

Interviewee: Gloria Abramoff
Interviewer: Kayla Haveles
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Transcriber: Kayla Havales



Abstract: Gloria Zieper Abramoff was born in 1952 and raised in the Tatnuck Square section of Worcester, MA. She attended Tatnuck Elementary School, Chandler Street Junior High and Doherty Memorial High School, all on the west side of Worcester, MA. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Comparative Literature from Trinity College in Hartford, CT in 1974. She earned a Masters in Arts and Teaching degree from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, MA. Gloria lived in Philadelphia, PA for a short time where she met her future husband, Larry Abramoff, also a native of Worcester. Gloria shares her memories of owning and operating the popular and successful Tatnuck Bookseller with her husband from 1975-2006. She reflects on the changing bookstore business during that time.

KH: My name is Kayla Haveles and I am interviewing Gloria Abramoff on October 22, 2007. You agreed to record this session?

GA: Yes.

KH: Alright. What is your full maiden name and your married name?

GA: My full maiden name is Gloria – do you want middle name? Jane Zieper. And my married name is Gloria Abramoff.

KH: When were you born?

GA: In 1952.

KH: OK. Do you have any children?

GA: I have two sons.

KH: Two sons. Do you have any grandchildren?

GA: No grandchildren.

KH: OK. Where were you born and where did you grow up?

GA: I was born in Worcester and I grew up in Worcester.

KH: What was your neighborhood like growing up?

GA: Well, it's Tatnuck Square and I'm not sure it's changed all that much. It was, uh, very, I think, a classic post war baby boom 50's experience. We lived across the street from the school. We had a supermarket in the neighborhood. We went to school with our immediate neighbors, and our lives were pretty much in the neighborhood (laughing).

KH: It was kind of enclosed, even though you were in the city, it was kind of an enclosed community?

GA: Right, I mean you took the bus downtown, but your life was in the neighborhood pretty much.

KH: And how is it living where you live in the city now? Is it different from that at all or is it kind of similar?

GA: I'm still in the same zip code.

KH: So very similar.

GA: Pretty similar. I mean I think it was different, a little different for my kids and as you got older and moved out your neighborhood it could clearly have changed some. I mean I'm talking grammar school is the sort of 50's experience, you know. And then Doherty had been built by the time I got there and that drew on a larger population so you didn't know everybody in your class anymore (laughing).

KH: A little bigger.

GA: They weren't all the kids from your street.

KH: Um, where did you attend school? Grammar school, high school, college?

GA: All public schools in Worcester – Tatnuck School, Chandler Junior High, and Doherty High School, at the time called Doherty Memorial High School (it seems to have lost its M. over the years), and there was Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. And then I guess I went to UMass and got a Masters there.

KH: What did you major in?

GA: Uh, my undergraduate degree was in comparative literature and I have a Masters in Arts and Teaching from UMass, majored in English.

KH: OK, what year did you graduate from college?

GA: This shouldn't be a trick question (laughing) - 1974.

KH: 1974, OK. And what did you do after college? Did you go on to work?

GA: Yes, I moved to Philadelphia and worked as a waitress and as a paralegal (sigh) and then moved back to Worcester. During that period I met my future husband (and that's a different story) and I sort of knew because he was also from Worcester but we re-met as adults or semi-adults at that point (laughing). And then went – I didn't move back to Worcester actually – then I guess I moved to Amherst and lived there for a couple of years, and got another degree, and then moved back to Worcester and I've been here ever since. So I guess I moved back in '78.

KH: What made you move back up here after being in Philadelphia?

GA: Um, damn good dumb luck, uh chance. Really, re-meeting the man I was going to spend the rest of my life with and that was the reason (KH: That's pretty important) and family was here and so it wasn't - it was hardly an unknown, you know, a wild risk moving back. I did not fully intend to move back. I thought I was done with Worcester; I thought I had put in my time (laughing).

KH: And here you are (laughing).

