

Interviewee: Patricia True
Interviewers: Carolyn Kriso and Kristin Pancotti
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Transcriber: Kristin Pancotti



Abstract: Patricia True is 67 years old at the time of this interview and lives in Worcester with her son. She attended school in Worcester and Fitchburg and worked in hospitals, funeral homes, restaurants, and banks. In this interview she discusses her parents, growing up in Worcester, the discrimination that she and other women faced in the workplace, her community involvement.

CK: So, today is Monday, October 16th and Carolyn and Kristin are checking consent with Patricia True to make sure that...is it alright if we tape record this oral history interview?

PT: Yes.

CK: Okay. So, we're completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women, aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the 1850's National Women's Rights Convention that was actually held here in Worcester in 1850, there were three areas of focus, which were education, health, work, and politics or community involvement. And we want to focus today on your experiences with work, both paid and unpaid. So, the interview today will also be used for our Gender Studies term paper at Clark University, as well as the Worcester Women's Oral History Project. Thank you for your help!

PT: Oh, you're quite welcome.

CK: So, we'll start with kind of more general family questions. So what is your full maiden name and your married name?

PT: My full maiden name is Patricia, and it's Felicia, and it's K-r-z-i-n-o-w-k, Krzinowk.

CK: Ok, and when and where were you born?

PT: I was born in Worcester in 1939.

CK: Do you have any children?

PT: I have one son.

CK: Do you have any grandchildren?

PT: No.

CK: So, how long were you married?

PT: The first time or the second time? The first one I was married twenty-one years and the second time was twenty-one days. Twenty-one is not my number. [Laughing.]

CK: So, tell us a little bit about your parents, like what they did for a living and whether you think this had an influence on your life as an adult?

PT: Both of my parents worked in a factory, in fact, they both worked at the same factory. And after a while, my father was jealous of my mother working in the factory with him, because she started making more money than he did, and in those days men were supposed to be “the supporters of the household,” and it made him very jealous that my mother earned more money than he did. So, like I said, a long time ago, women weren’t supposed to be...in my time...women weren’t supposed to be the breadwinners or...you know, making a lot of money. It was supposed to be men. In my time, it was “men were ‘this’ ”, “men were ‘that’ ”, not women. Women were to have all these menial little jobs and stuck in the side. You didn’t call attention to women.

KP: How did your parents...how did your mother end up making more money than your father did?

PT: In the same factory?

KP: Yes.

PT: Well, my mother ran the machines and my father just went around supplying the work to each person running the machines, and the person that ran the machines earned more money than the stockperson.

CK: What type of factory was this?

PT: I’m trying to think of the name...it was um...Norton’s.

KP: And what was manufactured there?

PT: Actually I don’t know what they manufactured then. I don’t know at that time what they were manufacturing. I was a baby when they worked there.

CK: So, did your father try to change jobs, or what did he do?

PT: He wanted my mother to quit her job and just live on the money that he made, but my mother was a very strong person and my mother would not leave the job. So...but things...after a while they worked, but my father was very heartbroken and would never tell people that my mother was earning more money than him. Like, because in those days, well things didn’t cost as much then as they do now. Like, my mother’s pay would take care of the whole household, buy

food, she could pay everything with her pay, and with my father's pay it was... we would have to scrimp to get by, we wouldn't have got by very well.

KP: So it was good that she kept her job then.

PT: Exactly. My mother worked till just before they moved from Worcester. They sold the house in Worcester and moved to Auburn, and when they moved to Auburn my mother retired. And she said that was the worst thing she ever did in her whole life was retire from work. And then my father after, he retired when he turned 62. He retired in March; his birthday was in March. He retired in March; in June he was dead. So it wasn't good for him to retire either. But my mother lived four years after my father died.

CK: Did you move with them to Auburn when they moved?

PT: No, they sold the house after I got married.

CK: So, how do you think that your parents' jobs effected your own involvement in the labor market?

PT: I don't know how it really effected me, it's just that I want...my first job when I first went to work when I was 14, I earned 65¢ an hour and I thought I was making big-time money, because my mother...in those days your parents had to sign working papers if you went to work and I was working at St. Vincent's hospital, the old, old building, for 65¢ an hour. And I thought, "Oh, I'm making big-time money." But I used to give all my money to my mother. I never kept my money. I never kept my pay 'til two weeks before my wedding. I paid my mother all my money until two weeks before I got married.

CK: So, kind of your whole family contributed to the house?

PT: My older sister worked and she contributed to the house and my youngest sister is 10 years younger than me, we're ten years apart. So, we had no sister really close to us; we were ten years apart. So, it was always, "Who wants this baby?" In fact, I didn't know my mother was expecting until the morning I woke up and they told me I had a baby sister. And when they were bringing her home I locked all the doors and windows. I didn't want her in. I didn't want no baby! [Laughing.] I didn't want a baby.

