Interviewee: Betty B. Hoskins
Interviewers: Lauren Carroccia, Kerry Marasa
Date: November 13, 2008
Place: Assumption College, Worcester, Massachusetts
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Abstract: Born in 1936 in Baltimore, Maryland, Betty B. Hoskins grew up with her parents, John and Bessie Miller, and a younger brother and younger sister. Betty attended Goucher College, an all-women's school at the time, graduating at 19 years old with a bachelor's degree in biology. Shortly after, she obtained a master's degree in embryology at 21 years old from Amherst College. She eventually married and moved to Texas with her husband, Godfrey Curtis, earning her doctorate from Texas Women's University. She came to Worcester in 1972 when she heard that Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) was searching for a professor, and has lived here since. In this interview, Betty discusses her experiences as one of the few women who studied and taught at men's colleges, and the changes and strides she has seen women make in Worcester. Betty emphasizes how important women's achievements in education are, and reminisces about many of her colleagues and friends who fought for women's rights. The stories of Worcester's many changes, her involvement with the Worcester Women's History Project, as well as her personal educational achievements come alive in this interview, and demonstrate the effects of the women's movement.

KM: Okay, so Ms. Hoskins, we just wanted to make sure that we had your permission to be recording this today.

BH: Yes you do.

KM: Okay and 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 in Worcester. We are focusing on the areas of education, health, work, and politics and community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with work and education. We thank you for your help with this important project.

BH: You're welcome. Do you want to put your names on so everybody remembers that you're the interviewers?

KM: I'm Kerry Marasa.

LC: And Lauren Carroccia.

KM: And first we are just going to start off with some basic biography. What is your full maiden name and married name?

BH: The maiden name is Bruening. B-R-U-E-N-I-N-G. German one. Hoskins is the married name, my children have that name.

KM: And when were you born?

BH: 1936.

KM: And you said you had children, how many do you have?

BH: I have one alive, Catherine, who is the librarian at DePaul, the reference librarian, and one from Kent who died when he was 19.

KM: Oh, I'm sorry.

BH: It's a hard—that's a hard story, we won't do it today.

KM: That's fine. And you said you didn't have any grandchildren, is that correct?

BH: No grandchildren. Two Dalmatians [all laugh and smile].

KM: And what culture or ethnicities do you identify with?

BH: Well, my family is entirely German. German immigrants who came, well it was a little while after the 1850 convention here, and they came directly here to Baltimore, and very few ever left, I think I was the second who went wandering. I went all the way to Massachusetts and then Texas and then Sweden, then England, and et cetera. So there, keep going. Oh, and I'm obviously a Caucasian. [laughs]

KM: Have you ever married?

BH: Mhmm.

KM: And what was the name of your husband?

BH: He was Godfrey Curtis, also known as Curt, and he was a Texan with oodles of different extractions in his family.

KM: And are you still married?

BH: No, no. Long, long, ago, before, way before, even before I came here I was divorced. I've had relationships since, but marriages no.

KM: Could you tell us a little bit about your parents?

BH: Sure. Well, it's *apropos* of how I happened to be a first woman in science in WPI, an engineering college. Both my parents grew up poor, in the center of Baltimore. My father was the eldest of five, his father died when he was in college, and that made him very dependable. He got to college on a scholarship to Hopkins, he got a job at Bell telephone, AT & T, and he never left. So his sense of stability was in one job, the whole time. He was a great number of people with [___???]. My mother also was raised poor but with some relatives who were builders, and so a lot of the buildings in Baltimore that apparently the miller's family built, but my grandfather's job was to go around the country and find freight shipments that had been lost from the miller's businesses. So my grandfather was a wanderer, which is probably just as well because he's not *entirely* a nice person but my mother also—and her twin—went on scholarship to Goucher College, where I went, it's a women's college but it's co-ed now. And my mother majored in Latin and Greek, and she ended up teaching high school math. Her twin majored in physics, which she spent her life in Campfire Girls. Let's just say there was a lot of ability to follow your dreams, or your confusion, all of which I inherit.