GA: And here I am. So go figure. Best laid plans.

KH: Do you still have a lot of family in the area?

GA: Yeah, yeah. Well, less and less. Aging population, frankly.

KH: Yeah, yeah. Is it nice to have, to raise your children around your family? Do you think it made a difference?

GA: It was nice, (KH: Yeah.) it was nice. It was nice, um, I think I would have mocked it earlier but I think, I mean I've come to be really fond of my hometown and the people here and I.... we all complain about it, so – (laughing).

KH: What was it about Worcester that made you not want to be back here? Was there a reason?

GA: Oh, oh, I'm guessing the same reason all eighteen and nineteen and twenty-year-olds don't want to be back in their hometown. It's a little oppressive. You feel you know too many people. For the same reason it's nice to be back as an adult; it's oppressive I think as a young adult. You know, you want to be able to sort of reinvent yourself and be not somebody's daughter and not somebody's cousin.

KH: Do you think it was part of the baby boom generation? Do you think it was harder for you as a woman to leave on your own and go out? Like, was it different for boys and girls or did you - ?

GA: It didn't feel it.

KH: No?

GA: It didn't feel it. I think, because I – what am I a mid-boomer? – I don't know, I feel like, like the revolution had already kind of happened. (KH: Mm.) It felt absolutely normal. It would have felt, I think, at least for the people I knew, it would have felt very strange to move back and live at home and to not go get a job and move away (KH: Yeah). Honestly, I, I don't really know anybody who did.

KH: So you - therefore you can already see, like a change happening. You could have seen a change happening for women to go out into the workforce.

GA: I think it was much more – I mean it was expected. It would have been – I don't know anybody who married right out of college or contended to or – (KH: Interesting.) – kind of a self-selecting pool but – (laughing)

KH: Um, what did you do for work after you left college? Or do you still do the same thing now, or - ?

GA: No, um, I mean that - that's another how your plans – what you end up doing and what you think you're going to end up doing don't really coincide (KH: Yeah). As I say, I was in Philadelphia for a little while and was doing what came to hand. That was the other problem with being a baby boomer is there's so many of us that suddenly there's this huge amount of people with the same qualifications all chasing the same jobs. And '74 was, in fact, a recession, so it wasn't a great time to be graduating into the work place. So I actually went out and got a certificate to be a paralegal and worked for a huge company for a while, and was not loving it. And then met Larry, and decided that I would move closer to home but I wasn't really quite ready to go home (laughing). And he had opened the bookstore, Tatnuck Square. He had opened Tatnuck Bookseller in 1975 and, so, I guess that was an intriguing notion. I actually thought I would need a job so when I went to UMass and got a Masters in English with, you know, a degree in teaching I thought I would teach high school English and got certified to do that. (Sigh) And then sort of got swept up into, uh, the bookstore and never left. So – I did that for the next 28 years.

KH: Really? Is that what you're still doing now as well?

GA: Well the store closed in 2006, so I was semi-retired for about six months and now I'm working for – this is so complicated (KH laughing). We had two stores at that time. Both stores – we closed the business. The second store, which is a much newer store, is in Westborough and the owner of the shopping plaza that the store was in and the land – with our landlord there – did not want us to close and asked if he just kept the business, essentially, since we were closing it. And so we agreed and the build – is not ours anymore, but the business remained open and still does business under the same corp –

under the same name although it's a different corporation, different ownership, and we have nothing to do with it except that I am now an employee.

KH: Oh!

GA: So that's a very strange turn of events, but now I am the book buyer for the bookstore, which I'd been doing anyway, so –

KH: How does it – is it different being the owner and then being an employee?

GA: Yeah, yeah it's hugely different.

KH: Is it frustrating going from - ?

GA: It's both frustrating and liberating (KH: And liberating (laughing). It's uh – depends on which day you ask me (laughing).

