

Interviewee: Lynn Cody
Interviewers: Jessica Hernandez and Jennifer O'Neill
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Transcribers: Jessica Hernandez and Jennifer O'Neill



Overseen by Dr. Carl Keyes, Assumption College, Worcester Massachusetts

Abstract: Lynn Cody was born in 1983 in the Burncoat neighborhood of Worcester, MA. She has resided in Worcester for the majority of her life, with the exception of the four years in which she attended Stonehill College in Easton, MA. She currently is head of dining services and social media at the College of the Holy Cross and is married to husband Ryan Cody. Living in the city of Worcester has played a significant role in shaping her as a woman and has caused her to feel a certain bond to her city. This bond is what led her and a fellow student to enter into a contest to present why Worcester is such a great city. The two of them won first prize and gained recognition for their city as an All American City. This contest was around the time of the Worcester Cold Storage Fire on December 3, 1999, which Lynn remembers vividly, and says had an impact on all of the inhabitants of the Worcester area including her mother. She also recalls being on the first women's golf team in high school. Her family lives in the same area as she and her husband and they have played a major role in the development of Lynn's identity. Having traveled to a variety of places around the world, Lynn is a strong believer that one's identity is shaped by their community and the area they live in.

JO: We are completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women, aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850 National Women's Rights Convention on Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's education, health work, and politics/community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with your career. Thank you for your help with this important project! Mrs. Lynn Cody, do we have your permission to record this oral history project on April 7, 2014?

LC: Sure.

JH: Okay, so what is your full maiden name and your married name?

LC: My maiden name is Lynn Denise Caputo and my married name is Lynn Denise Cody.

JH: And when were you born?

LC: I was born [] 1983.

JO: And well you are married, what is the name of your current husband and or partner?

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LC: Ryan Cody.

JO: Do you have any kids?

LC: No.

JO: Okay, and now this is kind of a vague question...

JH: Yeah, but what cultures or ethnicities define you like what's your family background or heritage?

LC: My mom is Irish. My dad was Italian.

JO: Oh, I'm fifty-fifty. [laughs]

LC: Fifty-fifty, it's good to be! I'm Catholic? I don't know how much else to expand on that, but...

JO: We'll probably cover it later. [laughs]

JH: Do you want to give us a little like background about your parents, like where they were born in?

LC: My parents were both born in Massachusetts. And I'm pretty sure my mom was born in Chicopee, Mass. And my dad I believe was born in Worcester [Massachusetts]. And I was born here and my sisters, both of my sisters were born here and we're all still here.

JO: Townies? [laughs]

LC: We can't get out.

JO: Let's see... what other places have you lived in during your life, starting with where you were born or?

LC: I have only lived in Worcester with the exception of the four years that I attended college at Stonehill College in Easton [Massachusetts].

JO: Okay.

JH: Do you want to ask what neighborhood she lived in?

LC: I grew up in the Burncoat [Worcester] neighborhood. And now I live in like the Indian Hill area.

JH: Okay.

JO: So that's where you live now. Do your other family members live close by?

LC: Yep, my mom still lives in the house that I grew up in, in the Burncoat area. My sister actually lives not too far from Assumption [College]. And then I have another sister who's currently temporarily in Providence [Rhode Island].

JO: Okay.

JH: Have you seen any like changes in Worcester, or like your maybe like hometown you were originally from like do you know like go back and see something different or have you seen anything significant?

LC: I mean definitely there has been a lot of changes since I grew up in Worcester. It's definitely more diverse, the schools are more diverse, which is good. I think they are really starting to kind of build up certain neighborhoods to make them better for, you know, just better for like commerce. Downtown they have been making a lot of changes. When we were growing up a lot of the neighborhoods that I'm sure you guys go to now, either just to you know, not Shrewsbury Street. Shrewsbury Street has kinda always been how it is now, similar. But areas like the Canal District and downtown, we would never have gone there. Even and I only graduated less than ten years ago from college and a lot of those places were not there, so they are making some big improvements to kind of be more I think or they're working towards trying to be more on the level of towns like Providence [Rhode Island] and Boston [Massachusetts]. They are just trying to make things a little more exciting.

