

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Audio Files

Maine Women's History

1992

Oral Interview of Ruth Howarth by Jenny Meagher for a Project on Activist Women in South Berwick, Maine

Ruth Howarth

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_women_audio



Part of the [Women's History Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Howarth, Ruth, "Oral Interview of Ruth Howarth by Jenny Meagher for a Project on Activist Women in South Berwick, Maine" (1992). *Audio Files*. 15.

https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_women_audio/15

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Audio Files by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections Department

Oral interviews for a project on the history of activist women in South Berwick, Maine

Interviewer: Jenny Meagher (JM)

Photographer: Susanna Ross (SR)

Interviewee: Ruth Howarth (RH)

Date: 1992

Note: audio is faint

Recording number: 1992.2.8.c11.b

Length of recording: 64:04

[transcript begins]

SR: I don't know, I just really feel it's important you know, since we are giving your perspective here. To have kind of an image to go along with it. I don't know if that—

RH: Yeah, okay? Can I just ask, do you mind awfully, Susanna, if I ask my husband just—

SR: No.

RH: He'll probably be the type, he always [unclear]. You know he's my, probably best advocate, the kind of things that are really important to me.

SR: Yeah.

RH: This is, I mean it's, it's not beautiful.

SR: Was it on the outside? Yeah. Yeah.

RH: You know, it's just something that means something to me. [unclear]

SR: Sure, sure. [unclear]

JM: Yeah, you have a lot. I mean, this is a very homey home. But there's, I can't quite put—

SR: Like lots of nostalgia.

RH: Because I always say it's not fancy at all, but it just has the things that mean something to us. We don't want anything, and if anyone offered me, I mean I'm happy with what I have and it's, it's what we're all about.

JM: Yeah.

RH: I have little things around it and my mother-in-law many times says now, you know, she she's losing, you know, from having a stroke, certain parts of her memory are wiped out. And a lot of times she'll say 'Now, is there anything in my house that you really like' and I always say 'Ma, you've given me already the things that that I enjoyed from your house' and I said. And then I'll pick up a certain thing and say 'See this was yours.' You know there will be a vase, or she gave us some wine glasses and today they do not make them like that. It's so nice to find. And they, that was a wedding gift to her. But in her age, they always put things away. Nice things, they didn't use them. Today, I have them out on my hutch and when she comes and, and her sister-in-law comes, which would be our Aunt Gertrude, they come for dinner, I put the wine in her glasses on the table and always we comment about them and I said, 'See, so I'm enjoying them.' If I were to put them away in the closet, you know I would pass them on to my daughter because I have one daughter who feels very much like I do and she would in turn enjoy them. But we, we use and enjoy the things she gave. They're all around everywhere. That little, this little [unclear] on top of that, she had given me that, you know.

JM: That's so pretty.

RH: Yeah. I mean, it's just different. And so, I point out things so and then you know her face lights up and, so she's happy to think she's given me something already. You know it wasn't new, it was things that she had. But that means something to me.

JM: What kind of glass is that?

RH: I think that's what you call milk glass.

JM: Okay, 'cause my grandma has—

RH: Yeah, that was very popular in the olden days. In, and even I can remember way back to

my mother's, uh, you know, days, that, that she had a lot of that in and for some reason

dogs. Little Scottie dogs seem to be, I don't know, it seems like I always saw those.

Whenever they had an animal. Seemed to be a Scottie dog for some reason, I don't.

Maybe it was because of their heritage, a lot of, and not on my mother-in-law's side, but my mother, the Hastys, a lot of them came from Scotland.

SR: Uh-huh.

RH: And so maybe that—

SR: Yeah.

S: That's just a little what I'm putting a meaning to it. I have no idea if that was what it was.

SR: It sounds right. [laugh]

RH: Makes sense anyway.

SR: Yeah, yeah.

JM: But yeah, that's, that's interesting. Do you, I'm, I'm just curious because I, yesterday I went to see, um, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Hasty.

RH: Yes.

JM: And, they're just wonderful.

RH: Oh, aren't they? I know. Didn't I tell you that? Yes, well see, that's my mother's half-brother, Wesley. That was the three children that my grandfather had after his first wife, my mother's mother died when she was eight. And when my aunt was gone. Who now lives in Arlington. So he had three children. Well I should say four. A baby girl after whom I'm named, Ruth, that died. But then he had three by that wife and then these three and Wesley was the second. There's a daughter older than he. But he has been, he's like a person that you know just he's always lived up in that area, loves being a farmer and, you know, he's just a nice person.

JM: Yeah, and it was neat to see the house.

RH: Yeah, well, see my grandmother lived there. And—

JM: I was wondering if you could point out the house where you grew up on Witchtrot?

RH: Yes, I and, and they just restored that. See, I'm telling you if I could think of. I just showed a picture to the couple that live there now. Yeah, I can't remember. I wish I had thought of that before you came in. I would have had a picture of my mother's house. Now just, this is a picture of my mother when she started school. This is a one-room schoolhouse that later my grandmother would have taught. That's not my grandmother, that teacher there. But it's the same type of school and I had a picture of my mother's house that I had shown to those—

SR: That's adorable.

JM: Which one is your mother? Oh—

RH: Yeah, my mother wrote that on there.

JM: Ah, she's [unclear].

RH: I wish I could come up with that because the way the house is now they have fixed it and it looks very much like it did with my mother. Before it burned in nineteen forty—, nineteen forty-nine. And then my father rebuilt the, the what we call the [unclear] of the house was still part of the old house. But then what he added on was much smaller. You know, it didn't go back to the regular. What my home that my mother had was a three story. You had an attic, and the upper floor and, and the first floor. But the people who live there now have restored it and it looks very much with the exception of—

JM: Oh.

RH: I showed that to my granddaughter and now she says 'Gee, Grandma, what kind of dogs were those?'

JM: Yeah. Oh, these are [unclear].

RH: They just don't have those now. Oh now, here's my grandfather, in his later years right before, Wesley's father and my mother's father, Grandpa Hasty. And this was the house where my mother was born. And that's also up in that general area but it—

JM: Is that on Mountain Road?

RH: That's on, yes, that's the corner of Mountain and in fact Wesley has a son who lives on that spot now in a trailer. That was the spot where my mother was born and lived. We have a couple of rose bushes that we brought from the old [unclear] home and you know we keep them to remind us that those came from my mother.

JM: That's wonderful. What a wonderful tradition. I mean.

RH: Yeah, it is. Really. And I've passed that on and on. So, I've given one to my daughters and 'Now that came from where Grammy lived.'

JM: Um-hmm.

RH: And I bring her down a [unclear].

JM: That's great, I hope you—

RH: You keep on talking. Can you hear me okay if I?

JM: Oh yeah. Sure. I just think that that's really important. I know what my brother did last, last summer was, my grandfather's garden is just his pride. It was his pride and joy and he had his Rose of Sharon.

RH: Yeah, oh yeah, we have two of them right out in the front yard.