KH: Nice to be relieved but at the same time –

GA: Absolutely. I mean it's great when it's not your business and, you know, mistakes don't seem fatal and you can say well, you know, it's a job (KH: Yeah.). Having said that, when there's stuff I knew we should be doing differently or I think I could do differently, and I – but I'm not the boss so – (KH: Yeah, yeah.) So, so I guess I can't!

KH: And that can be frustrating.

GA: And that can be frustrating. And I think this is a bizarrely, you know very unique, strange situation that, in fact, I'm bringing such an insane amount of experience to a very specific job, but I'm not the boss so –

KH: Right. So the bookstore, it was just a small - ?

GA: I guess, yeah. I'm sad that you weren't here!

KH: I know! And I love books so I'm sad too! (both laughing)

GA: It was actually, it was a wonderful bookstore. It was um, it started very small. I'll give the whole history of the bookstore. When he opened it in 1975 it was 600 square feet, just tiny. And he and his partner were the entire staff. And then I came in and I was a huge part of the staff, and then he bought out his partner and we eventually had, you know, one or two employees. And then, we bought the building next to us, and then we expanded into the basement, and then we expanded into the upstairs and I – I always laugh – I had a customer who told me once he had a nightmare that we were tunneling under Chandler Street because we just, we sort of maxed out this sort of funny storefront at Tatnuck Square. And, about 16 years ago, we bought a different - it was an old factory building on Chandler Street, about two miles away from Tatnuck Square, although we

kept the name Tatnuck Bookseller we were not longer in Tatnuck Square, but it was Sleeper and Hartley building and it's about 22,000 square feet and it was at the time the largest independent bookseller in New England, before the big boxes came in. Although we still physically - I think were larger than some of the ones in the Worcester area (KH: Really.) Oh, we had a full service restaurant, they served three meals a day, and you could get a martini (KH: Oh wow) and we ran, at one point, the WPI bookstore, the Clark bookstore, and the Becker bookstore.

KH: So you really branched out to all different areas.

GA: And now, we don't! (laughing) It's a changing marketplace. But yeah, it was a great adventure; it was a great adventure. And it was a wonderful store.

KH: Why did you close it down?

GA: Changing marketplace, truly. The internet, the big boxes, they kind of circled us around, and cut us off, and really the internet was a lot of it. And just changing, just changing, you know. And we got tired. He'll say that - Larry, my husband, is a very creative businessman and he throws away more ideas, you know, than most people generate, every morning. And he always had the ability to just be a little ahead of the curve, to work a little harder, to, you know, do it a little differently, to think of something else. So, we sort of - at a certain point you're dancing as fast as you can and you can't keep it up and that's pretty much what happened. We came to the end of an excellent run. We had a blast, we really did.

KH: Um, what kind of books did you sell - Was it all kinds? Everything?

GA: Full service. Everything.

KH: What was it like working with your husband as a partner like that?

GA: We were actually pretty good at it. Um, we actually got better at it as the building got bigger (laughing).

KH: A little space? (laughing)

GA: Right. And our duties diverged more. Sometimes we could go hours and hours without really interacting at all. But, the downside is you bring it home with you too. We sort of couldn't escape the business or our own concern about the business. I always - for me the books really were the most important thing. (?) ...when people tell me numbers and I nod, I nod politely and I gotta say they don't stick, but I can remember titles forever (KH: Yeah, yeah.). We had the things that we did well and they worked well together. But yeah, we actually - we've been laughing about it now. Now I can come home and tell him all about work and it's really interesting. It's more interesting to both of us because it's a business we're interested in but - what we discovered is when we talked business in the past, there was an implicit criticism. If he was telling me what was wrong and I was telling him what was wrong, well, you know, look in the mirror.

Who are we talking about? You know, that's pretty much where it stopped. That was – if there was a problem or a mistake that needed correcting it was really about us. And now, it's just kind of this interesting business that we both really like and are interested in and, you know, put a lot of hard work into, and now it's much more theoretical. And it's, uh – I'm kind of having fun. It's kind of relaxing.