JH: Oh yeah, because Worcester is considered a pretty...

LC: Yeah.

JH: ...predominant city.

LC: Yep.

JO: Do you want to pause it?

JH: Yeah.

(pause to make sure device was recording correctly)

JO: So what next?

JH: Maybe this one?

JO: Okay, well since this is the Women's Oral History Project, what do you think, generally, like women's experiences in Worcester have been since you've been around like, do you notice any...?

LC: I haven't really noticed any changes. I mean I think we're lucky to live in a time where it's like, it doesn't matter if you're a woman. So I've never felt like doors weren't open for me, or like opportunities weren't available to me. I feel like Worcester has been pretty good to me in that way. I've never felt...

JO: Like held back?

LC: Yeah or discriminated against or...

JO: Well that's good!

[laughs]

JH: And you said that you attended school at Stonehill?

LC: Yep.

JH: Let's see.

JO: Where did you attend for high school?

LC: I attended Burncoat High School.

JO: Okay.

JH: What was your like major? What did you focus on? Did you like flip-flop at all between anything? [laughs]

LC: When I was at Stonehill, I actually designed my own major. I went in as a business major and I left with a degree in Multidisciplinary studies, which was a focus on marketing and graphic design. And then I also had a minor in Psychology.

JO: Oh that's my major right now. But I think I'm going to switch it probably to Human Services and do a minor in Psychology.

LC: Oh nice!

JO: Yeah.

LC: Yeah a minor I felt like in Psychology, I mean for me, it was enough.

JO: Yeah, I think that's enough too. Plus Human Services incorporates like a bunch of Psychology.

LC: Yep.

JH: Did you, I mean obviously every college student undergoes challenges, but was there any like significant challenge like you kind of got to a point where you didn't know either what you were going to do?

LC: Yeah, I think a lot of people don't know what they do, I don't even know if right now if this is what I want to do. [laughs]

JO: I feel like a lot of people still tend to say that. [laughs]

LC: I'm not a person who, you know really has a passion for one thing or another, I mean I have to work to pay my bills, but if I didn't have to work I mean I don't know. [laughs] Of course I'd find something to do but, there's nothing I...you know my husband's a teacher and he loves teaching.

JO: What age group?

LC: He teaches high school.

JO: Oh.

LC: And I wouldn't say that I love doing my job, but I like it. I don't really remember what the question was but.

JH: Oh it was just like challenges and education?

LC: Have I had any challenges in education...I will say that I...So I attended Burncoat High School. I will say, I mean I think I had a pretty good high school experience. I think the high schools in Worcester are getting a little bit tougher, in terms of the environment, not in

educational quality. But there is a part of me that feels like I could've been a little bit better prepared before going into college. I felt like I was a little bit behind a lot of the people that I, you know, met there. But so I guess yeah that in a way was a challenge. But it wasn't like everybody knew something and I didn't know anything about it. You know I just felt like there were things I probably could've probably known a little bit more about? But yeah.

JH: There were some things you kind of had to play catch up for a little bit? [laughs]

LC: Yeah there were some things that I was like "Oh, I don't know a whole lot about that" because we never went to school to learn about that. But I never felt like, "Oh my God, I'm not in the right place." It was just every once and a while I would feel like, "Oh I never learned about that."

JO: Do you think that your high school is working being better about preparing their kids more?

LC: You know, I don't know. My sister actually teaches at the high school that I went to. And I don't know, I mean I think things are very different now – the standardized testing is very different. The students, I'm sure you guys were all both really taught more towards the test. You know rather than...

JO: Yeah.

JH: A lot of our junior year, sophomore, like right before senior year focused on like getting ready.

LC: Yeah like things that are going to be on your test.

JO: SAT classes.

LC: My high school class was one of the test classes, so my grades and my performance on that test didn't matter. But now I think it definitely plays a role in what people are learning and I think in a way that kind of levels the playing field, but I just don't know if everyone is learning the things they are supposed to be learning.