JM: Oh really?

RH: Yeah, we love them.

JM: And he, my brother, took a little cutting from it, and transplanted it in our home, and my grandfather passed away about two weeks ago, and my brother was just so pleased that now—

RH: That he had tended to—

JM: He can carry on with the garden and you know and keep it growing. Because now, you know, he'll take care of that garden.

RH: That's right.

JM: He brought a part of it back with him—

RH: Well, that's exactly the same type of thing that we do. I think that's really nice, and as I say, I keep saying this to my grandchildren and everything just so they won't. But yeah, because I always tell my oldest grandson who's going to be 12 here at the end of the month. And I

say Seth, I have to take you and show you where everyone is buried because when Grandpa and I am not living, someone needs to know where everyone is. That like for instance my mother's mother, when she was buried in a cemetery in the field because that's what they did in those days. There wasn't even any marker ever put on her grave. Now in a few years no one would ever have known where she was. But my, my aunt in Arlington and, and my mother, and I'm probably the one that suggested them doing it. I said if they would like to do that, I would get someone to come and engrave the names, also the baby group that had passed away on, there was one big monument in the cemetery. So now my grandmother's name is there and baby Ruth and so at least there is a record of it. But it's often a field and someday somebody will live there and probably no one would ever even want to walk across someone's property to see who's buried there. But I'll make sure that that—

JM: Yeah.

RH: Things like that I think that are nice.

JM: It is interesting. Carolyn Blouin showed us that the graveyard—

RH: Oh, did she?

JM: Yeah.

RH: Oh good.

JM: Yeah.

RH: And that's right now her property, isn't it?

JM: Yeah. Right across the street.

RH: Yeah. Right. Yeah.

JM: And, um, it's just interesting. It seems, I've seen so many small family graveyards here in—

RH: Oh, there are. Even in my mother's field now we're when you leave here, Jenny, did you say you wanted me to go with you or you want me to just tell you where it is or—

JM: It would be great if we can all go but—

RH: It's, it's only like a half a mile up the road anyways, but when you're ready to do that then I'll just ride up with you and. Sure. I'll make time. I mean, my mother, my mother-in-law will be here, but I mean my husband visits with her so that she's no problem at all. So, when you're ready to, after you've gotten everything else that you know. Oh yeah, I had just done this before you came. So, I can't find it but I can just tell you that the house, the way it is now is very much like it was when my mother lived there. My mother doesn't quite see it that way, but I just—

SR: [laugh]

RH: She says it's not home anymore. And which—

JM: This is wonderful.

RH: Yeah. Thank you, honey. I was wondering—

JM: [laugh] Great. It seems like there's a lot of, I don't know, a lot of respect for, for the past, you know, for those who have died. I mean, I know Wesley was telling me yesterday that he was so pleased because his son had said the other day. Well, first of all, his, Beverly and Wayne are living in Mrs. Hasty's—

RH: —mother's house. Yes, exactly. Uh-huh.

JM: And that makes her very pleased. Now another son is living in a trailer—

RH: On the property where, where his father lived.

JM: Right. And then I think another one is living across the street in some way.

RH: Well, yes, that would be the other youngest boy is living across from Wayne and Beverly.

JM: Right.

RH: Yes, in the field which had also been property of Mrs. Thorough, who was the Grammy on, on Wesley's wife side, Emily.

JM: Right. And then he was saying that one of his sons, I don't remember which, um, said to him the other day. Um, I guess when Mrs. Ethel Hasty passed away, she said that she wanted to be buried in town—

RH: Right.

JM: —in the town cemetery. So they went halves. Wesley and his wife went halves on it on the site with her.

RH: Good.

JM: —and, and, then, but his son was saying 'Please, you know, don't get rid of the family cemetery 'cause I would like to be buried there.'

RH: Isn't that nice.

JM: He said that that made him so happy to hear son say that—

RH: Do you, was it his son that's living on the spot where his father lived on the Mountain Road? Because that's where my, my grandmother is buried out in that field. That's what I'm telling you. There's a big—

JM: Oh.

RH: In those days a lot of those cemeteries had one big monument. You know, a really large one. And there is one there and we have those names. And, I know, my husband and I have gone there and cleaned that cemetery. We always say it's such a peaceful place to be buried. There's lilies of the valley coming up there and there's pine trees all around. Of course, some of the, the stones that surround it and they had, like iron bars, but you know that people have come and taken those away. I'm sure to put in their homes and things. Not anyone in the family, but just people who were aware of—those kind of stones are hard to come by. So, a lot of that has, is not where it should be, and parts of it are missing, but the cemetery itself is such a peaceful place to be buried. I can understand and I would like to think that that's probably the boy who lives on, in the trailer, because that's—

JM: I think it's Tom.

RH: Oh Tommy. No, Tommy is the one who lives on the farm. Tommy and Betsy. She is a, works for the aging in Maine. Oh, so he's the one that wants to—

JM: Well, I think it well, I'm not sure.

RH: Yeah, no, you're probably right. The other boy is Dwight. Dwight lives in the trailer, which is across from the cemetery and on the spot where my mother was born and lived in their house. But it could be Tommy because he and his wife are very family oriented, so that's quite possible. That would make sense.

JM: And Mr. Hasty, Wesley and I were talking about just the respect for the land.

RH: Um-hmm.

JM: That he was brought up with. Do you think you're brought up with that too?

RH: Oh, definitely. I, I still feel that way today. Uh, land is, is, is very important to me. I like to keep it as, you know I'm always going out and pulling up weeds and, and cutting down little brush so that that it won't go back, you know to nature. No. It, land is very important to me and I like to think the only thing that I like to say is that I'm so glad that we had a piece of property, say like, my son lives in the back. We were able to give him a piece and yet he has his privacy. We have surrounding shrubs and everything so we do not interfere with him and he doesn't with us. But yet the children can come over, you know, just walk to my house without even going on the road. And I'm just so, I can't think of anything I'd rather be able to give my children then a piece of property if they need it. You know to. That's more important to me than giving them almost anything else, because in this day and age to have a piece of land is very, very important, I think.

JM: And what about, you've lived other places. Is there something about Maine land that's important to you?

RH: Uh, well, mainly because this is where I was born in. I think I told you before. My feeling is I can be happy wherever I am, but I, as long as I know that it is, it's not a permanent move. I always look for the good things and when we lived in Philadelphia for two years we went everywhere and there's a lot of history in that area. You know, Valley Forge and Gettysburg and Washington and, and that was the year of the World's Fair. And all those things would not, would not have been accessible to us from here. But living there we, we took our children to all those things. So, it really was an education in itself. And everybody was glad to have been there, although it was very difficult to make the change, but my husband's brother came and lived here with his wife while we were gone. So, they just lived in our home, which was a good thing for them. They didn't have a home and so they were able to

live here while we were there, which was good for them. And it was good for us to have somebody that was in the family staying in our house. And so, we all benefited by that experience. But we were all ready to come back here when my husband got a chance to come back to the shipyard. He was in a layoff. That's why we went to Philadelphia. It was the shipyard in either cold air or he, in those days you had to be in the government for three years before you became career. And he was, just, just approaching that, he was maybe like 2 1/2 years. And when they had a really big layoff and he was a newcomer there. So, we would have—

JM: Um-hmm.

