

Interviewee: Grace McLaughlin
Interviewers: Megan Brennan and Ashley Greenwood
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Transcribers: Megan Brennan and Ashley Greenwood



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Abstract: Grace McLaughlin was born in 1924 in Worcester, Massachusetts. She was the last of four girls born to Benjamin and Isabelle Vinti. Grace's father, Benjamin came to the United States from Italy and later sent for his wife. After settling in Brooklyn, New York, Benjamin and Isabelle made the move to Worcester, where their fourth daughter Grace was born. Grace recalls living in a close-knit community where most people were of Italian descent. Being of strict Italian descent, it was only natural that she and her three sisters were expected to date and marry Italian men. In this interview Grace discusses the initial struggles of marrying an Irish man, Frank McLaughlin. Once the two were wed, they settled in Grafton, Massachusetts. Grace discusses the issues of marriage, as her husband Frank did not want Grace to work anymore. However, Grace was independent, she wanted to work and continued to do so until they started a family. Grace gave birth to four children, three girls and one boy, all of who were born in Worcester. Grace still resides in the Grafton home in which she and her husband raised their four children, she currently shares this home with one of her daughters and granddaughters. Grace discusses the challenges and progression she has seen within her current neighborhood and city over time.

AG: My name is Ashley Greenwood.

MB: And my name is Megan Brennan.

AG: And we are here with Grace McLaughlin in Grafton, Massachusetts and it is October 17, 2012. We are completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences we want to focus today on your experiences. Thank you for helping us with this important project.

GM: It's my pleasure.

AG: Is it okay to record your oral history today?

GM: Yes, it is.

AG: Thank you. What is your full maiden name and married name?

GM: My name is Grace Vinti McLaughlin.

AG: Where were you born?

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GM: I was born in Worcester, Massachusetts.

AG: And when were you born?

GM: I was born [] 1924.

AG: Have you ever married?

GM: Yes, I have. To a lovely man.

AG: What is the name of your husband?

GM: Well he's deceased now but his name is Francis McLaughlin.

AG: How long were you married for?

GM: For 50 years. And I would – he is deceased and we would have been married for 62 years had he still been alive today.

AG: Tell us about your husband. How and where did you two meet?

GM: Well that's an interesting story. I, kind of went on a blind date, which believe it or not we did back then [laughs]. And I didn't really want to go out with him because I really liked to dance and I found out that he didn't really like to dance so I did go out with him on a blind date, and he seemed very nice and then he asked me out again and I said okay. But I kind of saved him for Sundays [laughs] because my Saturday nights I liked to dance and he didn't really like to dance and you know, he was kind of danced with two feet I guess you'd call it [laughs] so I would save him for Sundays and he would take me to kind of what I thought was kind of weird places. He was more into going to museums and things like that and to nature and go hiking and I had never really done that before as a young girl. I mean I'd be outside but I thought at first this is kind of weird because most of my dates were took me dancing so he was a little bit weird at first I thought [laughs].

AG: I'm sure it was a good relationship, how was he involved in the Worcester community?

GM: Well he grew up in Millbury, Massachusetts and he had a lot of friends that lived in the Worcester area and other family members some other family members and he was in the Navy so he would come to Worcester and meet some of his buddies that were in the Navy.

AG: Did you two have any children?

GM: Yes, We had four children. Oh, three girls and one boy. He finally got his boy, the last one.

AG: Where were they born?

GM: They were all born in Worcester.

AG: Do you have great grandchildren or grandchildren?

GM: Yes, I have 11 grandchildren and seven, four no, how many great great grandchildren do I have? I have four great grandchildren.

AG: How are they involved in the Worcester community? Do they live/work in Worcester? Or in the Worcester county?

GM: Well my daughter Elizabeth, who I actually live with now she works in Worcester at the UMass hospital as a nurse. My other daughter Jean, lives and works in the Worcester community I'm not sure exactly what she does I think some type of administrator or something and she has seven children. My daughter Joan and her family live in Mendon, Massachusetts and she works at an insurance company, I think in HR – human resources. And I have a son, who actually doesn't live in the area anymore he lives in Georgia. I kind of miss him, he's just so far away but and then I have you know grandchildren and I have a granddaughter who goes to Assumption College in Worcester.