KH: It takes the pressure off of it being about you two completely and - (GA: Right, it's not personal now) it's not personal.

GA: So that's kind of – that was an unexpected gift that we sort of discovered this last year, and it was like, oh yeah!

KH: Well, being able to stay in the business in a different capacity, that's definitely a plus.

GA: And he's not in it now so it's not about him at all, which is kind of great. So he's kind of a good sounding board for me –

KH: To bounce ideas off of.

GA: Yeah, which I guess is what other people would have done in their real lives if they didn't work together, but we didn't know that (laughing). And imagine our surprise!

KH: Do you have any regrets at all about working with him, or - ?

GA: No, I really, um, I didn't – I hadn't planned on some hugely hard driving career, if you want to know the truth. I'm really not that aggressive. So, bookselling for me was a wonderful career. And getting to be the boss and not within a huge corporate structure. It was heaven. It was pretty great. Because if you are the boss at Barnes and Noble, I mean, you are within these really strict parameters of what – they tell you the how and the why and the what and the when of everything you do, and we were always winging it and...(trails off)

KH: And it was good? Like you said you're really into the books so having control over, I guess, (GA: Right) what comes into the bookstore and what's being sold and put out there must be very –

GA: Yeah, it's great. You know if you're going to sell something – I was not a born salesman but I'll tell ya, this was a product I could get behind. (laughing) It was pretty great.

KH: Um, also, interesting that because you work with him, sometimes there's concerns, even now about women working outside the home and the pressures between a home life (GA: Right.) and family and working outside the home. Was there any pressure at all to stay in the home, or especially once your boys were born?

GA: No, you know and that – don't I sound like the wor- like the hugest Pollyanna here. I mean it really worked out that – that's not to say there weren't times of great stress, because having kids does that to you anyway, and having a business does that to you, and having a husband does that to you (both laughing). I mean that's potential for a very stressful – but there was never any question that if I needed to be home with the kids, I'd stay home, because his interests and my interests definitely coincided there.

KH: Right, right, so it was a good balance, good situation.

GA: And having grandparents around also was really nice then, because if there were any kind of emergency – that's also the upside to living in your hometown (KH: and around family...) Right. Here I have other people whose, you know, your children's best interest and who's incredibly close to their hearts, so, it does take a lot of that miserable pressure – and I would – I certainly saw lots of women really struggling with that. And it's – it was hard. It's hard for them and it was hard for us. We were always – because we were so close to our business, and knew it was easier for us in terms of childrearing, we tried to be really nice to people about that. But in retail, you can't put the job aside 'til the next day. You know, if you're supposed to be there opening the store, or running the register, or – it's not like a paper pushing job. You can't pile it up on your desk and say well today isn't a good day for it but tomorrow is (KH: Yeah). You physically really have to be there. It's not a – and there was not much telecommuting then, but you really couldn't have done it, you know. And so, I, it was – I mean when the kids were very young, particularly the first one because this was before I had two, I took him to work. And he had his little playpen in the bookstore. And people – you know, the store was small, I was young, he was cute. (both laughing)

KH: Good for business.

GA: It was good for business.

KH: Just sounds like it was a very nice balance between being able to balance and work at the same time.

GA: But once they got older they both had family daycare. Not my family, but they were both in daycare situations, for most of their babyhoods until they went to school.

KH: Right. Was it hard to put them in daycare at all?

GA: I – I don't think – I'd have to ask them if they disliked it. They would tell me they don't remember it probably. (KH: Yeah.) So, you know, I could beat myself up all day about whether it was wonderful or not so wonderful. I mean they were nice ladies who took care of them. I have no horror stories (laughing).

KH: If they didn't say anything then –

GA: Yeah, you know, who can tell!

KH: Outside of work and your job, um, do you consider yourself politically active? Are you part of any groups or boards or anything within the city?