RH: He would have been. He would have lost his job. So, he came home one night and just said what would you say if I said we're going to move to Philadelphia? And I said, fine, when are we going?

JM: [laugh]

RH: So, I said, you know, if it's, that was as long as my family was with me, I could make the best of that and we did. And then we were very glad to come back when the time came. We enjoyed it, but it was an experience I wouldn't change. I would do that again. Many, many, we had many good experiences from there. And, the rest of the family did because all, with the exception of his sister, whose husband had a, an operation that didn't make it possible for them. But all his brothers and sisters came with their families while we there and stayed over and we went around all those places with them too. So, everybody benefited in a small way from the change that came about for us. And but your original question was that's why Maine is special to me because I was born and grew up here and I just, the things, those are the kind of things that are very important to me. But I like to be enriched by the other

things that are available when you do make a change. And as I said, when we lived in Hartford for almost two years when we were first married. And there again we made that decision to come back when we knew we were going to have our first child. We wanted to be around where there would be family to, you know, to be like a back-up for us, so. That's what we did.

JM: And, it's, I know in some cultures they have, um, land is sort of sacred. And, you know, say in the Native American cultures I think land and especially family land is really sacred. And it seems like you know, in our culture it, it seems like that's not so much officially said or spoken. [telephone ringing]

RH: Uh-huh.

JM: But it seems in some families, I know in my family from Nebraska, that's very much the case. Do you think that's true— [telephone ringing]

RH: Yes, I do think it's true, because as I said, I like to try to think of keeping land, not because I don't want someone else to have it, but because I want it to stay very much the way it is. And be there for my family and that yes, I do, it's very important to me and we, we're very conscious of not doing things that— [telephone ringing] Would you excuse me a moment?

JM: [laugh] Yeah, sure.

RH: He's so acrobatic. He can climb trees, climb ropes. You know I was telling him that this morning I said, 'Well, you know, Jason [Joy, grandson], that tells me, I know you don't eat a lot of junk food, because you're so strong.'

JM: [laugh]

RH: 'Well, my muscles are not big.' I said no, it's not big, but I said it's strong because if it wasn't, you couldn't climb a rope. He went right up a, you know, a rope that's about this big.

JM: Wow.

RH: [unclear] his feet around it, you know.

SR: I couldn't do that.

RH: Yeah, me either. No.

JM: Now is he the one that's into recycling?

RH: Oh yes. Jason, yes, yes. If I had mentioned that he would have told you that. Yeah, he's very much so. His mother, they go clean the side of the road every once in a while, you know. Yeah, she teaches him all those. Yeah, Jason is, is well. She has the time and she makes those her top priority.

JM: Um-hmm. Did you? Did you teach your children that? Did you do that kind of thing?

RH: I was of my own nature. You can ask my husband today. I cannot stand to hear water running and not be turned off. I'm very, I'm, I'm of a very conservative nature and I don't waste things at all. I recycle all my peelings as we call them. In those days they were oughts. Everyone smiles when they say that weird O-U-G-H-T. That is in the dictionary. And it's the odd peelings and that sort of thing. And we recycle all that. We put it up in the barn and when it goes back to Earth then we use it in our flower gardens and. Yes, I've been very, I'm very conscious of water, especially. And I'm also conscious we don't use any pesticides and things like that. Only on this, and the even that one is not a harmful one, the one we used on the caterpillars. I'll let them. I'll go out and spend hours knocking them into a can rather than use something that I have to think about. It might get in our water

system or, you know, and then. So, I'm very conscious of that so I can. I'm definitely conservative in that area of my life. I'm liberal in others, but in that area I'm very conservative. And, and even in cooking and baking, I never waste anything you know, and I always plan ahead and save, like all my, the ends off my vegetables and the outer leaves. I wash and keep them for soup. I don't throw anything away hardly. Just the core. And on the apples, I eat that.

JM: That's great. Yeah.

RH: Everybody always kids me about eating everything. There's nothing left but the seeds when I'm done.

JM: That's good though. I mean, I think that's—

RH: It just, has always been part of my, you know, just part of my nature.

JM: Did your mother teach you that? I mean, did you mother—

RH: My mother was very conservative, yes, and also on my fa-, I mean, my husband's mother is the same way too. She was very. Well, she had a large family and they did not have a lot of money. They were, they were poor and they grew up in, you know, working in the mills and everything like that. So they didn't have a lot of things that some people that were a little more affluent had. But she was always very conservative and was, it, is even now, you know, she was very conscious of lights being left on if they're not needed. Even now, she's forgotten so many things, but she never forgets to check that. Is the back door closed, is the window down? Is, you know, are the lights off, and. They're very, very conscious of that. And so, I saw that on both sides of the family as I was a younger person.

JM: Were things hard when you're growing up?

RH: They weren't for me. I, I don't recall that be— Oh hi, Denise [Flammia, daughter].

DF: I won't stop—

RH: No, no, just come for a minute. We were just talking about Jason.

DF: I think I met this young lady. She was doing interviews down at the Strawberry Festival.

RH: Yes, 'cause that's where I met her.

DF: Near the children's thing. You were at the children's thing all day.

JM: Right.

RH: This is Denise. This is Susannah and this is Jen.

JM: Hi.

SR: Hi.

DF: Hi, nice to meet you.

RH: And we were just talking to Jason a minute 'cause the door was shut in and, and you know what, Jen said? Jason, she said, is this the little young man that's interested in recycling? I said he certainly is.

DF: There we go. OK, well, we won't disturb you, so I'll take him and run.

RH: No, that's alright, Denise. I'm glad you had good luck.

DF: And your [unclear] on the table.

AH: Yeah, you're very welcome. Anytime. You didn't even need it?

DF: I didn't need it.

RH: Oh dear.

DF: Okay, we'll see you later.

JM: Bye.

RH: Bye. Bye, Jason.

JJ: Bye.

RH: So that's Denise. That's my youngest daughter.

JM: Yeah, I did meet her. Yeah.

RH: So, where were we now? We were talking about—

JM: We were talking about whether things were hard on the farm.

RH: Oh yes, they were not for us. We were very fortunate because we had our own animals, so we had our own milk and we had our own vegetables and I, I never looked upon life as being hard, but neither were we, we were always raised not to expect a great deal either. I mean we had hand me down clothes and things like that and I never felt, you know, I never felt that that was a hardship, not having things that maybe somebody who lives downtown might have felt. And, I never did, because those with whom I grew up didn't have it. So I, I didn't expect it or didn't feel deprived in any way for not having had it. But at that, to get back to your original question, I, life was not hard for us due to that fact. Because they were able to, like they'd buy their apples by the barrel. You know, put them down in the cellar, so we always had fruit, you know. And we had nut trees. We used to go gather our own nuts in the fall of the year.