MB: Oh, we might know her [laughs].

GM: Her names Ashley.

AG: Okay, [laughs] what cultures and ethnicities do you identify yourself with?

GM: Well my background really is Italian, I'm full Italian so I guess I would say Italian is my ethnicity and my husband was all Irish so I mainly was Irish and Italian. Which is a strange combination back in the day but it's worked out very well over the years.

AG: Tell us about your parents.

GM: Well, my dad's name is Benjamin and my mother's name is Isabelle and they came from Italy, [pause] on the boat and my dad came first, we had family here or he had family here and so he came and then got my mother to come later that same year and they settled in Brooklyn, New York and then they lived in Brooklyn, New York I think about a year and then went back to Italy and lived in Italy and then came back after because other family members were still over here and they wanted to come back to the United States so they moved back here and I believe they went to Woonsocket, Rhode Island and then we moved to Worcester and that's when I was born, I was born in Worcester. My sisters, one was born in Italy, one was born in Woonsocket, I was born in Worcester, and my other sister I believe was born in Worcester as well.

AG: How many siblings do you have?

GM: I have four, well no, three and I'm the fourth one. I have three sisters they're all deceased now.

AG: Where do you fall in the order?

GM: I was the last one, I was the baby.

AG: And where have you lived during your life?

GM: Worcester, I grew up in Worcester and when I got married I lived in Millbury for a while and then we built the home in Grafton and I've been in Grafton ever since I was married.

AG: Did you grow up in Worcester? In what neighborhood?

GM: I grew up in Worcester and I lived in a couple of different neighborhoods, I grew up on Shrewsbury Street and then right off of Shrewsbury Street, on East Central Street.

AG: And what was the neighborhood generally like? Was there a sense of community?

GM: Yes. There was a lot of Italians, mainly Italians on Shrewsbury Street and off of Shrewsbury Street had very [sigh] Italians are very close-knit you know. Families all got together, a lot of them spoke mainly Italian, I grew up with everyone speaking Italian around me, including my parents. In fact, my parents didn't know how to speak English until I—my father tried to learn it and write it but he all, my mother and father wanted all of their children to grow up learning English. So we would learn a little bit from their speaking it as well as the other people around us, but I taught my mother, I tried to teach my mother English after I learned it in school.

AG: Did your family contribute to the community around you?

GM: Yes. [Pause] Say that one more time.

AG: Did your – how did your family contribute to the community?

GM: Well, we would have neighborhood gardens and things. My parents had a big garden in the backyard and everybody gave everybody everything, we'd help each other build things. There was communities where we'd go all skating together and play all sorts of games and family. There was the church group that we belonged to at Our Lady Mount Carmel, which is downtown, near downtown and off of East Central Street, we could walk from East Central Street where we lived right to Our Lady Mount Carmel so we had a lot of things that we did with the church.

AG: What differences if any would you say you have seen in the community?

GM: Oh, lots of changes in the community, it used to be when I grew up it was really vibrant. Shrewsbury Street and the area that I lived in near East Central Street and downtown Worcester was wonderful. We use to be able to go downtown just walk right downtown from wherever we were on Shrewsbury Street, you could actually see downtown from the top of Shrewsbury Street and then there was always bustling and then there was the train station, union station that was always bustling, we'd take the train and we'd see all the soldiers come from, their posts and they'd come into union station and we'd go down and cheer them on. So it was very lively, there would be bocce ball going on Shrewsbury Street and it was just everybody was outside, it was wonderful and we lived in, I don't know if you girls know what three-deckers are but we lived in three-deckers.

AG: [Mmhm]

GM: And then we lived in a two-decker, but it was a community where everybody was always outside, helping everybody, lots of walking, everything and it was wonderful and then Shrewsbury Street seemed to have, when I moved out, my parents still lived on Shrewsbury Street and I use to take the bus and go and visit my mother when my father died and it was still very active but then they started building new things around. Our Lady Mount Carmel was beautiful you use to just see Our Lady Mount Carmel just sticking out beautifully and then all these big buildings started going up and then downtown Worcester, we use to go downtown and we'd go to Filene's and Denholm's, I don't know if you girls ever heard of Denholm's?