JO: Okay, were you involved in any like, what did you do in your spare time? Like extracurricular activities either in high school that you continued in college?

LC: In high school...Oh this is actually kind of interesting! [laughs] In high school I played field hockey. I played tennis for a year and then my friends and I started the first Worcester Women's Golf Team.

JO/JH: Oh!

LC: So I did that for three years. In college, I was on the dance team and there was also a dance club so I was part of that. And then I was the secretary for the marketing club. And I was secretary for my class in high school, but it wasn't like real. [laughs] Like we didn't really do anything that I think real kind of student government associations do. I think I just attended a meeting one time. Yeah, so...

JO: That golf team?

LC: Yeah it was pretty interesting, I think there's like a plaque up in city hall or something.

JH: Oh wow.

LC: Oh and actually you know what also I did, I totally forgot about this... as a junior going into my senior year of high school. I don't know if you've seen around the city they have sometimes on the street lights or like telephone poles, these signs that say "Worcester is an All America City?" So, now you might see one if you haven't already.

JO: Now we'll pick up on it. [laughs]

LC: There is this All American City Competition that cities all over the country, I don't know, I don't remember exactly how you like apply to get in. But you go down to one specific city, so we went. I was part of a group of I don't know I think there might have been a hundred of us. So there were two students, a boy and a girl chosen from each high school and we all went down to Louisville. And we had to do this big presentation on why Worcester is like an interesting city. And we won!

JO: Oh!

JH: Wow.

JO: Cool.

LC: So I was a part of that. So now when you are driving around...

JO: We can keep our eyes peeled.

JH: Yeah. Definitely.

LC: I don't know if they have done it since then. I think it happens like every five years.

JH: That's nice. Kind of like representing your city.

LC: Yeah it was really interesting. It was just after the big Worcester [Cold Storage] Fire where we lost six fire fighters. So a lot of firemen went and were part of our presentation. So it was kind of interesting I found.

JH: Yeah.

LC: And we got to – so I went with actually a boy that I went to grammar school with, so we went to all of our, you know, younger years of school together. But we got to meet students from the other high schools in the town in the city that we wouldn't necessarily know otherwise. So it was kind of interesting.

JH: Cool.

JO: Oh so, right now you're at Holy Cross.

LC: Yep.

JO: How did you end up there?

LC: So when I graduated from college – well, actually we'll backtrack. My father worked at a couple of different companies that all ended up turning into Hanover Insurance. And he worked there for twenty-five years and then one day I guess just decided that he wanted to make a change and he really wanted to get into higher education. So he actually got a job at Holy Cross. Around the same time that my dad got hired at Holy Cross, my older sister was also graduating from college and she was looking for a job. They happened to be hiring so my sister got the job there. So I graduated college in '05 and I worked for TJX [Companies] for two and a half years. But I wasn't really interested in what I was doing. Kind of like I was graduating, they offered me a job, and I took it. I mean it was a good experience. I got to work for a huge corporate organization, which is really interesting. But it just wasn't what I wanted to do. And there happened to be an opening up at Holy Cross and I actually started so now I do marketing for dining. But I used to work doing marketing for the alumni relations office and the fundraising office. So that's how I got to Holy Cross. So I have been there since December of '07.

JO: Oh wow.

JH: Okay. Oh, who, I mean obviously there are kind of like the big shots at the school who do you work for. Are you kind of more independent or do you work with others?

LC: I mean I have a boss. And I report to her, but for the most part I work pretty independently. Just because the way that the department is kind of set up, everybody has very specific tasks to do. And Holy Cross tends to be a little leaner on the Human Resources side. So there's not, you

know, I don't have like a team of people. It's just me. So if something has to get done then I am responsible for making sure it gets done. There are a couple people I work with on certain events, but for the most part I'm pretty independent as long as I just meet with my boss, let her know what's going on, let her know what we're looking to do, and that's it. But for the most part, she kind of just lets me do what I need to do.

JH: Do you think that that's like better than working with other people, like are you more like a team person?