JM: What kind of nut tree?

RH: Walnuts. You know, walnut. They're still around now, but the squirrels have, have come to get them before the— which is fine with me. [laugh]

JM: And, um, Mr. Hasty was telling me about canning. How much his mother did canning.

RH: Oh, and my mother did too. My mother canned a lot.

JM: So that was a way of using the garden during the winter.

RH: Exactly. And then they also had like, not, now they call them root cellars, but in those days we had like what they called an archway that was like under the chimney area in the summer and it was, the floor was not cement, you know, in those days it was still damp. And so they, they had their own potatoes and, and they would be able to store carrots or things like that for quite far into the winter. So, and then the squash and pumpkins and things so they pretty much were, they'd have to go to the store for such staple things as flour and sugar. And flour and sugar and those types of cooking things, but not too much for vegetables or things other than that. I can remember our crackers were always a big thing on the grocery list because we had a lot of chowders and. You know, and, and that they used to get their own deer at times. So we'd have deer meat. And they'd go fishing and we'd have hornpout [type of catfish]. Things like that. And then my mother made her own butter. But that was one thing, I never could learn to like butter. I didn't eat butter growing up. I just, there was something about, because you had to smell that, you know, the, the cream that had to get to a certain stage before and there was just something about that, that I, didn't agree with me so I never could eat homemade butter. So, and now, of course, there's so much cholesterol in it we don't eat it anyway, so. [laugh] But I, I was a peanut butter eater in those days.

JM: Uh-huh. Yeah. And what do you think, I'm just thinking, with your mother. Was there anything special you think that she taught you?

RH: Uh, well, I'm, I'm sure she taught me to be resourceful because I mean she was like that herself. She could do anything. I think I told you that the other day. And when I say anything, I mean she could use a hammer, a saw. She just, if something needed to be done, she, and she could paper wallpaper, paint. Any of those things. I mean she was, she could just do anything that needed to be done. Whether my father, if my father was there, he would have done it. But she didn't even ask, you know, I mean, she just did what needed to be done. And I suppose from seeing her do those things, I grew up fairly—I'm not, I wasn't his handy as she was. I could not, I, I, when it comes to papering, my husband does the papering. He always did it as a young boy, but in his mother's house. So, I'm the one who helps. But he's the one who actually does it. Where my mother could, you know, I mean, she just went ahead and cut the paper, did the whole thing.

JM: Yeah.

RH: So, I'm, she certainly taught me that and I can't of think of saying it any other way.

JM: She sounds so busy. Did she have time to spend with you kids? To play with you and everything?

RH: No, my mother didn't. That's what I'm saying. We, she was outdoors a lot, so we made our much of our own fun by ourselves. She was always there. I mean on the property. But she was doing many things outside. But in those days we did a lot of reading and we played our own games and things that today, children don't do. We made up our own. We played school and things like that. And then we were very fortunate in that we each one did have other children on this road which were, as I told you, this next door neighbor she's one of

the younger ones in the family and, and my daughter Denise is now married to the son of the girl that was my age in that same family. And so, we all did have at least people in the neighborhood with whom we could play. And we did things together like that. But in a different way. We just didn't have the same—radio was a big thing in those days. We listened to the radio a lot and uh. So our fun was different but we made our own fun.

JM: It must have been hard though. Did you ever wish your mom was home more?

RH: Ah, no, no, I never did because I just was used to this right from the beginning. She was home, honey. But she was just not in the house. And as I got older, I suppose that instinct in me. I just obviously was glad. I'd be in the house and I'd be doing the picking up and, and doing things for her while she was out doing those types of things, and so at least when they came back in the house wasn't, you know, she didn't have to start all over again in the house. And I enjoyed doing that. That's when I acquired a like for making you know, cooking and things, but that that's been one of my favorite things to do all my life. I love to make bread and anything that has, I just think it's made with a little bit of love. And I've never bought, as they say, you know, pastries and things. I've always made my own. I said I, I'm not, I don't think I've ever made a box cake in my life. So, and I and I don't think I'll ever stop because I'm just so used to doing it. It's not work to me. Some people seem to think that's a job, but for me it's not. So, I've always made my own things, made my own cookies and, you know, and let the kids help and everything when they were young. They used to like to do that. Even these little ones coming up now. Sometimes they'll come over and they'll want to help do whatever I'm doing.

JM: Sure.

RH: It's fun.

JM: Do you cook for people? Do you ever do that like—

RH: Yes, I cook for all the, all whenever that, that's one of the things I do for good causes, it, as opposed to maybe doing something else. That if they're having bake sales, I mean I always bake for the friends of the library and then when Gladys Carroll has her welcome home week, I always made pastries. So yes, I have always, always given to any kind of food sales where they're raising money. I enjoy doing that. That's not work and maybe some other time I wouldn't be able to donate my time, but I could always do that.

JM: Um-hmm.

RH: And I have always done that and enjoy doing it. And I always had certain recipes that I thought were kind of special. You know.

JM: What kinds of things?

RH: Well, I have one recipe that now, I mean, I've just given it to everybody in the family so it's no longer special, but at one time it was and it's called raisin bars. And it's a spice bar which has, you know, raisins in it and it can be, like I usually put frosting on it. Doesn't have to. Sometimes I, I serve it warm with whipped cream and then it's very much like gingerbread. But that's one that I passed and everybody likes those. And those used to go to every bake sale that, and they were always popular, you know?

JM: Sure.

RH: Not just because I made them, but I'm just saying it was the type of thing that seemed to appeal to people. It was different from the usual chocolate that you see and that was always a very popular. So that's one recipe. And then I have my favorite recipe for pie crust. Most everybody seems to think that that's extra special and is to me. I've been using

the same one since I got it from Confidential Chat in the (Boston) Globe many years ago. From the fireman's wife and she always had many, many good recipes. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if my raisin bar might have come from there. I always felt as though I had a good sense. I was always perceptive about what would be a good recipe. I can read through it and say, nah, doesn't appeal to me. You know, I, I just almost know the kinds of things that I'm going to like and the things that those for whom make things will like. And so, I've just gathered a few. And I, I'm not too big on trying new things. I keep to my old standards and I have enough of them so that I would never run out of the things that I already have so I don't look for new ones.

JM: Um-hmm. Um-hmm. Yeah, I love to cook too. I just think it's so much— There's just, it gives me a lot of pleasure. I do like to cook for other people.

RH: Exactly.

JM: I don't, I don't always cook for myself as much.