AG: No

MB: [Mmhm]

GM: It was a really nice store and you'd, it would almost be like going into Boston and walking down Main Street especially during the holiday time, there would be all sorts of things that they'd have in the windows, moving, animated things, and you, I would take my children and we'd go down and we'd watch these things and then all of a sudden they put a mall in downtown, and big garage, parking garage and it literally cut the city in half it seemed like because you couldn't see downtown anymore and then all the stores moved into the mall and Denholm's left, and Filene's I think went into the mall and then Union Station closed down. Shrewsbury Street there weren't very many things going on on Shrewsbury Street anymore and now my daughter takes me down to Shrewsbury Street and it's become vibrant again, it's nice to see and I was surprised to see that they, just recently my daughter drove me by the mall, where the mall use to be, I don't know what they called it, but it's now coming apart and they tore down the garage that use to have there, so it's a nice thing and they have a nice circle that you drive around near Union Station and they opened up Union Station, I went to dinner there one time recently and now I think the train still stops at union station which is very nice so I think it's coming back and hopefully other families can enjoy what I enjoyed when I was young.

AG: Good. What advantages have you seen living in the Worcester area?

GM: Well, I think it's located in kind of the middle of the state so the advantages are you can go, my husband use to take me into Boston, we use to go to down the cape, we use to go to New Hampshire, we went all over the place so it was easy access to cultural type events and you could be outside, you go hiking up to the mountains, you could still go to the ocean with your family and we'd take our kids camping, there were many place to go because we were so centrally located and I think it has some nice culture, we have a art museum, we have many colleges as you girls know in the Worcester area so I think it, culturally it's a nice city.

AG: Do you live in the city now?

GM: No, I live in Grafton, North Grafton.

AG: Do other families – family members live in the same area?

GM: Well my daughter lives in Mendon, which is not too far for me. I live with my, one of my daughters, the nurse and actually my, one of my granddaughters lives with us as well, so were kind of like a little different generation living in the household, sometimes it's a little nerve-wracking [laughs] but I love it because I always have someone around especially when my husband's not here anymore.

AG: What is your current connection to Worcester?

GM: Well, my family has all, all my sisters are gone now and I use to have my sisters both, two of my sisters lived in Worcester, my other sister lived next door to me in Grafton but they're all gone now and a lot of my friends have passed away so I don't really have any connections, I don't visit anybody in Worcester anymore. I do have one friend who lives on the outskirts of Worcester, kind of like the Shrewsbury-Worcester line and I see her on occasion but I don't have any, really any more connections to Worcester other than going to restaurants.

AG: What challenges do you think this city still faces? And what would you change about the city?

GM: [Hm] Interesting. What would I change? Well, I – I have to think about that one. I wish that today's generation would see the kind of some of the hidden treasures that were in Worcester because it does have many opportunities, it's a starting place for a lot of businesses and I kind of think the nice thing like I said Shrewsbury Street use to be very vibrant and then it died and now you got a lot of businesses coming back up, a lot of restaurants and I think things are starting to happen again back in Worcester, I think Main Street is coming back to life from what I understand and from what I see that they've taken that horrible looking mall and garage down, I'm like surprised, it's amazing to me that they can put up something and spend millions of dollars then knock it all down.

AG: [Mmhm]

GM: So I think it offers a lot more businesses, it's centrally located and I think what's exciting is that I heard that um there's a, my son lives in Georgia and I heard that the Worcester airport might have JetBlue.

AG: That would be nice.

GM: And JetBlue goes right to, I hope they will anyway.

MB: Florida?

GM: I know they fly down to Atlanta from Boston and it would be really nice for me if I didn't have to go to Boston or when my son comes and visits me he could fly right into Worcester so that's nice. I think if that – that would be helpful if they could get that Worcester airport running back again.

AG: That would be a great idea.

GM: And the trains, I think it's nice the trains now are going into Boston, people will take their jobs and go into Boston, and we actually have the train station in Grafton and we took a ride on that.

AG: Fun. What distinct characteristics make Worcester the place that it is?

GM: [Hm] Well I think its culture, there's a lot of culture.

AG: [Mmhm]

GM: And there's a lot of diversity there's, you know, as you know, the colleges, we have a lot of colleges in Worcester. A lot of people like to come to Worcester for college because it's centrally located so I think we still have a lot of culture, a lot of diversity, a lot to offer. I think...

AG: What...