CK: So, do you have any other siblings?

PT: No, just the two sisters. One is...the oldest one is passed away and the youngest one, I think she lives in New Hampshire, but I'm not sure. I don't have any address for her. I tried looking her up on the computer, but I can't find her. 'Cause, I don't know if she got married and changed her last name or...I can't find her. [Laughing.]

CK: So, could you tell us a bit about your transition from childhood to adulthood? Were there any issues that you faced pertaining to your gender?

PT: Like I said, girls were treated different than boys. Girls were always in the background and the boys were up front. So, when you went for a job, you got some little paying job while a man got a better paying job! Even though...you could get a job and you could be doing the same job as a man and you wouldn't be getting the same pay. Which is why it went...you know...every place you went for a job and if you did the same *job* a man did, you didn't get the same *pay* a man did! So, it wasn't equal rights for women in my time. It just wasn't. No matter what kind of job I took, I never got the same pay as a man.

KP: Did you try? Did you argue with anybody or...

PT: Many times. Many times. I said, "If I can do equal work, why can't I get equal pay? Why does there have to be a difference? If we're both doing the same job and we're both putting out the same amount of work for the same amount of hours, why don't I get the same pay he does?" It's not fair!

KP: And what did they say?

PT: They just looked at me and laughed. They said, "That's how the system is." Well, the system is changed now.

CK: Have you experienced that through all of your jobs?

PT: Not getting the same pay? Yes. Every job I had. [long pause.] What's next?

KP: Whose health are you responsible for?

PT: Whose what?

KP: Health. Beyond your own?

PT: Whose health?

KP: Yeah, do you have to take care of anybody or make sure anybody is doing well or...

PT: No, I just make sure my son is well and he takes care of me and I take care of him.

KP: Ok. Do you live together?

PT: Yeah, we share expenses and yup...

KP: Where have you lived during your life?

PT: Ok, I lived in Worcester most of my life. When I got married to my first husband, we lived in Fitchburg. Which, at that time, was a transitional town, because it was right near Fort Devens and the soldiers moved in and the soldiers moved out. It was a transit town. But then I really didn't like it there; I spent more time out here than out there. And then we moved back here and he got a job here, so it wasn't too bad. But then, he lost his job and the day we both went looking

for a job, I got a job and he didn't, and that really lit a fire. Because we both went for jobs and I came home with a job and he didn't. And for a long time, I worked and supported the family and he didn't. And then he went to...oh, he went and took a craftsman course, it used to be right next to trade-school. I can't think of...W...something W something.

CK: WPI?

PT: Not Worcester Polytech, but it was...I don't know, but it used to be at Lincoln Square, right next to [Boys Trade]. I forget what the name of the school was! But he went and took a night school drafting course and he got a job at David Clark's and that was his big hurrah! He was going to make more money than I was! But then, he went and he signed a paper at David Clark that whatever he designed he would get no credit for. And he designed...[Yelling to son in a different room.] What did they call that, Scott? The Snoopy Space Suit?

Scott: Yeah.

PT: He designed that, and because he signed the paper for it, he never got credit for designing it.

CK: What is the Snoopy Space Suit?

PT: You know the space suit, they had the big long helmet? You know what they wear out in space? Those.

CK: He designed that?!

PT: Yes, but he didn't get credit for it at David Clark's, because when he applied for the job, he didn't read very good what he was signing and he signed a paper that he would get no credit for whatever he designed.

CK: Oh my gosh.

PT: What a rip off.

KP: Around when was this? Was this before the first...

PT: It was when the first person went up to the moon. That was in the '60s... '60s or '70s, or something like that. But he didn't read what he was signing when he took the job.

KP: That's too bad!

PT: Yeah, what a rip off. He would have had a very nice amount of money right now, because they're still using them. Yeah, they called them the Snoopy, because it's a big round helmet. You've seen them on television and that.

KP: So, you lived in Fitchburg and then back...

PT: Back to Worcester.

KP: What factors played a role in your choice to live at each location?

PT: Well, we lived off of Cambridge Street, because he got a night job at Reed & Prince making boxes at night. So, we were across the street from the factory so that way he wouldn't have to travel to work. And then we moved off of Cambridge Street again onto Hacker Court and when we moved there it seemed like...this was a private street; it only had six houses on it. It seemed like when we moved there he could not find any work and I just kept working and working and working. Never ending. The reason why I don't work now is because I used to walk to work from Webster Square to near the Holden line, and I ended up having two heart attacks on the way to work, so that put me out of work. Because, I used to say that "I'm gonna work until I'm 99 years old." But that put me out of work at 40-something. And that's...oh, if people knew what a slap in the face that is when they tell you "you can't work anymore." Because I had all kinds of jobs. I drove fork-lift trucks and loader trucks; I drove trucks and delivered caskets down South. I did time in the military. I took a 13-week course at the Worcester Police Academy.