GA: I have been. I have to say I'm pretty inactive right now. Politically active – I mean, I have a big mouth I'm not sure if uh – (laughing) I feel strongly.

KH: That's political! (laughing)

GA: But am I a particularly active member of any group? I'm not a great joiner, honestly. So even when I'm on boards I have a tendency to nod off. You ever sat through one of them and (makes vacant, staring look – both laugh)?

KH: When you are part of boards - what boards have you been part of in the past?

GA: Um, let's see. I am currently still with Worcester Historical Museum. I was on the board for the bridge for a long time. Um, oh God I don't know. I'm active with Mass Audubon. I was active with the Worcester Women's History Project.

KH: Sounds like you kind of have an interest in history, too.

GA: A little bit, yeah. Or I think people assume I have an interest in it.

KH: So they ask you join things? (both laughing)

GA: No, I am interested in it.

KH: Do you feel now, um, differently than you did when you were - like a younger woman just starting out. Like has it changed you as a person being part of this career world or is it about the same?

GA: How do I feel about what part of it?

KH: Just, I guess in general has it changed your beliefs or your character even?

GA: Oh, I think it must. Boy, I hate to think you're so fully formed at 22 (laughing). I mean I thought I was at 22. I think in retrospect I know that wasn't the case. Yeah, yeah, I mean there are some gifts of age you do – and some downsides. I mean, I never suffered fools gladly. I don't now, probably, any more than I did then. But I have a broader definition I guess of what a fool is (KH: Yeah.). I mean it sometimes cuts – I don't know – or (?) in both directions. I think you're more tolerant, I think you have to become...more tolerant. It's a variable. Sometimes you have a shorter fuse and sometimes, you know... But yes, you do change. And I think business, being in business, and it was a very public business, and I guess that's – it's sort of interesting that you don't know it because in Worcester – this is going to sound bizarre – it figured large in peoples' lives and imagination. And for us, the store, more than being on boards to

some extent, was a very – bookstores can be like that - are a visible expression of what you think. You know, your support of First Amendment rights, of – I will tell you we tended to host more Democratic functions than Republican functions. You know you sort of – it was in its own silly way kind of a bully pulpit and you could work with different organizations and we would give space to, you know, the Boy’s Club or the Special Olympics – you know you could work with – it was a place where lots of non-profits in the city would come to us and say, “What can we do together?”, and it was a place where people could come very comfortably and do things were – well it was easier for them. It was sort of a very public, very central place that you didn’t feel like you had to be committed to this event or this cause, but you could partake of it in a very, sort of a neutral setting. You know by the end – this feels like old politics – but we didn’t realize that they were having lots of the meet-ups for the John Kerry committee and people would call us and say, “Oh, what time is it?” And we’d say, “Well, we don’t know.” They were sort of – because people felt comfortable – and so we hosted lots and lots and lots of those events. So, partially for me because I’m kind of lazy about joining things it was great. You know, I could sort of be part of an active, have an active role in lots of things without becoming deeply committed as a board member or, you know. But it was kind of wonderful.

KH: That’s kind of nice to have a – the bookstore itself kind of became a political center, for everyone.

GA: It did. For everybody. And um, you know, skinheads weren’t particularly welcome, but whatever. (laughing) It was a Massachusetts kind of experience. Given that it’s Massachusetts it was, uh, it was wonderful.

KH: But how does it make you feel to have provided such, like an important place for so many people?

GA: You know I don’t think until in retrospect and we heard from so many people, honestly, when we closed, how bereft they were. And I have to say, it’s two years later and I still hear it. And how does that make me feel – it was great. It was – and I feel sad that there’s nothing that’s quite taken its place. I mean you can’t really do it in a mall. But because we were the proprietors, and had the final authority to say yes, you could say yes to lots of things, and you weren’t hearing from a bigger boss telling you, “Well I’m not sure, you know. If you hold this, you’ll anger this group and if you say no to that you’ll anger that -” you know, and which is really why places like malls don’t do that. They can’t.