GM: Sorry.

AG: It's okay.

GM: I think the businesses, I think Worcester is trying to promote more businesses coming.

AG: What do you think women's experiences in Worcester – in Worcester have been like generally?

GM: I'd say pretty good, I'd say Worcester women are pretty spunky [laughs] and, you know, don't put up with anything [laughs].

AG: Where did you attend school?

GM: I attended Venerini Academy.

AG: Did you attend a grad – attend or graduate from college?

GM: No, I did not.

AG: What were your challenges in education?

GM: Well, I had to, when I went to school my parents wanted us to have a really good education and then I couldn't really go to college because I was trying to help my parents with their, as you know and then my father died, my father had a heart attack and so I wanted to help my mother and then I met my husband and I got married and we wanted to save a lot of money so I got a job and saved my money and when I was married we saved my paycheck for the things that we, you know, wanted to do like family vacations and things like that especially when we had kids and I didn't work when I had children but my paycheck, my husband didn't want me to work.

AG: [Mmhm]

GM: And I was like well why shouldn't I work, what am I going to do? So I did work I didn't have my license so I would have to get a ride or take the bus to go to work and then one day, I don't know if my husband really wanted me to get my license but one day I surprised him and got my license [laughs] I didn't tell him [laughs] and then I surprised him I think he was a little upset at first [laughs] but he got use to it and then I got a car, I got my own car.

AG: Wow. What support networks and mentoring have been important to you?

GM: Well my family, I had like I said, three wonderful sisters and so they were very helpful and my husband came from a family of like 11 siblings and so we were always around family and when we were married and moved to Grafton our neighborhood here there was a lot of young families and a lot of young mothers just like me and they didn't work so the mothers and the children, even the husbands our neighborhood was really, really tight. So we had the support of our – our families, nobody's here anymore, some of the children have bought the families homes and now there's all the young families again.

AG: [Mmhm] What extracurricular activities did you participate in? And do you still enjoy any of these activities today?

GM: Do you mean like when I was young?

AG: Yes.

GM: Well I loved to dance, I loved to roller-skate, ice skate I was on the swim team and I got my the lifesaver certificate, I had a sister who didn't know how to swim so she really pushed me into swimming, making sure I knew how to swim and I really loved it so I did, you know, dancing and skating. Dancing was really my passion, but as I got older and things I started taking up, you know, kitting and painting I use to do a lot of sewing and painting. Now I don't do much of that anymore, sometimes I might paint a little bit or draw I guess, I don't really paint anymore but I do play cards with a bunch of my friends, we meet at the senior citizens center in Grafton. I have a friend who picks me up and so we play cards, you know, like twice a week and we don't play for much, I play for pennies [laughs] I can't really afford to play for much. I use sometimes with my other friends, when we were younger, we might go down to take the bus with the senior citizens down to Foxwoods and Mohegan and that was fun. [Pause] And then my family, I have like I said, so many grandchildren and great grandchildren that my grandchildren are really good they always come and visit me so and I have one great grandchild that is with me while she goes to school, she takes the bus to my house and afterschool she's here. So it's generational here in my house [laughs].

AG: When you worked outside of the home, where did you work?

GM: Well, I worked as a kind of like a secretary and then I worked at a bookbinding place, I can't remember the name of the place, isn't that awful, I can't remember [sighs].

AG: Was it located in Worcester?

GM: Yes, it was. It was a fun job, I did that, I worked before I had children and then when my children were older, I think my son was probably in high school, I got a job with a friend here in Grafton, and we had mothers working hours and she would pick me up and we would go to the book binding place and that was a lot of fun and it was from like nine to three.

AG: [Mmhm]

GM: Lots of books, lots of books.

AG: When did you begin working outside of the home for wages?

GM: Oh, when I was probably in high school, so I could help pay for my things to help my family.

AG: What did this work mean to you?

GM: Well it meant that I had my own independence, I would, you know, try to help out my parents and give them a little bit of money if I needed to but at least [rustling] I had some independence to buy my own things because it was tough back then, we had all sorts of good things but if I wanted something at least I could say I had my own money to buy it so it gave me a sense of independence.

MB: [Mmhm]

AG: Was there a need for you to work outside of the home?

