with that. We definitely worry what's going to happen. And I [pause] I don't know what is going to happen. Right now, we're in a good place. If things change, it might mean that we have to go back to work to either pay, [pause] if the costs are way too much. I mean we had planned on \$1500 to \$1700, but if it changes and it's up to three thousand, then we're not going to skimp on it.

AK: And are you responsible for anyone else's health besides yours?

MC: No. Nope.

CG: So, you had touched upon how faith is really important to you. Would you say that's what gets you through the tough times? Or if there's any other things that get you through tough times? And what kind of thoughts keep you going?

MC: Faith is right up there. I think that's the [pause] biggest thing I turn to when things are really, really hard. So, I have that, but then I have my husband and we work well together in times of trouble. One of us holds the other up kind of. Like last year, he was the one that kind of kept it all together, [pause] but if he falls apart then I--- we balance each other really well with that, but both of us have faith. So, we--- if I need it for strength, then I go for that. If I need it to say thank you for something, so we both have that. And then my sister has jumped in when things are really hard. She's unhealthy herself, she has some health issues, but it's kind of weird if she sees both of us, Bill and I falling apart, she jumps in. But really, it's mostly faith and my husband.

CG: How...

MC: Plus I have some really good girlfriends!

AK & CG: [laughs]

MC: A couple good, close girlfriends. And though they are, [pause] they're wonderful.

AK: Mhm.

CG: How would you define success in your life? And have you--- [pause], has this definition changed for you over time?

MC: It has changed. I mean years, [pause] years ago it would have been--- success would have been being somebody, being recognized as you know somebody in the birding world and the habitat specialist like, that was where I wanted to be. The certificates, being a wildlife biologist-- I worked really hard for that and that was what I wanted to be. [pause] But now it doesn't matter so much. Our idea of success has definitely changed. It's not so much about the career, as it [pause] as it is, I don't know, we don't even really think of being successful honestly because it doesn't seem to matter. So, I guess it's kind of, I guess it's changed and now it's just disappeared [laughs].

CG: [laughs]

AK: So, what would you say like would matter? Like you said success wouldn't matter.

MC: This sounds so trite, but really going through the day either enjoying the beauty, it just sounds like a Hallmark card...

AK: No, it's okay.

MC: ...the beauty of the day. [pause]. Like I'm doing a land trust thing this afternoon with the Holy Cross baseball team. Me doing that and working with them and sharing some time with them and doing something productive, I would by the end of the day say, "Wow I'm tired and this was actually a great day." I don't know if it was successful but we kind of--- [pause] yeah just we really do kind of go just one day at a time. I mean it's great if I get to the gym like I'm supposed to, that's great and I guess that would be successful. [laughs]

CG & AK: [Laughs]

MC: If I lost 50 pounds that would be successful [laughs], but you know we don't care that much anymore, [Pause] the two of us, we're bums.

AK: [Laughs]

CG: Based on your life experience what advice would you give to women of today and future generations?

MC: [Sighs] I would say stick with your career. There's got to be a way. Because raising the kids is really, really wonderful, but if you can make it so you can do both, [pause] that is awesome. [Pause] Yeah [mumbles] and then just kind of like concentrate, like do what you want to do. Don't do it because other women ---[pause] you want to be on board with what other women are doing if, whatever you choose to do, do it.

CG: Okay. Now that we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of women that has been recorded in the past, what should we include?

MC: I think it's--- [pause] I think women's childhoods are interesting. And I think that those are changing, very different throughout the years. Mine was different than what, you know, my daughters had, and part of that was because I was terrified that something would happen to them. So, I can't even imagine what growing up as a little girl now is like. Do you, are you able to ever just go, you know, take your bike and ride around the block? [pause] I think the way they grow up when they're younger...

CG: Okay. Is there anyone else we should talk to? Like any suggestions?

MC: Other women?

CG: Yeah.

MC: Well [sighs] this woman would die

CG & AK: [laughs]

MC: Her name is Jackie Lynn and she--- [pause] I met her through the land trust and this woman is amazing. She's maybe a little older than me. She's--- she and her husband I'm pretty sure are retired. I don't know what she did beforehand, but this woman she leads organized groups of women, I don't know if she is just exclusive to women or that's just who shows up, but she takes them on land trust properties. She takes them on hikes, and these are women who would not have gone out in the woods otherwise. So, she does this all year long. She has created trail maps for the land trust, beautiful trail maps and she shares them with us. She's put together a hiking guide for Worcester, and she doesn't--- she's just very quiet behind the scenes. She helps out [pause] the Greater Worcester Land Trust, but she's also helping out Mass Audubon, she's also helping out the yoga group, she's phenomenal. She would absolutely die.

CG & AK: [laughs]

MC: But this woman, she's a photographer, she, she's the one that helps to put together our calendars because we're using her pictures. Like she's...

CG: Mhm.

MC: She's absolutely amazing.

CG: Ok.

MC: She doesn't like dogs.

CG & AK: [Laughs]

MC: That's the only negative thing...

AK: [Laughs] Negative thing.

MC: ...and she would have a fit. But she is absolutely phenomenal. And also one of these, she doesn't do it, I don't know she just does it.

CG: Alright so we're going to move back to a few more questions about you. Who were your role models when you were growing up? And do you have any role models now?

MC: Role models... [pause]. Well it was kind of weird because we didn't watch TV. [Pause] I remember really liking my neighbor, Elsa Isa [ph], she was from Sweden and she was like a strong courageous woman, very mild mannered, she spoke well. As a kid, I remember thinking it'd be so neat to be like Mrs. Isa [ph] [Bracelet hits against the table] because she's so poised and she's so gentle and so I guess she would be one of my role models.

CG: Okay. How would you define feminism? And do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not?

MC: I guess [pause] feminism [pause]... It's kind of weird, feminism to me is sort of like women [pause] proving to others that they can do anything that they--- despite being a woman--- they can do whatever men can do. But I never think of it like despite being women. I don't, I don't think of women and men, I think of individuals. So sometimes I guess I am not a feminist because I'm not actively out there saying well I'm a woman look what I can do. I've never gone for that, but I've, I've never been in a position though where I've had to say I'm a woman and I'm not being treated fairly.

CG: Mhm.

MC: So I'm kind of biased.

CG: Okay. If you could change one thing about how society views women, what would it be?

MC: I don't ever like the way, [pause] say you know you're a woman and you're as sex objects.

AK: Mhm.

MC: Like if you want to wear your bra on the top of a mountain, like your sports bra, like that's that's fine, but men looking at you like it's sexy, that irritates me, and I think that's wrong. So maybe that's, that is a bit of feminism in there.

CG: [laughs]

MC: I don't know

CG: Okay. That's it for our questions. Is there anything else you want to add in?

MC: No, thank you very much! I am absolutely thrilled, and I know at some point I [recording device static] need to spend some time looking at some of these because some women have done amazing things

AK: Mhm.

MC: And women have done some--- [bracelet hits the table] I mean when you think of women [pause] in the early 1900's, you know and what they had to do to raise a family that's really hard work.

CG: Mhm.

MC: This is much easier [laughs], much easier.