KH: It becomes associated.

GA: Right. It can be good for business, it can be bad for business, and those are risks they can’t take, and we could.

KH: That’s a nice freedom to have.

GA: It was. It was a really nice freedom. Um, so, no regrets! (laughing)

KH: Do you think there's any defining moments or events – like even public events in the country and stuff. Like having a bookstore like that throughout, and having it be the meeting place for people. Do you think there's any events that, either kind of you saw flourish within the bookstore or even within your life that were important turning points?

GA: (long pause) Hm. I mean, that is the nice thing about bookstores. Even if you're not hosting events you're so tied to whatever's happening. But because your business is that you have to be paying attention, you know you sort of can't – you're buying these books based on what you feel the temper of the times are, what people are gonna want, what the issues are, and then you host signings, of people – we had George McGovern in, we had one of the junior Kennedys, we had Paul Tsongas – you know it was, it was kind of great. So, as specific events but - just over time it became such a normal part of what people expected of the store. And, yeah, it tapered off at the end as business began to – I guess – I'm not sure if we saw it and nobody else did, but who can tell. The last couple years I have to say weren't as much fun, but leading up to them it really was, um - it was cool.

KH: It must have been really interesting to meet so many different people, too, coming in for signings and –

GA: Yeah, yeah it was fun. I mean, you know it was – we met Abby Hoffman when he first came out of hiding and did a signing at the store. And it was – it was a blast and we had angry people saying he shouldn't be there and it was...

KH: How did you deal with things like that? Or did it just not bother you?

GA: You just kind of – most people can kind of say that's the First Amendment issue that you really want to protect, you really want to have people be able to speak. But once again it was a private place so we could also say no to people, you know, that we didn't want. It wasn't like public – it wasn't like television where you need to give equal time – we don't! It was kind of wonderful! (laughing) No public money involved, oh well! It's funny that people don't quite get that with the bookstore. They'll say, "Oh, you know, you shouldn't have this book or you must have that book." And in the big world that's kind of true but it also is not true at all. It's like I still can choose to buy or not buy – (KH: Right) whatever I want!

KH: Right, and as a bookseller you had the power to kind of decide.

GA: Right, right. It was fun. That part's still fun!

KH: Are there any other times in your life, I guess even in terms of the bookstore, just being in so much power (GA: Never in power (laughing) – not power but having control and that type of thing. Did you ever feel because you were a woman that you felt opposition at all.

GA: Oh, I mean comically. Partially that was my fault because as I say I'm not particularly aggressive and we would always laugh if I were at the counter and there was a man 15 years younger than me standing next to me who I was training, people would turn to him.

KH: Really.

GA: Oh yeah. Absolutely. But, you know, you get over it. (laughing)

KH: Did that bother you?

GA: We thought – by that time I thought it was comical. Yeah, early on it did, but –

KH: You just kind of get used to those types of things after a while?

GA: You would get used to it. Yeah, partially that was it. As I said I brought it on myself to some extent, I think. You know, we didn't dress all that well. We weren't – we didn't have sort of a lovely corporate look. Really up until the last few years we wore jeans to work all the time. And then we tried to act like grown-ups and we tried to dress up a little, but –

KH: Did that happen right through to the end too, that they would still – did it change throughout the years? Did it change or did they still always prefer the guy?

GA: No, no, I think, I still think that that happens. Don't you think that still happens?

KH: I'm sure it does. It's very interesting though. Especially you'd think the older person would be in charge, but, that's-

GA: But, or even if someone who looked the same age if they were – you know, if I were standing there and the male employee was standing there –

KH: They would always go to him?

GA: Yeah, oh yeah. If they didn't know me there would always be an assumption.

KH: What about people you dealt with as like a co-owner? Did they want to deal more with your husband than they did with you?