GM: When I was a teenager, no not, there wasn't a need but I, it was a good idea. I mean, I wasn't forced to but I had to make sure I got my homework and things done, my father was really strict about my education so I didn't want my work to interfere with school and my husband, like I said, when I did get married, for some reason he didn't want me to work and he thought he could just – maybe it's an old man's thing or something back then [laughs] that he didn't want the wife, but it didn't make any sense for me to sit around and do nothing so.

MB: Yeah.

GM: I did work when I first got married.

MB: What were or are your responsibilities in terms of housework?

GM: Well right now, I do probably as little as I can get away with, no I'm kidding [laughs]. I live with my daughter so she pretty much does the bulk of it now but growing – you know, obviously when I had the family and things I did a lot of the housework. I, pick up, I sometimes vacuum, I do the dishes if they need to be done but pretty much my daughter and my granddaughter who live here do the bulk of the housework now and I just kind of help pick up and do things and pitch in where I can.

MB: How has your housework responsibilities changed for you now versus when you had a family?

GM: Well, when I had a family, I did it all and now it's my time to watch my daughter do all the work [laughs] but I do help, I pick up and make sure that things are picked up because my daughter and my granddaughter both work fulltime so I'm here during the day when I'm not off with my friends and going for walk, I do go for a walk everyday as well.

MB: Oh, good. How have you balanced different priorities, responsibilities, roles, and interests in your life?

GM: Well, I think it was easier during our time than it is now, I think that especially with families, I did stay home with my children so while my husband was working, we were always, the mothers were always home taking care of their children and the children during when they weren't going to school we were, you know, outside with our children, bringing them different places if we could or just working with the community and having fun within the community with our – with our kids. I think now, it's a lot different, I don't even see kids outside any more playing, I think now you have two people working and their kids are going off to babysitters which is kind of sad when you think about it but times have changed I guess. [Sigh] So I would say that, you know, I think our – I think I grew up actually in a very good era.

MB: I agree.

GM: You know, we did have a lot of different responsibilities but we were able to do many different things, we traveled, we only had one car, we went camping and went all over the country, my husband liked to do that [laughs].

MB: How would you characterize the personal and professional costs of your chosen path? How about the benefits?

GM: [Pause] I think the costs have been—what's that saying that they say? Priceless [laughs]. I have—I don't know if this is what you're getting at, but I don't have any regrets. I think my path that I've chosen has been a wonderful path and I attribute that to being with a wonderful man.

MB: [Aw]

GM: That I married, and having wonderful children so I think the benefits have been really are very stable, rewarding and kind of a fun adventure. Granted we had some, you know, some—it wasn't all wonderful. We had some trials and tribulations, but overall I think it's been a wonderful path.

MB: Good. What type of work did your husband do?

GM: He worked for Mass Electric, it's called something else now.

MB: How did he feel about you working outside of the home?

GM: Well, like I said he didn't like it at first, like when we were first married he didn't even want me to – we didn't even have any children, for some reason he didn't want me to work which was a little bit crazy. So I decided that that wasn't going to happen [laughs] that. We were going to have, we were living in an apartment when we first got married and actually when we first got married we lived with my mother and then we moved to Millbury and into an apartment, and we bought a piece of land, here, right here, and built our home right here. So I knew we had some goals and we were going to have a family so I thought while I can work I should work, so I did.

MB: Do you consider yourself active politically?

GM: Yeah, I'm a Democrat [sigh] I guess I was probably more active when I was younger, now it's just getting so crazy especially with this, you know, this current political scene coming up its getting a little crazy.

MB: Have you been involved in volunteer or community work?

GM: Yes, [pause] I, you know, again, kind of when I was younger I did a lot of community work when I was growing up on Shrewsbury Street, or the Shrewsbury Street area there was a lot of community work and when the kids were younger, I did a lot of community work in Grafton but not so much now. My daughter wants me to, you know, make some things for the hospital, for new born babies, like get back into knitting some blankets for the newborn babies so I might do that. I suppose that would be community work.

MB: That'd be nice. Have you... Oh sorry.

GM: I go to the senior citizens center and I help them out sometimes.

MB: [Aw]

GM: Being the senior citizen that I am [laughs].

MB: Have you been involved in volunteer or community work?

AG: You just read that one.

MB: I already asked that [laughs].

GM: That's okay, I get forgetful myself.