LC: I mean I think it would be great to have a team, for people to be able to do everything. I'm sure we would be able to get, you know, a lot more done. But I think we do a pretty good job of getting what we need to get out there. And the only person who has ever held...actually I'm the only person who held my position before in Alumni relations. So that's an interesting kind of decision to be in too because you have nothing to work from which can be good and bad because you have nothing to reference and say, "Oh we did this last year." But I mean I think it would be good to work with a team. But you know now it's just not an option. I mean yeah there are people around if I need something. Everyone is always willing to you know kind of pitch in. But for the most part, as far as, it's just me. Solo. [laughs]

JO: So what's like your average workday like?

LC: So my average work day is...right when I get in I check my email and I check all my social media accounts. Make sure that we didn't miss anything over the evening. Usually I have some kind of meeting that is tailored around an event that we have coming up. So, you know, like for example we have like an Easter dinner coming up. Or we're also doing a big renovation of the dining hall this summer so I have a lot of renovation related meetings. And I am also on a committee for the college is looking to redesign their logo and do a whole new marketing scheme. So I'm on the committee for that too. So some days I have a lot of meetings and some days I have none, which is good. So I do a lot of promotion around upcoming events. So it could be anything from posting on social media to designing a poster to reaching out to the "Team G."

JO: A lot of stuff.

LC: I also am responsible for, there's a professional organization that we're a part of. So every year they do like a series of awards. So we submit certain events that we've done to see if they'll win an award. So if like the Easter dinner, if we did something really spectacular and we went and submit that. Say like we did like a giant Easter egg or something, we would submit that. So I'm responsible for making sure that those entries get in as well. So it's everything from social media, to you know local media, to national publications. Just kind of getting the word out about what we're doing.

JO: What forms of social media?

LC: We're on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

JO: The big three. [laughs]

LC: Students aren't really on Facebook, so it's really mostly for the staff. But Twitter – Twitter everybody's pretty active. Instagram, we'll get there. Get some more followers.

JO: I feel like that's the same with Assumption, like Twitter is the new...everyone's on Twitter.

LC: Everyone's on Twitter. I think a lot of people are on Instagram. They're just not necessarily following us, so. But then they won't be able to see our awesome pictures. [laughs]

JO: Let's see...you said that your husband is a high school teacher?

LC: Yep.

JO: What subject?

LC: He's certified in Business and Spanish, but right now he's just teaching business. But he has taught Spanish previously. So he does like a marketing class, I think. One or two marketing classes, an economics class, and like a social, not social, like an entrepreneurial type class.

JO: Oh that's cool.

LC: Yeah.

JO: I don't even think my high school had one. [laughs]

LC: Yeah I know mine didn't.

JH: Yeah.

LC: Yeah so, he likes it. He also coaches baseball so.

JO: Do you think he will go back to teaching Spanish?

LC: No, I don't think so, I think he kind of found his...

JO: Found his niche? [laughs]

LC: I mean he likes it a lot better but. So yeah he's fluent in Spanish, which is helpful. We went to Mexico for our honeymoon, so...

JO: Oh!

JH: Yeah that makes it much easier.

LC: Well I didn't know what he was saying. I mean he could have been saying anything. [laughs]

JH: Hey less work for you. [laughs]

LC: Yeah it was great if we were trying to get to a market, or just tell a taxi driver to take you anywhere. It was like, just listen to this guy. [laughs]

JO: Besides Mexico, have you been anywhere else outside of the country?

LC: Yep. I have been to Paris, London, Ireland, Italy, Aruba, Jamaica.

JO: Vacations or for...?

LC: Yeah. Vacations. Nowhere with business, nowhere out of the country. Anywhere else? Nova Scotia. That's not really like a destination... Oh Bermuda. Anywhere else?

JO: That's awesome.

JH: Yeah.

LC: Think that's it. Yeah, been busy.

JH: And like you said those weren't for business, but for business do you like go across the country?