GA: Well, it would depend, you know, on – correctly, for lots of things they dealt with him. As I say, he loves business. He loves the business of business and finds it fascinating and finds it challenging, and I never did.

KH: So it was just kind of a separation of duties kind of thing?

GA: Yeah, yeah. And because – this sounds stupid but – because he loved the business part, because a lot of the risks that we took – and we took some huge ones – were his to some extent, you know. He had invented the business. I have to say I was, you know, a good addition. I brought skills to it that were really useful. But, was I a visionary businesswoman? Absolutely not. That would be a huge lie to come away with, that idea. (laughing)

KH: But at the same time you were very happy with your position within the business.

GA: Right, right. I mean, I wasn't a retiring flower either particularly. But, business decisions, monetary decisions within the business – I wasn't that interested in it. They weren't kept for me. I think the poor guy would have loved it if I had said, "but, but, but don't you – look over here – or, you know, let's check out that spreadsheet," you know. (KH: Yeah). And he was so sweet. He would tell me this stuff and I would nod as if I were following along but really I was (laughing) thinking of something entirely other because as I say numbers just don't sing to me. I would try but they don't and they still don't.

KH: But at the same time, there you had two different aspects of business that needed to get done and work together. That's great. (pause)

GA: Is that it?

KH: Is there anything else you would like to add? Anything about - even about it being in Worcester, do you think Worcester made a difference? The fact that it was in Worcester as a city, a specific city?

GA: In books – they had a very quick change and evolution. I'm not sure it would have made a difference. I mean, independent bookstores are closing up all over, including in major cities, and Boston really doesn't have any left. New York has very few left. That all came and happened, what feels like, in a heartbeat. Really from the beginning of the proliferation of independent bookstores, and when books became less expensive, and easier – the whole business sort of started to work and there were a million of us, you know, mom and pop stores and we grew faster than most and got sort of bigger and fancier than a lot of them. But when the big boxes came in, I'll tell ya, I don't think – a lot of bookstores were really blindsided. And pre-big box ones like Walden's and Dalton's, and this centralized buying for 1800 stores or, you know, 2000 stores, or 2400 stores or whatever these would end up. I mean this is really within a generation, these small bookstores grew and died. It was pretty fast. (KH: Very fast). And I'd say the real – the online bookselling then really, really hastened the demise of what was left, whatever business was left, because independents, generally what would happen was they would keep the hardest part of the business, you know, the specialized books and special orders that were difficult to get and a sort of labor intensive ick (sic) of it, and then that was gone. You know, that sort of got (?) out. So there wasn't a whole bunch left. So would it have mattered where you are? I think we hung on a little longer because demographically Worcester is - always gets no respect. I mean, truly. You're here. You

know, we got our first Starbucks four years ago (KH: Yeah, yeah.). And so really until they had pretty much cannibalized everybody else, they started moving in (laughing).

KH: Last resort? They'd used everyplace else.

GA: They'd used every other piece of real estate. OK, Central Massachusetts we'll give them – and to some extent that was nice. You know, it kept us from being as boring and homogenous and – it allowed for pockets of quirky that got wiped out faster in other places.

KH: Right. And Worcester being kind of a smaller city, too, and not completely commercialized and high powered...

GA: Right. It's a secondary market and so when they were starting out they kind of ignored us and so we got to grow and flex and – so we probably had a longer run than we might have elsewhere. But nationally, I mean, the trend was the same. I don't take it personally.

KH: Yeah, yeah. Not much you can do about that. Um, I think that's it unless there's anything else you think that you'd like to add?

GA: Hmm. I think that's it unless - if that does it for you?

KH: I think that's all I had to ask. Thank you very, very much.

GA: Well it was nice meeting you.

KH: You too, I really appreciate it.

GA: What year are you?

KH: I am a senior.

GA: Oh, you're a senior.

KH: Yes.

GA: So where are you going next year? Now I get to ask the questions. (laughing).

KH: I'm looking at grad school

GA: You can shut that off now