RH: Yeah, that's right. I, I think that it gives you a chance. That's one place we can be, put a lot of yourself into something I think and I can always remember. I tell this to my husband but I didn't work when the children were young and I can always remember when they'd come home from school and I had made raised rolls. There's something about that smell of yeast that is so special. And, and two other smells that I always associate in the fall when we get the very first apples and I make applesauce. There's that kind of a smell in the kitchen. Mincemeat, applesauce, or anything made with apples that you can smell cooking. And but the kids always used to come in, and when they would smell that, rolls, they'd always want one, you know when they came in from school. An I thought that was kind of nice to be able

to be there and have something that I had made during the day that they enjoyed having when they came home from school.

JM: Yeah.

RH: So that was, something I especially enjoyed. And then my husband is a bread person anyway. He could enjoy different kinds of bread almost more than desserts. He's, uh, pudding and bread, in his family were, were big things. And so, he loves anything like that. So we've always made a lot of puddings. I make all my own cornstarch puddings since I never buy those boxed ones.

JM: There are so— My mom used to make custard.

RH: Yes.

JM: Those are so good.

RH: Yeah, you bet your life. And that's, like that's one of my favorite recipes. And that one came from my mother's side of the family. I mean, my mother-in-law's side and that's a filling for cream pie. She was noted for her cream pie, and I mean that, the cream that is so good. And you, and sometimes you go into a bakery today and you look at an éclair or something and it looks so good and you buy it. And it has absolutely no taste. So, I've learned that things that look good do not necessarily taste good. And now, she's, as I think I pointed out to you, she's diabetic and we're all watch our cholesterol and try to keep our sugar content down. And I have a very special recipe called, and I've never seen it anywhere else, is called pumpkin custard. And it doesn't have very much sugar in it, and it's so light and, and everybody that comes, they really enjoy that. So, I can make that. I have a brother who

lives in Wisconsin he's the, the head of the English Department at Carroll College. [long pause, cut off?]

JM: My mom used to do that where they, she really tried not to have a lot of sugar or butter, or just to be conscious of how to make flavors. Things without—

RH: Without, Um-hmm, exactly.

JM: Yeah, that's really. And you know, one thing that, another thing I found out yesterday was about Mr. Hasty's grandmother was a nurse or midwife?

RH: Uh, see now, I've heard my mother speak about that, but that I could not add a lot. I do know that that's a fact. Now that would be something that he could tell you better. But I've heard my mother say, you know that they would call her when somebody was going to have a baby, so he's, he's correct about that, but I couldn't add anything to it.

JM: Okay, I was just gonna ask if there were any stories that—

RH: But I always know my mother speaks very highly of her grandmother. You know, spoke of her as being such a nice lady. So, I'm sure that he's correct in that.

JM: Okay, and um, let's see, I was talking to Aimee Schramm. I did get a chance to talk to Aimee Schramm.

RH: Yes, she's a peach of a person. She's given so much of herself to this town.

JM: Um-hmm.

RH: For all the right causes. She's really special.

JM: Um. And she was saying that, I think it was her that was saying that you had served on the town council?

RH: Yes. I, I never bring that up though, Jen. That was a very painful year for me and I was always, probably, if I, that's one of the few things, if anything else, that I would ever change in my life. I would never have done that if I had it to do over again. I was not the right type of person to do that. And especially at the time that I did it. I think I told you we had one town manager and this was right before they put town managers under contract and there was a lot of controversy in the town at the time. And it's because he did not have a good personality in that he reacted very quickly to things. But he was always, he was always for the best that was for the town. I mean he was just an outstanding person. But his, his personality left a lot to be desired. But I felt as though we were not paying him for his personality. All his other skills far outweighed that and that I would if I, if I were to speak one on one, I would say he should work on that. To try to deal with those things a little bit better. But the few times I can think of instances where he, people would say, well, he's gotta go, you know he reacted this way. And one particular time I can think of a person who wanted to go in the dump that was closed. They were not supposed to have a key. They had a key and went in and dumped something. And see, he couldn't, to that sort of thing he reacted very quickly and he just, that was just totally wrong. And so, those kind of things some people did not. And I happened to be serving at this time when they were really trying, there was an element that wanted him out of this town. And I mean they were working very hard at that. And I could not be a part of that. And I could see what they were doing. They were building a case against him, in order, because in those, without a contract, you could not get rid of someone without just cause. There was no just cause with the exception of personality. That's not a just cause. If he's doing all the administrative things correctly, which he did, and most people now, that even felt that way then will look back and say he was an excellent town manager. And I think a lot of people probably today

would be less critical than they were then. But I was serving at that time. And that made it very difficult for me, because I just felt he was an advocate for the town. Like, my husband at the time was on the planning board. Well, these people, like my husband was a worker. He did not have time to read ordinances and be really well versed and the town manager did. So, I felt as though he used to go to the meetings of the other boards and be there to advise them. They made the decisions. But I mean, if he saw them going in the wrong direction or maybe not being aware of something that they should, he would bring that to their—I thought this was a plus. But other people resented that. They said nope. The planning board should do what the planning board is about and not, the town manager should not be involved in that. And that was, and that was totally opposed to my, my thinking. So, as a result of that I couldn't get along because I couldn't go along. They were, as I said, they were trying to build a case against him and that didn't agree with me. So, I just felt as though I was not serving the people that voted for me. And my husband felt the same way in his capacity. So we felt that it was time. So I served it to a point where it didn't cost the town anything. I, I left the position when they could then re-appoint somebody at a town meeting and it didn't cost the town. You know, if someone leaves in the middle then you have to have a town meeting and it costs the town money to do that. So, I didn't do that. I stayed throughout that. But then I felt that, I just was not fulfilling the role that I should be and so very sadly. But I really regretted that because I always was, I was always prided myself on not being a quitter. I never quit anything. I, I never took on anything until I was absolutely sure. But if I was sure of something I never changed my mind. And this was one time when I did and that was very painful to me.

JM: Wow, that, that just sounds so hard.

RH: Well, it was.

JM: But you did what you thought was best.

RH: Exactly, I did really. And, so as I said that. I don't even, there was a long time I couldn't even talk about it. It really was. Because I felt as though I had let people down who I, I looked at and said why did I let anyone even speak on my behalf. I should've just said I'm running and if, if you vote for me fine. And if you don't, fine. But I participated in, in those days and Carolyn was you know very good about things like that. And just portraying who I was and what I felt before. But I felt in some ways than anybody who sort of endorsed me or something that I had let them down by not fulfilling and staying. But then, and, but in my heart, I felt as though I was letting them down by not being able to do what I thought was in the best interest of the town. So, I mean, it was just a, it was just a very difficult time. If I had been on the board at some other time perhaps it would have worked for me, but it didn't. And that is one chapter that I'm very sad about.

JM: Was there anyone that supported you?

RH: Oh, I'm sure Caroline did.

JM: Yeah.