MB: I'm sorry [laughs] What role...

GM: You are too young to get forgetful [laughs].

MB: Yeah, I know [laughs]. What role has religion played in your life?

GM: A large role, you know, again when I lived on Shrewsbury Street growing up, Our Lady Mount Carmel was right there and that was a big part of our - our family. We went to church ever, every weekend and during the week and we had a lot of events going on there and, you know, I went through the, I'm Catholic, and I went through all of the, you know, baptism, communion, and what's that other one called? I forget.

MB: Confirmation?

GM: Confirmation, see I get forgetful too [laughs] and and then I was married in the

Catholic church so and I go to church every Sunday still, sometimes I wish my children would go, and they don't always go for some reason, you don't see a lot of young people although, I think I see more young people it seems like they might be coming back, but I go every Sunday when I can.

MB: How have health issues impacted your life or those in your family?

GM: Well, I had a bout of [rustling] breast cancer many years ago, I'm fine now and luckily that's gone away and I'm clean of cancer and so I've done pretty well for my age if I do say so myself. My husband had a bout of prostate cancer, when, right after he retired which kind of stinks but he did fine with that, he survived that and only problem is that he had around when he was in his 70's got, well maybe it was before it started but he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and unfortunately that led to him failing and passing away so it kind of makes me a little bit angry because he was a very healthy otherwise man avid hiker, he ate really well, he had gardens, he was just very, very active, he use to run, he use to read so I was kind of angry to think that this disease could get him.

MB: Absolutely. Whose health are you responsible for besides your own?

GM: Other than you know, I have my daughter and my granddaughter with me so, but pretty much just basically my own health.

MB: What major historical events in Worcester have occurred during your time here?

GM: [Hm] Well there's probably been many, historical events, well you know, we had all the, I don't know if you want to say we had the wars and things like that. I'd have to think about what historical events in Worcester but certainly in our lifetime, whether it be in Worcester or any other area, we [rustling] had all sorts of historical events, you know presidents getting shot, you know, the wars that I grew up with and my husband was actually in – in a war and then seeing the other wars and so I'm not sure if you mean historical events in Worcester or historical events in general but I would say those are the generally historical events. There have been many things that have taken place; going to the moon was an historical event.

MB: Yeah, absolutely.

GM: I don't know you girls, historical event, what was it one of those bands, I think maybe historical event with the rock bands. I don't know if you girls know the, I think it was the Rolling Stones I think came to Worcester...

MB: Oh, cool!

GM: In one of the little clubs [laughs] I remember my children going to that band, I don't know if that's historical but [laughs] a little bar or something.

MB: How old were you when you were allowed to date?

GM: Oh, in my twenties my father didn't want us to date, my early twenties. He wanted us to concentrate on school, but I had already been out of high school but he was really strict.

MB: Where did you go on dates?

GM: Oh, we went – I like I said, I liked to dance so I would go dancing and skating and things like that it was pretty, you know, dancing, go downtown and then when I got older, I got married and my husband didn't dance much although he would take me dancing with out friends and things but I did a lot of traveling with him.

MB: What was considered fashionable when you were a young woman?

GM: Well, we use to have really nice suits, I don't see very many young people wearing suits, but we had some nice tailored skirts and – and suit jackets, with pretty little blouses. So I would say that was kind of – and, you know, men dressed really nice back then but we use to always get dressed when we went out.

MB: What was your favorite musical group or song?

GM: Oh, I don't even know if you'd know who they were [laughs] but I remember the Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, you know, that whole group there – Connie Stevens.

MB: How were girls treated when you were in school?

GM: They were treated very nice, I think there was a lot of respect and a little different than today, nowadays I think you kids say what you want to say, and do what you want to do. There was more respect back then, I think.

MB: Did women often pursue higher education?

GM: Yeah, I think they did. Maybe not so much as today, I think you girls have an opportunity today and when my daughters as well, it seemed like there was, there were women who pursued a higher education back then but I think now it's, you know, sometimes when I read things it says that more and more women going to college more so than men, I'm not sure if that is a true statement but certainly are a lot more women going to college, it's part of the – part of what they do. Whereas back then, we kind of went to school, met a nice guy, an educated guy, settled down and got married. Now girls go to school and they do what they want to do and don't have to settle down and get married.