KP: Did you end up becoming a policewoman?

PT: No. I just do...I call it a "snitch" job, but they call it CI, Citizen Informer. That's what I am. That's what I do.

KP: Do you get paid for that?

PT: No. Any kind of jobs now I don't get paid for, unless I do a home care job, but...and I'm telling it on tape...I get paid under the table.

KP: So then you moved to Fitchburg when you got married...

PT: Right, we only lived there...Scott wasn't even a year old...when we went back to Worcester, because we couldn't find a job out there and we just...when we lived there at first, I got married and he was working at Wachusett Potato Chip, which is in Leominster, but then he lost the job there and just...Fitchburg is no place...was no place at that time to find any work. I don't know how it is today, but...so, we came out here. We moved out with my parents first until he got the job at Reed and Prince and then we moved to a house right near it. Well, an apartment.
[pause]

[Whispers] I don't know if this is what you're looking for?

CK: Oh, no! It's good!

KP: So you've lived in multiple areas in Worcester then.

PT: Right.

KP: Do you have any other family members that live in the area?

PT: No, I don't have...there's hardly...I have...my mother had 14 brothers and sisters. All she has left now is a sister and a brother. On my father's side, there's zero left. So, from my father's side I don't have anyone left. On my mother's side, she has a brother and a sister that are still alive.

KP: And you just have one son?

PT: And I just have one son. And my sister has three children, last I knew. And my older sister had two.

KP: What do you think women's experiences in the Worcester labor market were when you began working here compared to recently?

PT: In the labor market when I was growing up, it was terrible. To me it was like zero. Now women have a *much* better chance of getting *much* better paying jobs at higher levels. They can get higher in government.

KP: Have you ever experienced discrimination of any kind?

PT: Just being female, to get jobs. They say the jobs are only for men. If men can do it and women can do it, why can't...why do women get discriminated against? In my time it was that way.

KP: Did you find that being a woman prevented you from getting any specific jobs? Or was it more just of what you were saying earlier about the pay?

PT: Well that's what most of what it was- the pay. But some places don't want to hire women. You know, you could go for a job and they'd say "we'll call you," or "we'll get in touch with you." But because you were female they didn't bother calling you back. They'd take some man who didn't even have as much experience as you had and then hire them. Which is not fair.

KP: For your past three jobs, did you take the job first, then look for a place to live, or did you select a job after you found a location to live in.

PT: Can I ask you to please repeat the question?

KP: Oh, sure! Did you get the job first, and then pick a house, or did you pick a house, then pick a job?

KP: Well when we moved back to Worcester, he had to get the job first, then we had to pick a place to live. [Phone rings. Recording is stopped while Pat speaks on the phone.]

KP: So first your husband chose a job and then you moved? It didn't have to do with your own job then?

PT: No.

KP: His job was more important.

PT: Well, when we moved back to Worcester, I didn't have a job, so he just grabbed the first job there was. And then when he lost that job, we both went to look for a job and on the same day we went to look for a job, I got a job and he didn't. Which was great. [Laughing.]

KP: How were you raised to view your own gender role?

PT: How was I raised? Women are in the background; men were in the front. Men are leaders, women are behind. But don't tell that woman over there, my mother [gestures at a photograph]. She was small but she was very potent. When she said something she meant it. And when she used to tell us, "I will speak once and that's it." But she was ...she could be very controlling, which my father hated, because he was very much bigger than she was. But women were always...when I was growing up, women were in the background and men were in the front.

C: And that's how your family...that's what you felt in your family too?

PT: That's how it seemed in the family. Whether the women were smarter or not didn't make any difference, you stayed in the background. You know it was like people would say, "Speak when you're spoken to, don't speak otherwise." But see that didn't work with me. I just said what I had to say all the time and if people didn't like it too bad!

K: So did your mother teach you differently then?

P: She taught me to stand up for what I believed in or wanted. Don't back off from people if you don't want to back off. And say what you gotta say.

K: That's great.

PT: That's is. That's one of the greatest things I learned from her.

K: Where did you attend school?