KM: Where have you lived during your life?

BH: I lived for 19 years in Baltimore because I lived at home during college, because that was how to be frugal. That was true for my younger brother and younger sister too. And then I came—and here's my first at being an oddity—I came to Amherst College and did my master's degree. What's odd about it is it was then a male school, and a very highly prestigious male school. I didn't even ask, truthfully, I wanted to come here and do some research on how salamanders grow back an arm if it's bitten off or cut off. And I had worked on earthworm regeneration as an undergraduate and part of it was an interest in hormones, I won't go on about that now, but that became a theme and it got me a teaching assistantship at Amherst, and then I realized 'Oh my goodness, I'm the only student woman on campus.' It was a very small graduate school but I was teaching undergraduate and it was a wonderful, enlightening experience because of what was expected of undergraduates there. And lots of people taught undergraduate there, like Dave Suzuki [____???] Onward. Then I married and moved to Dallas Texas, I married a medical student and when he completed his M.D. we moved to Houston for his internship and also our daughter Catherine was born there, and then, he, also having some good research experience was invited to come to London, England to do a post-doc. Yeah, he had been in Galveston, Texas, was known for this, he was able to photograph cells, well that's ordinary now, time lapse photography is like nothing, but his was one of the two set ups in the country at that time when he was at Hopkins. And of course, he got very unhappy later because he was only a technician and a kid, so you'll see other people's names on the patents. Onward. So in London we worked with a very distinguished fellow James Danielley who later moved to Buffalo who was later invited to become the department chair at WPI which is when it transformed from biology to bio-tech for reasons we may come to because I didn't stay there, I was tenured but not kept. So then I stopped moving around, oh no no no, I've left out one. After London, my husband was invited to a post-doc in Stockholm, Sweden, in one of the labs that he had was doing early studies of RNA in cells. That means I was able to see the Noble Prize awarded

twice and go to the banquet. Etc. etc, yeah, my son was born there. It was a very plummy time. We returned then to Dallas [sighs], well that was a tangled time, anyway it was interesting and useful. And eventually I got a job there teaching at a brand-new community college. It's a theme, brand-new, [….] scientists there, we were still building what that community college system and it's county paid for and I was brand new. Again, I decided I really needed to get my doctorate, so I went racing off to Texas Women's College which is in Denton, near Dallas, but stayed living in Dallas. I did too fast the doctorate and before I was even finished analyzing my data I had asked my friends and my college advisor to look out for jobs and WPI, in the summer of '72, was looking for a woman. So I moved here [Worcester], and I moved to Paradox Drive and have stayed ever since. So that's, let's put me there and see what else you asked, I just, I'm a better professor so every fact leads to a lot of interesting little things. So just remind me, 'My point that I asked you was…' Go ahead.

KM: Do you have any other family members who live in the area?

BH: No. I have cousins all over the country now, [___???] etc etc, so I got in the habit of moving less than everyone else. I have such great friends that were family but they're not genetic family. Keep going.

KM: What challenges do you think this city still faces?

BH: We talked about it coming over, aren't we? Worcester is such an amazing city and I liked it partly because it's so like Baltimore, there's lots of cultural activities, music…Worcester has probably more fine organs, possibly even more than Boston has if you count Worcester County, fine organs, and it's a very active chapter, lots and lots of free concerts. Worcester has an art museum that is first-rate, in fact Worcester and Baltimore were doing archeology studies at the same time during the Depression so they have very powerful collections, small collections. There are ten plus colleges in Worcester, and yet Worcester keeps thinking 'Oh, well that isn't going to work' or 'Oh, they aren't going to give us enough trains,' well see, now those people are sweeping their leaves instead of waiting for their collection day. There's an [Esau] of maybe the 1940's, I was a kid then, but just a naysaying, and I don't know if it's a desire, but people tend to trip each other rather than get together and be proud together and develop programs, they tend to go 'That's not my department' or 'No, we can't do that' so that's a big challenge I think still. And it is a contrast, I was on the Worcester Women's Oral History, which comes out of the WWHP. I was part of the first steering committee that developed the WWHP, yeah, the first. And I'm going to tell a story because when we were looking at this, and I was part of a group of feminists in Boston who met at Harvard Divinity, a theological opportunities program. I'm more interested in ethics, but still, wonderful speakers, and I invited (when I was put on the first steering committee) I invited a woman, Pat Morris, to come out here, who had developed the Women's Walking Trail. This public school teacher got a grant and a leave of absence to develop the walking trail there. This gets important because what she said to us, among many other helpful things, was 'Involve the women of other ethnicities, involve the women of color, right away, don't wait till later, say oh, we don't really have an African-American or a Portuguese or