RH: Because she felt the same way I did. But some people can respond to those things. I'm very sensitive and probably take everything right to heart and somebody else could probably have stood up and maybe not let them, let it bother them to the degree. The only, the only source of comfort I had is the— And see, I could not discuss the things that were happening because as a member, that's, you're not supposed to discuss things that go on in uh, in, in you know, what do they call the executive meetings. So therefore, the things

that were really bothering me I was not at liberty to say that. So, all this was happening and, and, and I'm not saying this to be critical of any of the people who are doing it. I like them as persons. But I mean I did not like what they were doing. And some of them today. I would say there was one person in particular that he's been very good for the town. But he was not good for the town in that case. And so, I can't make exceptions and say. I think I told you that my brother-in-law said, well, you can bury somebody on one issue. I can, if it's a matter of justice, injustice and, and that's what I saw happening in that case. So that's a sad chapter. But yes, I did, and I'm sorry I did.

JM: In a way though, I mean it was, even though it sounds like it was really hard, it was really a test of your convictions and you stuck by them.

RH: Yeah, well, thank you, Jen. [laugh] That makes me feel a little bit better. 'Cause I really and truly did that. I never, I didn't realize, I didn't say, never discussed it with anyone the things that I saw happening. I just dealt with it on my level but it just got to be so overwhelming I practically made myself sick over it, you know, so.

JM: Wow.

RH: It just wasn't.

JM: And your husband felt the same way about it.

RH: He felt the same way. He left it. He left the planning board at the same time that I left the council and we just said that we just felt that we could not fulfill, you know, our role.

Because he felt that he could probably, could not have served on the planning board if he didn't have that comfortable feeling that if he was making a decision that was not wise the town manager would pick up on this and give them the guidance they need. He thought

that was very important to him. He's willing to do his homework and do it to the best of his ability, but he also knew that he was not well versed in every aspect of the things that you really need to know. And we were, 'cause we were then approaching this era when I'm telling you, the town was beginning to grow and you need it to be, you know, that was not, those who are big undertakings, and the decisions you are making were very, very important. Because it was not a time when everything was going smoothly. You know the town was pretty much the way it used to be when the selectman ran it. Then, then things were different then. You know they weren't dealing with all these big problems at the growth, right there, just waiting to happen. So anyway, he did feel the same. We both shared that feeling in that we had a great deal of respect for, for the, for his ability and the fact that he was an advocate. We never saw him ever doing anything that would be for any one segment of town or any one group. Everything was always what he felt was best for the town and we thought, we applauded that, so.

JM: Were there any other women on the council when you were on?

RH: No, I followed a woman who had been on and she too, had but for the opposite reasons for me. She did not finish her term either, but she was a, anti the, the town manager, so. I mean she had her own reasons. You know she was just that, just looked at things just a little bit differently. So, the two of us and then there was another person who came on and I think I told you that. From the store downtown. I mean she was an excellent person. I mean she is, on any board that she's on, she really stands out. So, she came along and sort of, you know, proved and you know that I did tell you that we did have a woman town manager which has made me feel really good. So, I thought that was quite progressive. So even though the two of us perhaps didn't ah, go on and set a record for, for the women to be on

the, the board the one person who followed us did. And we had to do what we felt was right. Right now, though they do not have any women on the board.

JM: Do you think that, you were saying before the town manager, it's not like he had a real aggressive manner. Do you think that you were ever put down or your opinion was not taken as seriously because you didn't share that, I mean you don't strike me as that kind of a person.

RH: Yeah, no, yes, I mean, I think that a lot of people who may not have uh— Probably people thought that I was too pro him because I did not see any reason not to be, you know. But I saw the things that they were saying. And, and in fact, when it come to evaluations, you know the, the council always has to evaluate the town manager. And this is one of the things I always put in my evaluation. I pointed out all the things that I saw that were very good, and that was the one area where I thought that he needed to work on. His, his communication skills with people who were— But there was always someone who was actually doing things that really were not proper. Do you know what I mean? It was that, he always really, but, but you have to learn how to control yourself even in those situations so. Probably people felt that I was, that I shouldn't have been quite as supportive of him, but I was. That was who I was so.

JM: Right. I guess what I was getting at is if you ever felt like because being a woman, did you ever feel like people didn't take you seriously or?

RH: No, I don't think that. I think that's they— No, I don't think that it was because. At least, I don't think so. They may have felt that way behind my back, but I never had that feeling. I thought that was more because they might not have agreed with my feelings about how I,

what I saw as a vision for the town, you know. And where I thought the town should be going and, and I, in that case I think maybe I was [unclear].

JM: Yeah.

RH: That I could see these things are going to happen. I just would like to have, have them happen in the best possible way. You know. , I think it would be more my thinking that they might have rather than the fact that I was a woman, I think.

JM: Right, it's just interesting 'cause the women I've talked to, it seems like a lot of them have that liberal thinking. And I'm wondering if it's—

RH: Uh-huh.

JM: —almost a gender thing or the women tend to think more that way. And the men, well, a little more conservative?

RH: I, I think that that seems to be my experience. I mean like the people that I'm telling you that really stand out for me. I think most of them are, are liberal thinking and that there, there in this case happen to be women. I can point out a lot of men in town who have been very outstanding too. But the ones with whom I've associated in one way or another seem to have been women. And I just think that, I think that they are mostly like Aimee and Carolyn, and Marie Donohue. And you know, I just have a great deal of respect. I just think we have a lot of outstanding women in this area.

JM: Why do you think that? I mean that's, that's really strange.

RH: I don't, I really don't know because it is a small town, but maybe it's because we are. We are a small town but we are very near to cultural things. You know. In fact, we had that, there was a person who lived in this area is now up Maine and he can't wait to come back

down this way because he said down here you have access to cultural things. You know, Portsmouth has a lot. We're not that far from Boston. Yet we can have all these. We're very, very fortunate. We have the sort of a small town, not as small as it used to be, but still a small town living at, but be able to take all the good things from the cities. Without a great deal of problem and I think that we're very, very lucky.

JM: But why would that affect the women more than the men? I mean, it's just, it's just a—

RH: Well, maybe men are more, uh, busier about earning the living and uh. I, I really don't know. That's an excellent question. I really don't know, but I really do see that, It, it, from the ones with whom I associate, I think the women are the ones that seem to be moving in that direction. More than the men.

JM: Yeah. It's just interesting, I mean, I don't know if I would know the answer either in my own town.

RH: Yeah. And also, though, I don't seem to have an, I, I can't really put my finger on it. I never thought much about it. I don't really associate that much with, other than family, other men. You know, I mean, the, the boards or the things that I'm associated with always seem to be the woman.

JM: Um-hmm.

RH: You know, so, so, maybe I'm not a good one to answer that. But I really, but I do feel that way. That the women are—

JM: Do the women, are there a lot, it seems like there are a lot of groups or clubs or—

RH: Oh, I think there are in the area, yeah. And, yeah, I thought about that the other day and I can't recall enough to tell you, but you might be familiar with the movement of Beyond War.

SR: Um-hmm.

RH: Now see, I went to some of those meetings, Carolyn and I did. And that was one thing I didn't work for, but I would always make a little small donation as best I could to at least help them because I felt that that was, I really thought that movement was great if they could have gotten that, you know, rolling. Yeah, because that's the only way we're ever going to get. We have to have a different mode of thinking I think if we're going to get rid of war, to me.