MB: What did your parents' education consist of?

GM: My parents' education was really high school, I mean they didn't go beyond high

school other than when they came to the United States, like I said, my father tried to learn English, so he would take a English, writing and speaking course where as my mother, we tried to teach my mother that.

MB: What difficult transitions did you go through in moving from childhood to adulthood?

GM: I don't know if it was difficult. We pretty much were very – my father was a, you know, a disciplinarian so I don't know that it was a difficult transition, certainly we, like I said, I had a job when I was younger, and I saved my own money and took care of the things that I wanted to get, so transitioning into adulthood I didn't have things handed to me, so what I wanted I had to get for myself so I think that was probably a good thing. I think nowadays get things handed to them, which is probably not a good thing.

MB: [Mmhm]

GM: Times are different as they say [laughs].

MB: What were particular areas of the city where you spent a lot of time?

GM: Well, mainly Shrewsbury Street and downtown Worcester [pause] the Shrewsbury Street area.

MB: Do you have hobbies or do any regular leisure activities that take you outside of the home?

GM: Yes, I go walking with my neighbor, there is one neighbor she lost her husband and she lives alone, so I walk with her, we try to walk on a daily basis if we can and then I do play cards a couple of days a week, and then I have my children and my grandchildren who are here and they take me places and I go on vacation with my you know, my daughter, my daughter takes me away and then I sometimes go and visit my son down in Georgia, I wish he was closer but he's so far away that as I get older I don't want to get on a plane anymore and fly so I actually think he's coming up around the Christmas holiday which will be nice, I miss him, he has two daughters.

MB: How do you get through tough times? What kinds of thoughts keep you going?

GM: Well, I think you have to focus on the good things that you have, the tough times that really for me was – I still sometimes miss my husband very much even though he's been gone for – I want to say 12 years, maybe a little bit longer, it seems unreal to me that he's gone that long but there are tough times because I do miss him, and I wish he was here and like I said before, I get a little bit upset that God kind of took him way before his time because he was probably one of the healthiest people I knew and I don't know how he got that darn disease. But that the time and then I have to just kind of get myself out of that when I think about him. I sometimes, you know, think about him and say oh, he's calling me but I think about the fond memories that he gave me and that kind

of gets me through and then my family gets me through.

MB: That's very nice. How do you define success in your life? Has this definition changed over time?

GM: Success in my life? Well, I guess my family, I hate to keep going back to my family but...

MB: It's a good thing.

GM: It's been a big part of my life, you know, my family with my parents and my siblings and then, you know, my outside family as I came into, you know, my husband's family so it's really been a community of family and friends in the neighborhood and friends I grew up with. We use to socialize with them along the way so really that has helped me be successful, I would say.

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

GM: I don't have any regrets no, would I be different if I went to college? You know, probably but no I don't have any regrets, the only regret that I have is that that darn disease took my husband.

MB: Yeah. Based on your life experience, what advice would you give to women of today and future generations?

GM: I would say, you know, the women today have a lot going for them and I would say keep going for the gusto really, I mean you don't have to settle for anything, you don't have to, not that we settled for anything but there's so much more opportunity, you have a world that's totally different, you can become president of the United States if you wanted to where as I kind of grew up really in a man's world so to speak, and I think the man's world has taken a little bit of a back seat, which is a good thing, so you can do anything a man can do and what's that saying? Only better?

MB: Yeah [laughs].

AG: Anything he can do, I can do better [laughs].

GM: Right, and I do believe that. I think that you guys have opportunities.

MB: Do you carry on any traditions?

GM: Yes, you know, we have the whole holiday traditions and pretty much those are the traditions with our family is the family holiday traditions those are a big part of our life, we do, were going to be coming up on, I mean we do Halloween.

MB: [Aw] That's cute.

GM: That's coming, and I like Halloween and sometimes I use to get dressed and I loved seeing the little kids but that's kind of going away too. I don't get very many children coming to the door anymore, you know, maybe society has kind of changed some of that but then we have the thanksgiving holiday. We use to have the thanksgiving holiday at our house, when my husband was here and he would do all of the cooking, my husband did all the cooking, you know, I never even had to make a pie, he did all of that, made the turkey and things, and as my kids got older they would come here now we go to my daughters house for thanksgiving and Christmas and Christmas eve, and we have Christmas day here at my house with my daughter and I host Christmas day here.