LC: Occasionally I have to travel. When I was in alumni relations I had to travel to, where did I travel to...? I mean we're lucky 'cause we're so close to Boston. A lot of things actually happen in Boston. So a lot of just like day conferences you can go to. But I went to Chicago for a social media conference. And then I went to Kansas City for another conference for like one of the softwares that we use in that department. And I actually just got back from New Jersey for a conference with dining and then I'm going to Baltimore for another conference for dining in July. And then Atlanta in December for like the national association that we're a part of does like a regional conference that was the one I just got back from. The national conference, that's the one in Baltimore. And then they do these kind of like institutes where they're like really hyper

like specific on certain subjects. So the one that's in Atlanta is at Coke. And it's just totally dedicated to marketing. So only people who are working in marketing which is good 'cause then you get to meet people who are doing the same thing as you. So then you have people that kind of bounce ideas off, which is good for someone like me who only has one person in their department. I can say, you know, "Have you ever tried this?" "Is it gonna work?"

JO: Yeah get different intakes.

LC: It's interesting, you know. There are a lot of jobs out there that give you the opportunity to be able to kind of go different places. I mean you don't really get to see a lot of what's around, but you know. You could always extend it, you could always use a vacation day and extend it and go see if something kind of like cool that you really wanted to see. Like Baltimore. There's a lot to do in Baltimore, so it's in the summer. I could take a couple days and stay down there, do something...

JO: So it's a lot of flexibility?

LC: You know, when you're when it's the conference, you're at the conference.

JO: Yeah.

LC: I mean, dining is a little bit different because our job focuses around food and drink. So it's, you know you're at breakfast at eight am and you're going straight through to dinners and cocktail receptions like to midnight. So when you're, you know, during the day you're in meetings, you're at presentations. And then you go to dinner and then you have like an afterwards reception where you can kind of market with people. So when you're at the conference it's like, you're at the conference. You're not seeing anything else. But, you know you can always say, "Oh I'll stay an extra day and go see whatever." Like in Baltimore, if you want to go catch like a baseball game or something. Then you could go do that. You know obviously you're not getting paid for it. But you're there anyways you might as well take an extra day.

JO: Why not?

LC: So a lot of people do that.

JH: Would you want to do this section?

JO: Yeah sure. Do you consider yourself active politically at all?

JH: Is it a big factor?

LC: No. I mean, I vote.

JH: Yeah.

LC: But I'm not like ever going to run for office. My mom and my sister both work for the Worcester public schools so, I mean, I pay attention to kind of those things because obviously I want to be able to know enough about what's going on to be able to vote in their favor. But I'm not, you know...political. I make sure to vote because there are definitely things in the city that, you know, if you're living in a city and you're paying taxes you want to make sure that things are kind of moving in the direction that you want them to. But outside of that I'm not really too involved.

JO: Is anyone else in your family?

LC: No, and I mean, I think we're all kind of like at the same level, you know you pay attention, you see what's happening in the city, you can be as involved as you want to be. I don't think anyone in my family has an interest in running for office but hey, what else, you never know. I don't think so but...

JH: And have you done any either community service recently or in the past or is that been a like big thing?

LC: You know, I don't do a lot of community service. I think, you know in high school I did a little bit because we had to do a little bit to put on your college application, so we did a little work with the Jimmy Fund and you know cleaning up in the like the school kind of...parks, that kind of thing. But, I'm not really too involved in the community in that way I wouldn't say.

JO: Okay. You mentioned that you were Catholic.

LC: Yep.

JO: You come from like a Catholic family? Are you like, and active...

LC: I'm really not, I'm really not. I mean, I'm Irish and Italian. Those are pretty, I mean they're pretty Catholic people. You know, I think my grandmother still attends pretty faithfully. I am not very practicing, even though I work at Holy Cross. But...

JO: In Stonehill?

LC: Yeah I mean it's a part of my life definitely, but I'm not attending every Sunday, even though I literally live like four doors down from a Church but...And I'm also on a campus with a church every day. But, yeah no I wouldn't say I'm practicing I think a lot of people of my

generation, especially in this area kind of feel the same way, I mean, so, yeah. I mean I still definitely kind of live by the things I was raised on but I'm sure a priest would tell me I'm not really like a practicing Catholic but...

JH: [laughs] So then, say you were like, having a hard time with something, would you like look to your religion for maybe like some comfort or would that not even...