a whatever, Hispanic, in this, or Asiatic. Involve them at the beginning and assume that they have means. Assume they are of the class you think of yourself as. Do not assume that other people are poor, not knowledgeable, etc.' That was so helpful because promptly, when somebody suggested an enactment of Sojourner Truth, a couple of us, me and Laura Howie said 'Well, let's go and ask Emmanuel Baptist Church if they would be willing to co-sponsor.' And Shirley Wright, the minister's wife, has been a grand colleague and friend ever since and she's been on the history project's steering committee. Then followed Ogretta McNeil from Holy Cross, and then followed Dorista Goldsbury, who's in counseling psychology, so what we established was this recognition to ourselves. There was a middle class and upper that became doctors, etc, population present in Worcester: three people at the time of the 1850 Convention. And they came to it, as did Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglas, but it meant that we put on the record the co-equality of women of means of careers or of family etc., that served us *very* well and that's one of the stories that kind of gets swept up in the midst of all of it and we should acclaim ourselves for having kept that camaraderie going. Keep going. Let me see, what was the question? [laughs] Tell me what I was talking about. Oh yes, the challenges of Worcester. The challenges of Worcester, what you see here are wonderful projects. We have a huge number of people here in the year 2000 [WWHP Conference], we had as many people who had been here in 1850 at this first National Suffrage, well, Suffrage and Abolition. It's the first in the country that named both anti-slavery and poor women's right to vote and that was women black, and women white, and women any other color. It was held in 1850 here because of the train system was so good. Here we are in 2000, eight years ago, and there were fewer trains but they were not as well used as they are now. So that's an oddity about Worcester, about all of Central Mass. Has enormously important times in history. We [WWHP]were able to get four portraits in Mechanics Hall, first time they ever had any women in Mechanics Hall, and they had to remove some pretty unknown mayors, whoever, to put those portraits up, there was a great fuss. The women who are there are Clara Barton, who lived in Oxford, Lucy Stone, who lived in Gardner, Dorothea Dix, who lived in mental health, what we would now call the Mental Health Movement, and Abby Kelly Foster, who was one of the most striking, stunning of orators, who traveled all over Central Mass, out to Ohio, etc. with Frederick Douglas. White women and black men did not sit in the same chair, but if they traveled, and then 100, 150 years later we really are kind of at the same place. That's a difficulty of Worcester. We, it should be loud and clear, Abby's House is named for Abigail Kelly Foster, there's a charter school too, and we carry on Abigail Kelly Foster's tradition with Abby's House, and yet it's just one more part of one more city whose newspaper tends to find things to grump about.

KM: What changes have occurred in Worcester over time?

BH: [laughs] Well, let's see, when I came here the Galleria that was renovated to be the Worcester Fashion Outlet, which now has essentially nothing in it and the same kind of design issues. But that's another problem of Worcester, it tells itself things that aren't true. Like 'there's no parking near the train station.' Well, the Outlet garage is a block and a half away, and I had a debit card to park there, I had to go to a hearing and tell the mayor about it, and the Planning Commission that there is a lot of parking. They're sorry

that you don’t refer to their garage at the train station but it’s a lack of, it’s not even imagination, I think it’s an ability to look around and see what’s good. So back to, no, that’s enough there.