MB: Nice. Do you feel you have a legacy?

GM: Yes.

MB: How has your Italian descent impacted your involvement in the community? Which I know you kind of brushed upon.

GM: Yeah I mean, I would say that my Italian descent, you know, again as I was growing up it was a big major part of my life. It was interesting that when I even met my husband he was full Irish and my parents, especially my father, was a little bit taken back that I would be dating a man that was an Irish man. I dated so many Italian men, that I would say that my Irish husband was the cream of the crop.

MB: [Aw]

GM: Compared to those Italian men I dated [laughs] it took a while for my father to warm up to my husband but everybody loved my husband, my sisters, my mother and that worked out really well. My husband was a sport, you know, because he'd be around all of my family, my sisters and their husbands were all Italian and everybody would be speaking Italian so my husband, I remember him going to the Worcester library and getting reel-to-reel tapes so that he could learn Italian, he'd have them – he'd run them in the morning before he was getting ready for going to work and he'd play them at night when he got home so that he could either learn to speak it or at least understand it.

MB: That's cute.

GM: But everybody, you know, welcomed him after, but at first it was kind of, I was the only one who really married out of the Italian tradition but it turned out to be great.

MB: Good. How important was it for you to raise your kids in the Worcester County?

GM: It was important because we wanted our children to be close to families, my family and my husband's family, my husband's family was from Millbury and mine was from Worcester so when we got married, like I said, we lived in Worcester and then we lived

in Millbury and then we found our home, here in Grafton. At least that kept us, close to Millbury and Worcester so that we could see our parents, and our siblings. I use to take the bus and with my kids and take my kids on the bus, the busses. I don't know if they even have busses anymore, but busses use to Millbury and we'd take the bus into Worcester and then we would exchange and take the bus to see my mother.

MB: How nice. How would you describe yourself?

GM: [Pause] Maybe you should ask my kids [laughs]. I say [laughs] that I'm a very nice women, if I do say so myself [technical noises]. I, you know, I have had a good life, you know, I've always been a good friend, I think I've been a good mother, I think I've been a good wife, we had a great marriage so I don't know how I wouldn't be a great wife so I would say that. And I am a great friend, I've have lots of friends along the way and still do which at 88, almost 88, I still have a core group of friends that I hang out with, unfortunately some of them are passing but I've had friends for very many years so I'd say I'm a pretty good, good woman [laughs].

MB: Now that we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of women than has been recorded in the past, what should we be sure to include about you?

GM: Well I think, what should you include about me? [Pause] Well coming from, you know, an Italian descent and coming again we kind of were a diverse group coming into Worcester and kind of went to an area where there were a lot of Italians. And you know, I think diversity is kind of the way of the world and the way of the United States so I kind of, kind of lived that at truly at one point. I mean even like I said, I was the first one who really married outside of the Italian culture, so I maybe I was a little rebel back then, I'm not sure but um I think that started – now I, now I know that my kids can say that they are Italian and Irish but my grandchildren are a mix of so many different things which is as they say, the melting pot...

MB: [Mmhm]

GM: Of the United States, so I kind of came from being full, you know, descent of Italian and then started the – I guess maybe I started a transition...

MB: There you go [laughs].

GM: Into a diverse society.

MB: Is there anyone else you would suggest we talk to?

GM: Sure, I think that you could go to, you know, I'm very fortunate that I still live in a home, in the home that I, you know, I had built with my husband. There might be some opportunities to, you know, visits maybe some of the senior centers, maybe in the Worcester area who have, you know, maybe they grew up in Worcester and are still in Worcester or in a, or in or either in a senior center or maybe in a, I hate to call it a nursing

home, but unfortunately that's what some of them are and then maybe you could get some [throat clears] more, women talking about how it was to be in the Worcester area.

MB: Well, Ashley and I, definitely appreciate your time that you've given up to give us this interview.

AG: Yes.

MB: So we would like to say thank you.

AG: Thank you so much.

GM: I hope I gave you what you, you know, what you wanted.

MB: Absolutely.

AG: You definitely did, thank you.

GM: You're welcome, good luck with your schooling [laughs].

AG: Thank you.

GM: I'm very proud of you [laughs].