PT: OK. Grammar school was Ward Street School, which is not there anymore and then I went part of the time to Providence Street Junior High, which is not there anymore, it's a grammar school now. And then I went to Fitchburg High School and took a GED test. And then I went to a place after...it was a long time after. I was married, when we moved to Hacker Court, I went to a place called OIC. I forget what the letters stand for, it's some occupational something. And that's how I got the job in the bank. I worked in the bank for a while.

K: So, you did not attend college then?

PT: No.

KP: What were your challenges in education?

PT: You mean what was my hardest subject?

KP: Well, were there any gender issues...were girls treated differently than boys in your schools?

PT: In grammar school and in junior high it was like girls got ignored and boys were up front. You know, with girls, you're there, so you're there. You count, because you're here, but otherwise nobody would know the difference. That's how I felt, you know...like I said, we were always in the background. Girls were in the background.

CK: Can you think of any specific examples of how you were treated in school that show that?

PT: All right when a teacher would ask a question, they want an answer. Everyone would put up their hand to answer and they picked the boys not the girls.

KP: Did that happen equally with male teachers and female teachers?

PT: Yes, it did.

KP: That's interesting. What did you see as your options when you finished school? Did you feel like you had many options, or no...or?

PT: The reason I went and took a GED test was so that I could get into the service. I don't think that if I wasn't going into the service, I don't know if I would have ever would have taken that GED test. You had to have that at that time in order to get in if you didn't have a high school education.

KP: What did your parents' education consist of?

PT: I don't know how far my father went in school, but I know my mother only went to the eighth grade, because when my grandmother had children, my mother had...my mother was the oldest so she had to take care of the children while my grandmother went to work. So, I know that she only went to the eighth grade, but that was the smartest woman that ever went to the eighth grade that I'll ever know.

KP: Do you think somebody taught her at home or...how did she learn so much if she dropped out in eighth grade? Did she just learn on her own or...?

PT: I think she...when her brothers and sisters brought their things home from school that my mother would, you know, go through their books and papers and stuff, and I think she just learned on her own. But only going to the eighth grade, that woman was very smart.

KP: So, you started work when you were 14, and what did you do when you were 14 again?

PT: I worked as a nurse's aide at St. Vincent's Hospital, which is weird.

CK: Why is that weird?

PT: Because I was working in the children's ward, there were patients there...some were patients in the children's ward at that time that were older than I was!

CK: Oh wow! [Laughing.]

KP: How did you come to do this work? How did you find out about the job?

PT: My cousin got hurt and I went up one day to visit my cousin in the children's ward and I said, "Hmm, this looks like work I could do." So, I went in and I talked to the nun that was there and she said, "If you want to work here, we can teach you how to do everything." Because, at that time the nuns ran St. Vincent's hospital. So, it was nice to be there with female authority. Because, you couldn't do anything up there at the time without asking the nun first. So then I went home and I said to my mother, "I'm willing to do this kind of work." So she said, "Well, I'll sign the paper and you can do this kind of work." But it was nice at that time though, because, like I said, the nuns at that time, ran the hospital, the Sisters of Mercy. And it was great having a lady boss and everything you wanted you had to go and ask them, but it was nice having females run a business. To start out that way, and start working, you know, with women in charge...

KP: That's great!

PT: Yes, it was! That was a way of saying, "If they can do it, so can you."

KP: Do you feel like...how have you found out about new jobs? Did you look them up in a newspaper or did you hear about them from other people, or...?

PT: Word of mouth.

KP: Word of mouth?

PT: Yup, because when I left St. Vincent's hospital at 16, I went to Worcester City Hospital to work. And I said, from there, going to Worcester City Hospital was more money. Not a whole lot more, but to me it was a lot more money.

KP: Did you hear about your jobs through friends or coworkers or family members?

PT: Yeah, from people I worked with, because they told me you go to work for the city, you have insurance, you have a better pay, you have a pension, all these things, that was considered a private hospital, so you didn't get all those benefits. So, going to work at Worcester City Hospital was benefits.

KP: Did your family influence your decision to enter the workforce?

PT: No.

KP: What factors influenced your decision to choose a particular occupation?

PT: Factories?

KP: Factors.

PT: Give me an idea of what...? Earning money, being independent.

KP: Did you just take any job that you could find that you felt you could do, or were there specific jobs that you looked for on purpose?

PT: I liked doing medical work the most.

KP: So, you chose mostly medical jobs?

PT: Right.

CK: Do you think you could give a list of your jobs if you could remember them in some order after the two hospitals?