LC: I don't think I would. I mean, I don't know really, I mean I don't think it would. I mean, not being in a situation I don't think that I would find it helpful but you never know. Something could happen maybe I could give it a shot. I mean, I guess I don't know. I would say probably not. It would probably have to be something pretty drastic. But, no I mean it's definitely something that, you know, to consider when you're having a child, which hopefully Ryan and I will be able to in the future, but you know, we were both kind of raised in the same way. It's like, you know, you get your first communion, you do all the things you're supposed to do. So it's like, do we want to do that same thing and it's like or we don't. I don't know what you do. You know I just kind of feel like we probably will be better about kind of involving the church in our lives when we have children because I think that changes things a lot, but right now it's not. We're not and I don't think that I'd go to the church for help but maybe I would. Who knows?

JH: So then you weren't thinking of like one child? You'd want like multiple kids?

LC: Yeah I think so. Ryan's a teacher so he just finds kids so adorable. And I have a niece and a nephew and he is great with them. Actually a lot of times he'll ask me like "Oh do you think we could go up and like play with the kids," and I'm like I'm sure my sister would love for us to go over. [laughs] Yeah, yeah, I mean it's definitely something that we're thinking about and I think I'm kind of at the age now were like, on Facebook literally every person that I went to high school with and college are either pregnant or just had a baby. So I'm kind of in that age now where it's like we have some decisions to make, you know, what do you want to do? I've never pictured my life without, you know looking down the road like I've always kind of felt I would have children so hopefully we will.

JO: Oh, what was I gonna say? Oh, back to the college thing, did you, were you happy that you chose to go to a like private college rather than like a state school or did that not....

LC: Yeah.

JO: And now you're working at one.

LC: Yeah you know I enjoyed it. The fact that it was Catholic had no bearing whatsoever. For me it wasn't like "Oh I definitely want to attend a Catholic school or not." For me it was just like, "Ok well there will be an additional you know requirement from me to take you know my required one religion class or whatever." But I just liked the school. I think a lot of, I can't really

remember where I applied anymore, but I think I kind of had a mix of schools that were and schools that weren't.

JO: Yeah, I definitely did too.

LC: And I mean, for Holy Cross, you know it wasn't at all a factor in my deciding to go there, but, in a way it's kind of nice because it's just different I think. I think it's just kind of like a different environment. The people are a little more kind of like family-ish, you know what I mean? Because everybody kind of is like – but that could just be like the college campus kind of environment where it's like, we're all kind of in this together kind of thing.

JO: Did a lot of your friends go to private schools? Like you'd hear different things from them like was there a different atmosphere to their schools or anything?

LC: You know I don't think I had a single friend from high school who went to, like of my like close group of friends, I don't think I had a single friend who went to a Catholic school. I feel like they all went to state schools actually. Which is weird.

JO: Did their like stories, like experiences were they....

LC: No I mean other than we got different days off. We didn't get certain holidays and they didn't get certain ones.

JO: Yeah with Easter coming up.

LC: Yeah so we'd get Easter break and they would be having a regular weekend so, you know I felt like our experiences were pretty similar. I mean I had a friend who went to UMass [University of Massachusetts] so that's like kind of a different situation but I had a friend who went to Bridgewater State so they're a little bit closer in size, Bridgewater and Stonehill, so I think even though her school wasn't Catholic we had still kind of similar college experiences. You know you still got to get up and go to class.

JH: Endure.

LC: And do whatever you do on the weekends and whatever.

JH: And now kind of like moving onto like health-ish kind of questions, do you yourself have like any like health issues that have like impacted you or like does your family like...

LC: My father passed away in '03 from kidney cancer. My grandparents have had, you know, kind of like grandparent kind of problems, you know like heart problems and a little bit of

diabetes, you know kind of. But nothing drastic. Myself, no I think I've been pretty lucky to be pretty healthy so we'll just keep going about our life.

JO: And your husband?