KM: Okay. What distinct characteristics make Worcester the city that it is?

BH: [laughs] And I think the presence of this many colleges is like Baltimore, although Baltimore is bigger, and Worcester has a fair, but not good cultural commission, this common calendar so that you know cross-campus. For instance, in the newspaper yesterday Michael Dukakis will be at Clark tonight speaking on the future of government. [interrupts herself to change topic] Oh by the way, sorry I lost a crown [referring to tooth as she talks] the other day, well I think it’s weird, this gaping hole that you get to look at. [Back to question] To me, this means this is a very urbane city with a lot of cultural resources and even if you can’t get to all of it more than I can get to, so I *certainly* don’t want to live in Boston—it would be overwhelming to wish to participate in so many things. And yet, we don’t review them well in the paper, we don’t work hard enough in this cultural commission. Or the Consortium has to do, to get things listed a week or two before. That’s a problem. It’s a light under a bushel, or maybe a whole haystack. Go ahead.

KM: What do you think the women’s general experience has been in Worcester?

BH: Well, we can go to my time here. And other people’s. I came to Worcester in 1973, and I told you how; because I was invited to interview over the summer, and I said ‘I’m not finished with my dissertation analysis, and I really can’t come in the fall, the next month, plus the children need to be moved and one was junior high, and one was, no, they were both in elementary school at Tatnuck.’ So they were very good, they said ‘We’ll hold the job until January.’ Which meant I arrived here moving back from Dallas with the dog and the plants and the children in the car and looked for a house, etc. And they were really puzzled…WPI in general. [Imitating people’s reactions] ‘You’re coming to WPI? It’s a boy’s-- men’s school’ but utterly welcoming. We found a house, and before the mortgage was complete, I was in on the strength of being, coming to teach at WPI. There were two of us, though, Joanne Manfra came the previous September so we’re both hired for ’72-’73. She did history, she’s still there, maybe now retiring, [she] has been head of humanities. I moved on from WPI in 1979, longer story we’re not going to do. It was a curious experience and let me just preface, each college did their own way of going co-educational or integrating. Holy Cross had hired a dean of women and started planning before they brought students. I don’t remember Assumption’s habit; I’ll talk about who I knew here. But WPI had had some applications from women, and my guess is they said, ‘Well, you know, no reason to turn them down, they’re good,’ and then they said ‘Oh my goodness, we need women’s facilities.’ [everyone laughs] Originally, I was in a lab building which had no women’s room so they had to designate one of the men’s rooms. And there were grumbles like, ‘Oh, you know the secretaries didn’t mind going to the next building, even in winter.’ Yeah, they’d put their coats on and walk through the snow to go to the bathroom. I said ‘What’s it coming to?’ That’s funny, in a way, but it’s also, it meant that I got called ‘the one who’s not smart enough to stay in her own

department.' Because I'm in the Women's Movement and was then, so forth, I would get calls [imitates people questioning her] 'We've been through the catalogue and we don't think there's much sexism but would you read it through for us?' And I had a feeling that I was not diplomatic and simply said something like 'If you know there's sexism in it, take it out, you don't need me.' Or 'We're hearing that the women want shower curtains, do you think that's a reasonable expense? It was only […]' Well, you see that was all fair and legitimate and leapt right in, but on the other hand the only preparedness that just let you do your work or your studying. On the one hand I was a part of an enormous change in society, on the other; it was very easy to accidentally end up with something, like, for instance, 'She puts tension in the room when she chairs a committee.' Well, there had never been a woman chairing a major academic committee there. It came up as something of 'Do we really want to retain her?' It was awfully hard on my family; they didn't really want to retain me, even though the faculty had accepted me as tenured. I think that was duplicated on every campus, maybe Clark not because they were always co-ed, and also rambunctious. There was Assumption, all men?

LC: Mhmm.