PT: Let's see, I worked at St. Vincent's, I worked at City, which is...I worked at a hospital, but now it's ADCARE, but it was Doctor's Hospital. Then I worked in different rest homes, one of here isn't here anymore, and I worked at like three other rest homes. And then I worked at factories. I worked at Parker Manufacturing on Washington Street. Then I worked...oh, I'll tell you the one job I didn't like, I did try waitress work. I worked three days at a waitress work job, and I left. And it was at the Corner Lunch at the corner of Harding, okay. Policemen used to come in there for their meals and one day I was serving them their meal and I had a necklace on and I thought the policeman was trying to grab me and all he wanted to do was look at my necklace and I went *bam*, I hit him in the face and told the boss "Goodbye, I don't work here no more."

CK: Wow! [Laughing.]

PT: Back then, I thought he was going to grab me, but he was really just going to look at my necklace. But, I thought when I was putting the plate on the table, he was going to grab me, and I just backhanded him and said, "Goodbye," and walked out.

KP: He didn't...did he come after you?

PT: No, he just had such a look of surprise on his face. [Laughing.] Just because I am a waitress doesn't mean you have the right to touch me. That was the worst job I ever hated in the whole world, waitress work. I feel so sorry for waitresses when I go anywhere.

KP: It's very hard work!

PT: I don't know how anyone can put up with customers. Now I can put up with a person who is very sick, I can bury the dead, but being a waitress...oh, I feel so sorry for girls who have to do that for a living.

CK: Yeah, it's not a great job.

KP: What did you do after waitressing?

PT: Um, let's see. I'm trying to think...oh! Well, back up a little bit. My father's only sister, her second husband was an undertaker and summers I used to go and work for them. I used to work...see, undertakers are the last person to let you down. [Laughing.] They are, they are the last person to let you down if you think about it. [Laughing.] They can't hurt you, it's live people you've got to worry about.

CK: That's true! [Laughing.]

KP: So, you were an undertaker...er, assistant or something, what exactly did you do there?

PT: What did I do there? Well, I helped bathe the person, dress the person, put the makeup on, do the hair. And then greet the people who came for visiting hours.

CK: Where was the location of this?

PT: In Three Rivers, Massachusetts, which is near Palmer, near Ware, near Belchertown. Ringing any bells?

CK: Yeah. How did you get there?

PT: My father's sister lived there. So, I would get a ride out there and stay there for the summer.

CK: Wow, how many summers did you do this?

PT: About five.

K: Do you think that if you'd tried to work somewhere where you weren't related to the people, would they have discriminated against you as a woman to not work with the dead?

PT: Right, because my aunt's husband treated me like slave labor [indiscernible word]. How come the men that work there don't get treated the same way I do? I just hate the way people always...like I said, when I was growing up, I hate the way they put women down. I just hated that. Don't say, don't put female on me, just put "this person does this work." Why do people have to have titles? When you go for a job, why do they have to put down male or female? I'm just here for the job. Does it make any difference if I am male or female? If I can do the job, what difference does it make? Sound terrible, don't I?

CK: No, I totally agree.

KP: Me too.

PT: I'm glad I have somebody on my side.

KP: What has work meant to you?

PT: Providing a home, meals, a way to take care of my son, myself, learning something new all the time. When you work, there is always a chance to learn something new, and like the old saying goes, "You learn something new everyday." There's not a day that goes by that you don't learn *something*. Even though I don't work anymore, I still learn something new. But at work you could learn things to advance yourself. You watch what somebody else did and you did it better.

CK: Do you feel that in your jobs you had room to move up in the scale at all?

PT: No, men moved up. Women didn't move up in my time. Men got the raises women didn't. Like I said, they kept you in the background, even though you were doing the same work they were. You didn't raise up in scale, they did. They got promotions, you didn't.

KP: Did men ever get bonuses around Christmas-time and women didn't or anything like that?

PT: Men got bonuses, but they didn't tell women that. Men's bonuses were on the sly. You didn't know about their bonuses. They didn't even tell you when they were having a Christmas party.

CK: At your jobs, were there ever any unions that you were involved in, or that existed?

PT: There was a union when I worked at um...TJ Maxx, there was a union then. That was good, because a lot of the union people there were female, so that was...they made a big difference. And then, I got a job one night stocking at Shaw's and it was all men and just me. Now I was doing the same jobs they were, but they were there stealing, ok? I reported it three times to the manager. So, he paid no attention to me. On the fourth time when I was going to report it, I just went over to him and said, "I quit." So, they sent...then I found out two days after I quit, the Auburn police surrounded the place and everybody got arrested for stealing. And then Shaw's sent me a letter and asked me why I quit. And I wrote it down that I told the manager three times that people in this building at night are stealing and I said I was ignored and I'm not going to work in a place where people are stealing and then I'm going to be caught with them? No. Not when you can see it right in front of your face what they're doing, and you tell somebody and nobody does anything about it, because they're all men. And the manager was a man.