JM: What did, what did that group do?

RH: Well. You probably could answer that better than I could, Susannah.

SR: Well, I mean, I'm not sure exactly what they did, but the whole theory was to move literally beyond war to a state where you know—

RH: They don't think of that as an option. They are solving problems. That there's got to be a better way, and that everybody has got to look at a different way of doing it. And that a lot of things happen because of the mindset of people and 've got to get beyond that. In order to, to get to a point where we can think that war is not an option, you know.

JM: I see.

RH: I had another thought there and it got— Well, there was one man that was involved in it and there again Carolyn was there and several other really good people in this area went to several of the meetings and I— Oh, I was going to also say that another thing that we try to do in our family. We're on, we're retired, we're on limited income, but we try to look at all the different aspects of life and do some little thing in that area where we feel we can make a difference. Like we belong to Common Cause. Now that's a grassroots movement where

they try to make changes in Congress. And you must have heard of Common Cause. No, it's not one you're familiar with? Well you just keep your eye open 'cause I'll tell you, that is one area where Congress stands up and listens when they hear Common Cause. And it is growing little by little and they take that, every year they ask you the— Carolyn [unclear] she didn't mention Common Cause to you?

JM: No, no.

RH: She, they, they always send you a questionnaire saying now what things are you, do you think we should be devoting our time to. Like campaign finance reform has been a big thing with them. They were the ones who got the little bit of a change that has happened, done. And they're still now working on even further improving that, getting rid of PACs and things like that. And I do think that they have made a big, you know, have made a big change and I think that they're, they're an organization that they listen to. And like we get a magazine, you know, and it tells you all this fraud and abuse and everything which is absolutely terrible. But they keep you informed in that way, so we donate to that and we're members. We're not active members, but when they call and say call Senator Cohen, he is, he's the one that's not going to vote right on this and he needs to hear. And also we do the opposite though when he does something that stands out. We're Democrats and he's a Republican, but if he has done something that we admire or he's voted what we feel is right, we also contact him then. We do not just contact him when we want to tell him that he hasn't done something right or that we think he's not going to.

JM: Yeah.

RH So we try to be fair and at least you know, contact them in both areas. So, they will send to us and they'll say they can send out what they call an alert. And say, you need to contact

him. This is coming up for a vote. It's this bill and you need to call and encourage them to support that. And so, we try to do that now. So that's one little area that we work in. And then, then we think of the environment. So, we make sure that we do our recycling and wherever we can try to stay away from pesticides, recycle our bags. I always bring my bags back to the store and, and things like that just to do what we can do in our own little area. And we feel as though if everyone were able to do that, you know that's where little by little. It's a lot of littles that make a big. And so we just pick out different things and then we work on, you know, trying to donate a little bit to missions. Because we think that's very important to the disenfranchised that need to have somebody sort of thinking about them. And so we don't do a lot, but we try to do it in different areas so that we can make a little teeny weensy difference in different—

JM: That's how it starts. That's what grassroots is all about.

RH: I know. Exactly.

JM: And which missions?

RH: Ah, well, we have a girl right here from town that's a missionary in Africa. Because I'm Catholic. I don't know if I said that or not. And she's a missionary in Africa and I just saw where the women's club at our church. But she's one that if I want to donate. I never give flowers when people pass away. I find a cause that I think relates to them and I give my money like to the library or to something that I feel is for the living but sort of makes a statement about the person for whom I'm making that donation. And so that girl is a missionary in Africa and I noticed that the women's club gave a small donation for an ambulance to be used out in the Bush wherever they are. I don't know that much about the towns, Tripata (?), or wherever that is. But I once in a while when someone passes away,

especially if they're in the Catholic faith, I will send a little donation to her and it probably doesn't help a lot, but maybe it helps in some small way. And so that's one, that's one of the missions. I'm trying to think of—

JM: Was it Maryknoll?

RH: No, she is, I think that hers is called, uh, almost, not Society of Jesus, but it's, she herself is in the nursing area, so I don't know. I almost wanna say a Grey Nun, but I don't think that's right either, but that I am familiar with the Maryknolls [unclear]. And so, you know, it's just, there are different little missions like that that we, even within the church we feel like we give more to the things that are being done for those outside the church rather than doing it for the church where it shows where people do not need it. We like to give to the fund that's coming for something where like earthquake victims or something we always give to the Catholic, uh, Catholic, uh— See that's in the CSO.

SR: Relief?

RH: Catholic Relief Service, yes. And because we feel that they and, uh, OxFam are two very good ones that really you know your money is going where you want it to go. So we try to when there's world tragedies to give a little bit in that area, so.

JM: Um-hmm.

RH: That's what.

JM: And at church to do other people support the same kind of causes that you do?

RH: Well, I don't know if they feel as strongly. Maybe some of them feel more like they're— Everybody has a different vision. Some people like really giving everything that's in for the church itself here and see we think we like to think of what the church should be reaching

out to. So that's where we concentrate. And I, I don't have any criticism of them doing it their way. I'm just comfortable doing it mine, so. That's where we give more to when it involves that than we do when it involves the church or something that has to do with the appearance within the church. I feel that the appearance is not important, it's getting about God's work here.

JM: Right. Yeah.

RH: On this Earth and there's plenty of it to do. Not enough workers.

JM: Were you raised Catholic?

RH: No, I, I became a covert before, before I married my husband, so. He was the, he was the Catholic. But I think you've heard me say that the people that live where my daughter does. She's the property adjoining this. They were, he was a dentist and they, they were actually like about a fourth cousin to my father. But I never knew them as relatives. They were always more as friends. I knew them from the time I was three years old. And so, they used to take us down to, to Dedham for, that's where they lived, Dedham, Mass. And they took us down there on vacations. And that's one of the places where we got a, a lot of nice upbringing from that lady. She was just a wonderful person and she taught us only good things. Then we learned a lot by going to the city with her where we had, did not have access to that ourselves. And, now what was my point, I've forgotten. What did we start to say about—

JM: About becoming converted—

RH: Oh, yes. Thank you very much. We can get back on track. And so anyway, they were Catholics and very devout Catholics. But they never wanted my family to ever feel that they

were influencing me or anything. And so, it was simply because they set such a wonderful example of their faith. So they just grew to know that I wanted to be a Catholic. I just liked what they did, was, I think everybody has to worship where they get the most satisfaction. And I've always felt that way. I'd rather see a good Protestant than a poor Catholic. So, I think you need to do wherever you're going to function the best. And, so I used to be, used to admire them so much. In fact, I lived with them one year when I went away to school and they wouldn't let me go to their church because they were too afraid that my parents might think that they were influencing me. So they made me go to the, the Episcopal Church which I really enjoyed. But I mean that was still there and so they became my godparents and, and I became a Catholic before I married my husband. And I've been wonderfully happy in my faith. I just enjoy it very much.