BH : So it was startling. And your first professor was Professor Clare Quintal , who came to start Maison Francaise, up at the front of the campus, and it was her creation. And I don't know that you can get her to talk in a speech say, but to be the first woman on a faculty entirely of priests before her, excellent French speaker, excellent French knowledge of French and Canadian-French history, is still an oddity. But it helped Assumption then to become a place where both young men and young women were in the Catholic environment that the new president, for instance, is still very much building. Who else was around? Worcester State was always co-educational; Anna Maria was all women and began to let men take courses. First it was in the master's and biology I think, because I taught some in biological advances and ethical dilemmas. And they had police officers doing criminal justice. You see, to a degree it's all economic, where can we get more income legitimately? Ah! Different kind of students, called men or women. But you see, that's, I'm very pleased you're interviewing because I said to some of my friends over the years that this is an untold story. Hilda Hines was the first Holy Cross woman, she's in philosophy, and developed a very good college, but then again, it was hard, because whenever you're giving advice on how to change, your point of view improves the place you come to. It's an uneasy position to be in. The other thing that Assumption did well was they added Angela Dorenkamp in English, and she became part of the radicals of the 60's and 70's in Worcester, people and so on, she got support from Michael True. Oh dear, there's other women that early, that's not fair of me, I can't remember each of them. Anyways, let's go, let's go some more.

LC: Well, going back to your education, you said you grew up in Baltimore, so did you attend high school there as well?

BH: This gets silly too. In Baltimore they had an excellent public education system that did a lot of experimenting with Hopkins men's education. So, two things, they had a program where bright children could skip by going to summer school for six weeks. And

this is during the Second World War where you wanted to move people on into productive jobs. So, I skipped the first half of first grade by learning to read in six weeks at Hopkins when I was six. And then I skipped the second half of that year in fourth grade by going to Hopkins. And so I thought the really bright people were the ones [___???] at that time we had both February and June graduations, so that if you were one of the kids that was born on October the 15th, you didn't have to wait a whole almost year, you could come into the school system in January. And I thought the people who were in classrooms during World War II, where both the first and the second half were taught, and they just listened and learned both of them and got skipped. They didn't have to go to six weeks of summer school; I thought these were bright people. And then my junior high, which drew from the entire city, we all came on three cars, by ourselves, from everywhere. Transfer students, I mean transfers from the bus or whatever, did the three years of then what was junior high, seven, eight, nine, in two. So, by the time I went to Goucher, I was 15. Or just turning 16, so I graduated when I was 19, and I got a Master's degree when I was 21.

LC: Wow

BH: Right, and then I married. [Laughs] And raised the children. But, you see, that wasn't odd then. Even my brother's three years younger, and by then, well after the war I guess, it was thought of as enrichment and you didn't want the children to get off form their social maturation. There's some interesting things about us who skipped and went fast and so forth, but there are more of us in professions and in the norm for women of that era, especially if you went to a women's college. I went to, therefore, this mixed from all over the city, mostly Jewish, junior high school and went to an all women's high school. It was 100 years old, a long tradition of women's and men's high schools. And then I went to a women's college, and then I came to Amherst, which was a men's college. [Referring to people's reactions] 'What were you thinking?' I wanted to work on earthworm, not earthworm, newt regeneration. And then when I did go back and do my doctorate, I went to Texas Women's University because, again, they were happy to pay me to be a teaching assistant. And they were the largest nursing school in the country, who's ever heard of Texas Women's whose not from Texas? It's a state school; so then I came to teach at an almost all men's college, which was not fortuitous. Well, actually by then, I had worked at that brand new community college. And that was a change from my own education, and I ended my career by teaching at the College of Art and Design in Boston, which is a state college. All the majors there are either fine arts, sculpture, painting, art history, art education, or industrial design, graphic design, so totally humanities. I thought that was cool because all of my degrees were from liberal arts schools, and I think women should do that balance in arts of sciences. People should take more science. But it is unusual to have that, and these artists were bright, bright, bright [___???]. It was a very competitive state college, so they had a terrific background. And it's co-ed. And it's multicultural. There was one semester where I had mixed classes, two sections of 60, I had at least 17 nationalities. So, this world has changed form little kids during WWII skipping grades but all these little white children, to, I mean it was exotic to have some Jewish people. I mean, Protestants and Catholics you had but no other ethnicities that I could remember. To now, where we're getting comfortable with people

form all over the world that have got to the college we're at or the job we're at and it's fascinating and a bit breathtaking. Can we go a little further?