CK: I can't believe they had the nerve to write you a letter to ask you why you left when you were the one who told them.

PT: Right, but the main office sent me a letter, “why did I quit.” I told them why. You ask me, I’ll tell you. That’s another thing my mother taught me. Never lie, because when you lie, it comes back and bites you.

KP: How did your work affect your family life?

PT: I tried to work around his [her son] going to school and stuff so that when he was home, I was home, when he was out, I was out. The only thing was, a lot of times I would work third shift, so by the time he was waking up, a lot of times he didn’t even know I’d worked because I’d be gone while he was sleeping and I’d get home just when he was waking up. So a lot of times he never knew his mother worked! [laughs].

KP: So you’re husband was home during that time?

PT: Doing nothing, yes. One time, he used to spend a lot of time on the phone, so one time I went and had the phone shut off and he asked my why, and I said ‘when you can pay the phone bill then you can have the phone’. I said ‘ I’m not paying for a phone that I don’t even use. I come home you’re on the phone, I come home at night you’re on the phone what do I need a phone for? I’m not using it. You want the phone? Go to work and pay for it.

KP: Did he?

P: No.

KP: How was housework divided and chores divided throughout your family?

PT: Divided in whose family?

KP: Your family.

PT: When I lived at home with my mother? Or when I lived with his [my son’s] father?

KP: How about both?

PT: Ok. When I lived at home with my mother, Monday was wash day. So my mother washed the clothes and before we went to school, we got them all hung out on the clothes line. Tuesday, clothes got ironed. So whatever needed to get ironed was ironed on Tuesday after school. And then Wednesday was just get whatever needed to be done around and what errands needed to be run till Thursday. And Friday was pay-day, and get the shopping done Fridays and Saturdays. Now, see, we’re girls, so my father didn’t do anything....except when he got a car, he took my mother shopping. But otherwise, we went and lugged around the bundles, my sister and my mother. And then when I got married and his father [gesturing towards her son, referring to her ex-husband] didn’t work, there was no divided housework. I bought the groceries, did all the different housework. Everything was on my lap, and he did zero. So there wasn’t a divide there.

KP: Did you father help out with the housework?

PT: Not really. My sisters and I did it. My older sister and I. I'll tell you a really funny story. One time, one Saturday afternoon my mother and my older sister went shopping and my father was supposed to be taking care of me. Well, my father fell asleep in the den on the chair. While he was sleeping I went into my mother's room and I got the lipstick. I drew- we had set tubs because we had an older wash machine- they had just painted it- I drew on that, I drew on his face. I drew on my own face. Now when my mother came home, she asked my father how well were you taking care of me. He said 'very well'. He hadn't looked in the mirror and seen his face, he hadn't looked in the mirror and seen how I drew all over everything. [All laugh]. That didn't make a big hit with my mother with how well he was watching me. See that time too, we didn't go out of our yards. If we went outside, I stayed in my yard. I recall. But then when we got older, we used to play tag in the streets and hide-and-seek and stuff. But, before that, when we were younger, everybody- you know the kids stayed in their own yard, unless your mother came over to visit and then she brought you- well then you played with the kids who came over. But like us, at my house, my mother was the oldest. So her sisters came with their kids, so there was always somebody visiting and there was always kids at our house. And they always showed up at supper time, 'cause we lived the middle of the hill. So they were coming up the hill and they were coming down the hill- and we lived in the middle. There was ALWAYS someone at our house at supper time. Always. And my mother always gave up her plate of food. And one time my youngest sister said "Well ma, I'm never getting married 'cause I'm not going to keep giving up my supper like you do." [All laugh]. They are little stupid stories though, aren't they?

CK/KP: Oh no, we love them.. they are fun!

KP: Did you ever drive to work, or did you mostly walk?

PT: Mostly walked or took the bus. I didn't buy my own vehicle for a long time. [Pause] In fact, I didn't buy a vehicle 'till after I divorced my husband....why should I buy him one?

KP: How long was your commute usually?

PT: Well, when I worked at St Vincent's hospital, it was just Vernon Street to Winthrop Street. And then from Vernon Hill to Worcester City Hospital, just walk down through Kelley Square and up Chandler Street. In those days, it didn't seem like anything to walk to places. Like when I lived on Richmond Street, I used to go uptown and pay my mother's bills on Saturday and go to the store, we walked everywhere, we hardly ever took the bus or got rides or anything. We did it all walkin'. So walkin' was nothing.

KP: So you mostly worked within the city? You never worked outside the city and had to commute there?