JM: What is it about it? What is it about the, your, your godmother, she is?

RH: Yes.

JM: What was it about her that? What?

RH: Well, I, I think it probably was her overall attitude to everybody and her, the way she approached her faith. Like, I can always remember when they'd come here on a weekend she always said her prayers before she went back home to ask God to keep her safe on the journey back 'cause the traffic even in those days was bad and her husband was anything but a good driver. He was sort of, uh, he didn't always notice everything. In fact, he would be a person that you'd really be a little bit jittery about riding with him. He'd back up without looking and checking. And she always said her prayers, and she was always so good to everyone around her. Very conscious of people who had less than she did, was, you know, they didn't, they had a, a good lifestyle because he was a dentist and a very

good one. And, and she was very close to her family. And I noticed that you know, if some of her nieces, really were having a hard time she'd always slip them 10 dollars, 20 dollars just because they needed it at a time. And that would make a difference to them. And I think it was just her overall, uh, attitude towards life and towards the things that God created on this Earth. That's probably where I acquired my love of wildflowers and walking in the woods and she, we used to go with her because she was very much afraid to go in the woods and we as kids were not. So, we'd go and pick flowers, then we'd come back and she'd look them up in the flower book. And so we learned a lot. And she just taught us a lot of things about respect for older people. Like she always said you should never, you know, don't ever make fun of older people because as you are now, so once were they. As they are now, so shall you be. And so, I always thought that was such a good philosophy. And, and we'd go by a cemetery and she's always say 'You know, honey, you should really say a prayer for their souls. Maybe nobody's remembering them. And so I always remembered that. I thought that was so nice. You know.

JM: Yeah.

RH: So she taught us a lot of good things.

JM: It sounds like it. Yeah.

RH: She was a great person.

JM: I know, my family is Catholic too and, and for my grandfather, um, he, for him the rosary was really important—

RH: It was for, Boston mother, it was very important in her life. Yeah. Mrs. Grant was— And there again, I'm not sure if her husband, Dr. Grant, I can't remember if his family was

Catholic from the beginning. I'd say his father was not, in fact I know his father, his mother would not have been because being a cousin to my father, you know, my father was not Catholic. So therefore, I'm sure on one side of the family was not. So maybe his, his father was and his mother wasn't. But, I mean, he was Catholic all his life and was a very good one. And, uh, a good spokesman for the faith. So, but she was definitely, the Boston mother, it was very important to her. And I learned another thing from her which I just passed on to my aunt in Arlington who has eye problems. She always used to talk about St. Lucy. She was a, Mrs. Grant was Irish, her name was O'Leary. Can't get much more Irish than that. And she always used to say that St. Lucy was the patron saint of people with eye problems. And Irish people have a tendency to have eye problems. They have very light eyes, that may be the reason but everybody in her family had very, you know, their eyes would get bloodshot very easily and they had eye problems. She had one niece in particular that had a very serious eye problem. She didn't see well even as a young person. So, she used to pray a lot to St. Lucy. And over the years I never forgot that but I never saw any reference to a St. Lucy in all my life until recently in our Catholic periodical, The Church World, there was a little article on St. Lucy and it told the history of how she became that, the saint of people who have eye problems. And my aunt at the time was suffering from a serious one in Arlington, so she's not Catholic but I said well, she'll find it interesting anyways. So, I cut that out and sent it to her and I thought well, it can't do any harm. I'll pray to her. [laugh]

JM: Yeah.

RH: So, I thought that was kind of interesting 'cause I had never heard of St. Lucy except through Mrs. Grant and she used to talk about St. Lucy, so.

JM: It's interesting because my mom's Catholic and she's real, she feels it really supports her and strengthens her in her activism because she's very active—

RH: Exactly.

JM: —um, well with service, she's very political but she's also very active with service people.

RH: Uh-huh. You mean service, not military service. You mean service to others.

JM: She works, works with handicapped—

RH: Yeah. Oh, oh, yes. And she's like an advocate. Oh definitely. I mean, that's where I feel very strongly about that too. And that's why I like to see my faith doing those kinds of things rather than doing it where it's visible but not necessary to anybody's wellbeing, you know. I mean the Church could be a pretty bare building. I mean that's not what makes the faith—

JM: Right.

RH: —is the building. And so, that's, my husband and I both feel very strongly about that. We like to see the things happening to those who cannot do it for themselves, you know, and who need. The rest of us are very lucky to get—

JM: She, she really espouses liberation theology. Have you heard of that?

RH: Uh, no, but just tell me. I mean the word itself sounds as though it would be something that I'd be in favor of.

JM: It's not so much big in the States but in Central America there is a group of Catholic fathers, Maryknoll is—

RH: Yes, uh-huh.

JM: And um, they believe that the word of Christ comes through the people who are the poorest—

RH: Oh, definitely.

JM: —the most down and out.

RH: Oh yeah, I definitely feel that I see Jesus in the people that I'm associated with. Like, I have one person that I try, well this is like I say, we try to work in different areas. I have one person who is, she's in, uh, she was here in South Berwick. She's fifty and she had been a bright, bright girl. You know she was probably second in her class when she went to the academy. But she had, her family had mental problems, she inherited these. She ended up in down in AMHI [Augusta Mental Health Institute?] which is the mental institution. And now, she, her family is gone, she's living in a, and it can never be any different for her. She's in with people that are 75, 80, all of whom have problems and she has to function in this kind of a setting. And there's absolutely nothing you can do because she cannot at this point, ever go out and live by herself. She wouldn't be able to cope with it. So, she is destined to have to stay in that kind of an environment and I just think that is so sad. So, I try to be her friend. I can't do everything for her, but I have her come to eat. I bring her treats over to her and like, I brought her to Strawberry Banke [outdoor history museum in Portsmouth, NH] and I let her have my strawberry shortcake 'cause I didn't want it anyway and she definitely did, so, you know, little things like that. And I take her to travelogues and so I try to go and pick her up and I at least listen. She calls up and I have to hear the same thing a hundred times over 'cause the poor soul has nothing else to talk about. And she could have been so bright and had so much to add if somebody had gotten her before she fell through the crack. Now there is no halfway houses. She shouldn't be in a place like

that. But she can't be by herself. She needs something in between. Where she could give of herself what she's got to offer but would have somebody there to support her in the areas where she can't do it for herself. You know, it's really sad. So that's another little [unclear]. Well, I can't help everybody but I can at least try to help Mary a little bit.

JM: It's interesting, that's exactly what my mother does.

RH: Yeah.

JM: She, she tries to build a home for people like that who are in between.

RH: Oh boy.

JM: Where they have jobs and they have jobs in the home. It's their home.

RH: Yeah, exactly.

JM: And she and my stepfather are sort of facilitators, kind of like parents.

RH: Oh, I think that, I think that is just wonderful, Jen. That, that to me, this is what I'd like to see our government be about.

[end of transcript]