LC: Yeah, you know I don't think, all the time I had I don't think I can think of, there's nothing in our like family histories like your doctor would ask you like "Do you have any family history?" The only thing I think of, so my father having been sick, the type of cancer he had. They don't know if it's hereditary, so it's just kind of something we keep an eye on but it's not. Who knows it could be a factor, it could have nothing to do with anything, you know it could have been an environmental thing that has no connection to anything.

JO: One of the questions is, what are your experiences in accessing quality like affordable health care?

LC: I've been pretty lucky. I've actually...so TJX was...Okay well I mean growing up my mom was a teacher for a majority of our time so, and my dad worked for an insurance company so we, you know, in terms of having coverage when I was younger we were fine. As an adult I worked for TJX, which was primarily women. And women care a lot about making sure that their families have good coverage so we had really good coverage options. And Holy Cross has one of the better benefit packages I think I've ever seen. So we really are well compensated in that way. So for me it's never been an issue, but you know, I've been lucky. There definitely are other people who, I guess, I mean putting it in kind of like a real world situation, I am not at all concerned like if I have to call my doctor and go in and see her. But I know that there are other people that are; you know it's expensive to get in to see your doctor so....

JH: And would you say that you're like responsible for anybody else's health? Like I know you don't have kids but like maybe your mom...

LC: No, I'm not responsible for anybody's health. My mom is healthy, thank God so she's able to take care of herself.

JH: That's good.

LC: So yeah nobody else, I mean, I guess technically I'm responsible for my husband but I think he's ok so... [laughs]

JO: This question asks, I know you mentioned the fire in Worcester, were there any other major historical events that have occurred since you've been here? We've kind of covered that, but any ones that impacted you personally?

LC: Not that I can think of. I mean the fire was really something. It's hard even explaining what it was like to people who weren't here then. You know, my husband didn't grow up in Worcester, and you know of course he's heard things because it was on the news, but you know, I feel like everyone was kind of connected to that in some way, you know. One of the families grew up around the corner from us so we went to grammar school with them. I mean I wasn't very friendly with them, but you know we played with them in the neighborhood. They weren't like my best friends but I think that's the only one. I mean it was pretty significant. I can't think of anything on that same level.

JO: Do you remember where you were when everything....

LC: Yes, so it was December 6th [December 3, 1999] I believe and it was at night. I was at home, but my younger sister was at the Auburn Mall with her friends. And my mom had, was driving out to pick her up kind of at the beginning of all of this before they started shutting down the streets. On their way home they were redirected, they had to go a different way but on her way out to the Auburn Mall she took [Route] 290 like how you would just normally go to get out to the Auburn Mall. And she said that the heat coming off of that building, even on the far side of 290, she said it was so hot coming in the side of her car that she thought the window would burst. And at that time we, no one, I mean it wasn't quite on the news it was kind of like, "Oh there's a fire in Worcester." You know, those kind of stories are on the news all the time, no one was really thinking anything of it. But I mean, parts of 290 and roads were closed for weeks. You know, you just kind of learned to get around in different ways, but it was something.

JH: I didn't even know that was like that colossal of an event.

LC: It was really massive. I mean the building that came down was... I mean it was huge. And it's weird kind of now to think about like now I just drive by. I mean I drive on that road every day. I drive on 290 every day to get to work. But it's funny to think, "Oh my God, for half of my life I drove by a building that just doesn't exist anymore and took six people's lives and changed their families' lives forever." You know, I mean that's pretty significant.

JH: Oh yeah.

LC: You know and it affected, I mean the fire that just happened in Boston, it affects that neighborhood. People are really connected to that.

JH: Oh yeah I just drive by there like when I went back home and you know, everybody like was talking about it. They had the funeral for one of the firemen actually in my town. One of them was buried there, so it was like, I could only imagine, like that wasn't even like a huge, huge fire.

LC: Yeah I mean, it's big. I mean I think the technology is so good now that like it's, thankfully rare that firefighters will lose their life in a fire. So I think when more than one person suffers it

you know, it's pretty like that's kind of significant. So that was pretty big. I mean I can't think of anything that really was that big.