PT: No. When I lived any place that I worked I was you know in that city. I didn't work when I was in Fitchburg. Most of the places I walked to. Parker Main factory, I walked there. I didn't think about transportation. Except for one job, when I did a CPA job in Leicester, I took a bus here, went right to the lady's doorstep, and when I got done at night, the bus stopped right at her doorstep and took me back there. But most of the time like I said I hardly ever used public

transportation. Most of the time- foot power. And at that time, I used to weigh a lot. I used to weigh 270 pounds, and that's a lot of weight to drag around. Now...[looks at self] bones! [All laugh]

KP: Was your husband- or ex husband's- commute time much different from yours? Did he mostly walk as well?

PT: No, mostly he took busses, he was too lazy to walk.

KP: So he worked within the city as well?

PT: Yeah or he'd get a ride with someone who he worked with.

KP: Did he usually work further from home that you did?

PT: No.

KP: About the same then?

PT: Sometimes mine was farther than his, but like I said, walking in those days- you just did it naturally. It was....yeah.

KP: So your husband- or your ex-husband, you said he made more than you at times, and you made more than him?

PT: I made more than him.

KP: Most of the time?

PT: Most of the time.

CK: So now, well we've gone over some of the housework.

PT: He didn't do any, I did it all.

CK: Right. Have you ever had childcare or daycare for your children?

PT: No, neither one.

CK: Neither. Ok. So, now we want to take a look also at your community involvement and volunteer work. I know you've told me you've done a lot of this. What kinds of volunteer and community work have you been involved with?

PT: Let's see. I don't know how to explain that. Like I said, I went to the police academy. So that's doing like crime watch, crime watch group in the neighborhood. At the church- people

they come on Saturdays, and they give me the materials but I make things for them so that they can give them to street people or people in the PIP shelter or Salvation Army or whatever.

CK: And that's like you were talking about, like the gloves you made?

PT: Right. Like last year, I made over 50 hats, but this year they asked for mittens, so I'm going to get started on the mittens. Because pretty soon I'm not going to be able to sit outside, it's going to be too cold to sit outside. And I love being outside. I hate staying in the house.

KP: I agree!

PT : I hate the walls.

CK: What led you to join these organizations? How did you find out about them?

PT: Word of mouth. Just talking to people. Going to a lot of different...what do you call them, those stores that sell second-hand clothes?

CK: Thrift stores?

PT: Thrift stores. Going into stores, things like that.

CK: When you say word of mouth as a way you heard about job and volunteer work, do you mean mostly from females or males?

PT: Oh you never get them from the males, you always get them from the females. Not that I don't have a rapport from males, but most of the stuff you hear, you know from females. Like, the men I worked for at the bank. I had excellent rapport with them, I had Vice President and stuff from the bank, and it was excellent working with them. They didn't hold you back from gaining. We had, there were a lot of women who ended up president and ended up CEOs. The bank was no hold back. That seemed like the first place that I worked that women had a step up.

KP: Meaning what?

PT: They had a chance to rise. They weren't just going to be a secretary all their life they got in there, they got to be VP, some ended up CEO's, there was some that ended up as presidents of banks. That was a place, in the bank, that women would rise.

CK: When was this?

PT: Oh how many years ago. Scott was...I don't know. When I was about 40. So I'm 67 now, so it was when I was about 40 years old. I don't know what year, you have to figure out the math. That's not my subject.

KP: That's fine.

CK: How have you balanced all of your different responsibilities, with all of the volunteer work that you do, with working, and being a mother, and being a wife, how did you balance all of that? What was most important?

PT: The most important thing was taking care of my home and my son. And then I just started doing things for other people. There's a couple people I cook for and I give 'em suppers at night. I just DO it. And you know, things around the house...but see, we don't have a thing now, we don't have a set thing where this is done on this day, while this is done on this day. Whatever day it gets done, that's the day it gets done. I don't go by a rigorous schedule. Just that I feed people on time, that's all. [laughs] And supper's been cooking all day, I'm making beef stew, so that's why I could talk to you without running to the store all the time.

KP: Does your son help with household responsibilities?

PT: Oh yes, he sets the table, he washes the dishes, he runs errands for me, 'cause a lot of times I can't go to the store and I'm stuck home. He'll go the store, he does errands for me, he helps around the house, if I can't lift anything anymore, he does it. He helps with the cleaning, like I say right after supper, he washes the dishes right away. He doesn't leave them say till tomorrow or later. He does them right away after supper. But that way they're not there later. You get them outta-the-way and they're gone. Like tonight is easy-one pot. Not a bunch of pots and pans. He doesn't complain. He just does it. He just does it automatically. I don't know what I'd do without him. If it wasn't for him, I don't think I'd be here today, because when I had one of my heart attacks, I had a stroke, but I didn't know I had it until they did an MRI. And I have this thing called syncope, I can be talking to you, I have no warning, and I will faint. I'll have these seizures. I don't know when they'll happen. And that's why I don't drive anymore. I don't wanna kill someone else, I don't wanna kill him, I don't wanna kill me. If I kill someone else I could not live with that. That's why I don't drive anymore. But didn't get a medical thing to stop driving, I did it on my own, so if I ever wanna get my license back I don't have to go to a doctor and get permission. But like I said, I could be sitting here talking to you and just faint. And you never ever know when it's going to happen. No warning at all. And they can't figure out what causes it. I've had every test I think there is in the medical book, and beyond. I stayed in a week in a room hooked up to all these machines and they still couldn't figure it out. They had this thing inserted in here (near armpit), and you know what I found out? After they took the machine out, then it was approved by the FDA. When they put it in, it wasn't approved.

CK: Oh my gosh.

KP: They didn't ask you to sign anything?

PT: No, they just said this is the cardiology, we're going to insert this, were gonna find out what's causing this....but then I found out after they took that out that it was then approved for the FDA. But when they put it in, it was never approved.

KP: Why do you think they did that to you?

PT: I don't know. Experiment?

CK. Oh I really don't like doctors.

PT Me neither. I don't like working with them either [all laugh]. Listen to this. I went in for a hernia operation, supposed to take 45 minutes well this operation took 4 hours when I came to the nurse said to me, she said the doctor has a room for you, because the operation is long. I said, Excuse me. Bring me my clothes, I am going home. Come to find out, they did my hernia, but they also did an adhesion operation. I had had a perforated ulcer for a long time before that. But they weren't supposed to do that without telling me first.

KP: Did you have to pay for both of the things they fixed or just the one operation?

PT: I didn't pay for either one. You know...and then they wonder why people get sick and don't wanna go to a doctor. [A knock at the door] Oh somebody's knocking at my door. Excuse me.

CK: Sure, don't worry about it. [resuming again] So, based on your experiences in your life so far, what advice would you give to a woman today, in Worcester, about how they should choose their careers and live their lives?

PT: First of all, go out and do what you wanna do. If there's a job you want, go out and get that job. Don't let anybody push you job, or tell you 'no' to a job that you want. Don't get pushed out by males. But do what you wanna do, if there's something you really wanna do, go ahead and do it. Don't let anybody tell you "oh no, wait till later" or this or that. If you wanna go out and do something, go and do it. 'Cause there's no tomorrow, there's just today. If there's something you really wanna do, go to it. Don't put off until tomorrow what you wanna do today. I know that's all cliché, but....

KP: That's good advice.

PT: You wanna do something? Do it. You wanna go on a trip? Go. Like once in a while, I go to Foxwood. It's my only way away from here. It's only an hour's ride. I go for a day, I have a buffet meal, I play the slots, and it's a day away. Like I say, you want a vacation, go on that vacation. You wanna take a day to go here, do it. You wanna second job, go out and try to get that job, don't let someone tell you 'you can't have it'. If they wanna tell you 'you can't have it', let them tell you a good reason why not. Don't just take no for an answer if it's something you want.

CK: That's good advice.

PT 'Cause you keep letting people push you behind...and I'm sick of people pushing women in the back closet all the time.

KP: How exactly do you think women have gained...or do you feel that women have gained equal rights?

PT: If you look at today's world, yes but my time, no.

KP: How so?

PT: Look you have women in government now. When I was growing up. There were no women in government. None. You have women judges now. You have women police commissioners now. We'll have women president one of these days. I hope what's her name gets in...

KP Hillary Clinton?

PT: Yeah. She's a very strong, go ahead, don't-take-no-no's person. And I hope someday we do have one. I really do. And just like I don't believe putting tags on people. Like men and women. Colors, and that. You are a PERSON. Why do you have to have a title? You go for a job like I said, why do you have to put male or female? Why do you have to put Caucasian, African, whatever? You're just a person. If you qualify for a job, why can't you have it? Why, because you have a title? Go out and get what you want.

CK: Right! ...Is there anything else you'd like to add? Anything else you think is important to include?

PT:you'll have to help me here.

CK: I think you've said a lot!

KP Yeah, you've said some great things.

PT I hope it helps

KP It definitely does!

PT 'Cause that's my main aim in life, is helping people. That's why I'm going to be around for a loooooooooong time.

CK: Good!

PT Because there's a lot of people who need a lot of help. Only if it's only this much help.

CK: Well thanks, it was really inspirational to hear about all this.

PT: And if you ever wanna come back and talk to me, you're welcome to, anytime.

KP: Thanks so much Pat!

PT: Oh anytime!