JH: Okay, these are more geared towards like our class. In our history class we're talking a lot about identity and how a person's identity kind of like sets them apart from others or incorporates them with like a community of people. So we're wondering like has your, or how's your identity as a woman impacted your life or just like your identity in general has it ever been in question or have you ever like anything really significant that you would say like your identity has played a part in?

LC: No, I mean...

JO: It's a big question. [laughs]

JH: Yeah.

LC: Yeah I mean I don't think I've ever been discriminated against, that I know of. I mean I definitely think that there are things that are harder, but I wouldn't say that being a woman changes my life or changes any decision that I make. I just probably think about it differently than like I'm sure if you asked my husband a question he might answer it differently. For, I mean, for example, so I grew up in a house full of girls and my husband grew up in a house of all boys. And you know, for whatever reason whenever we're out coming home from somewhere at night he's always like, "Oh I'm gonna stop at the convenience store and get like a soda." I'm like okay. As a girl, I'm not comfortable with that. Because sitting at a gas station alone at night while my husband is inside, it's just kind of like a little creepy. That's not even something that crosses his mind. So I think different situations I might think about them differently, but I wouldn't say that it – I mean maybe it does, maybe I just think that it's not having an impact on the decisions that I make. But I think I just kind of live my life. I think I just make decisions based on what's good for me and my family and what makes me happy rather than, you know 'I'm a woman so I should do this.'

JH: Yeah no it's kind of a good thing not to feel like you have to do a certain thing because of...

LC: Yeah I actually almost feel, I mean I'm not really like a feminist, but I just kind of would be like "Of course I can do that, I'm just gonna go do that."

JH: Yeah it's kind of nice that it's become like a norm now.

LC: Yeah, I don't think, yeah I mean I think there are parts of the country that are a little bit different than that, but yeah living in New England I think we're pretty lucky because things are a little bit more progressive. So yeah, I don't think I have to think about things in that way. I think I just do them. And I'm sure because I am a woman I...there's probably a certain aspect of

my decision making that is different because of that, but I've never been like 'Oh I wish I could do that but I can't because whatever,' or 'I wish I could have done this, this way but I can't.'

JO: So if you don't, like strongly identify yourself as like being a woman what do you think you do like identify yourself as? This could be like related to your family, like your background, your job?

LC: Okay how would I identify...I'm a middle child so that I think plays a little bit into my self. My family is pretty close and I think a lot of that is because my father passed away when we were still kind of young. My younger sister was still in high school. So I think we're closer than most families probably are, which is good. I mean I've never really thought about it I guess. You know, I'm pretty family-oriented.

JO: An Irish Italian family. [laughs]

LC: I guess we're always together doing things.

JO: And it's good you're all close by.

LC: Yeah I think, yeah I mean I would never consider moving far away. It's just not even. I mean I get to my mom's house and my sister's house in five minutes.

JO: It's a comfort.

LC: And that's, you know I like that, like if I need something I can still call my mommy. You know what I mean like if she can be over in a couple of minutes it's not like "Oh mom, I just had a question." It's like if I needed my mom, she would be there. And the reverse, like my mom lives alone, if something, if she needed something I would want to be close enough to be able to get there.

JO: I feel the same, my godparents and one of my closest cousins; they live literally like three minutes down the street and like...

LC: Oh in Worcester?

JO: No, back at home yeah. [laughs] But like it's such a comfort knowing that like my parents aren't around and I need anything they're like right there and I see them all the time.

LC: I think people who don't have that make their own little families.

JO: Yeah within the neighborhood and community, yeah.

LC: Yeah so, I don't know, I guess my identity has a lot to do with like my family.

JH: And so you feel like pretty well, I mean it helps that your family's there but you feel well incorporated into the community like you're like comfortable where you are, you kind of like...

LC: Yeah, I like Worcester. I mean it's not like the most glamorous city in the world but I feel like it has kind of everything I need. I've never felt like, I mean I've never lived anywhere else really so I don't know if I'm missing anything but I'm pretty comfortable.

JO: That's good.

JH: Anything else?

JO: I think we're all set?

JH: Sure.

JO: Should I pause it now? [laughs]

JH: Okay. [laughs]