LC: Did you notice any big differences between a solely women's college and then teaching at a men's college?

BH: Well, as a graduate student, it is different to do. But I taught labs, absolutely. Women's colleges had seven sisters plus the three or four, that we call the eighth of the seventh sisters, were founded when only one college in the country would let in women, and that was Oberlin. So, women's colleges were formed usually by men or churches, mine was Methodist, to give women the opportunity to express their full selves, their intelligence, and their ability to bond with each other. And not all of the faculty were women, but there were spectacularly interesting and talented and famous women I had as an undergraduate. That's also true at Amherst for the men who are on the faculty. But the undergraduates were very bright and very sure that they would take very responsible positions in government and medicine and literature. But we were less sure of ourselves, we were much more tentative, and I'll give you one more. One of the college's slogans for raising funds, a campaign for funds while I was in college in 1956 was 'Educate a man, you educate an individual. Educate a woman, you educate a family.' And we believed it and we did it, but the whole notion of double tracking, building rare person, the whole notion of 'mommy has enough money to stay home,' that was normal, etc. So, that was a difference, but it was even the same before college. It was the same with boy and girl scouts, which I spent quite a few years in. The boy scouts would be required, let's say their badge would say 'Keep five reptiles at home and feed them for three months and tend them.' And girls badge would say 'Recognize at the museum or in a book five kinds of reptiles.' You couldn't compete. What had been expected of you would not let you go where, as easily at least, as it would if you kept reptiles, like snakes to play on the bureau. The non-spoken message was, 'This will be good, you can teach this to your little sister and brothers or you can be a brownie scout leader.' And that was good for the culture, but it sure stifled a large part of us.

LC: Yeah

BH: Yeah, it just, it wasn't a question. You were getting married and you would affect the world.

LC: Do you think that's changed at all?

BH: Well, I think you're dipping back in this era to a whole lot of pressure, and I guess you can say it's a result of feminism that we all so many of us discovered that equality is a good thing and we can be whole selves. But that challenges dependency needs, and I think we have a struggle on that one again. I'd be happy to expand forever, but having spent a life in feminists movements and publications and thinking and doing, most of, so much of what's been written in books, and, even as academic feminists have survived by speaking in ways that their academy can understand, has left out the vision of what we meant because it was a big equality, truly. Well, it's the same thing. The 1850

Convention they said was the first national, because Seneca Falls only drew from the region around it, but two years later the one here drew from the civilized country at the time, like New York and Illinois and maybe Pennsylvania, and it's the first to have a goal towards the vote and abolition of slavery without respect to gender or color stated as its goal. And, of course, what happened with the end of the Civil War later and the Emancipation was that the most our poor dear national leaders then could understand was 'Okay, black men could vote, as long as they have property.' And there were, there were middle class families here that were free men and some who had been emancipated. But women couldn't vote and sometimes, or most often we hear 'women got to vote later,' but we forget that no black women could vote from 1865 or 9 or whatever until 1920. Nor could anybody else until 26 or 2. Well, my mother was in high school when her mother was first able to vote. To me, that's not long ago, it's a bit longer for you but it's in my imaginable, I remember my grandmother's lifetime that any woman got to vote. And we were very gracious as well as they really argued with each other. The split in the women's suffrage movement because of that, saying, 'No, we won't step back and not also have our rights. The bible does not say slavery is right and it does not, or shouldn't, that women are inferior.' And the others said 'Well, get what you can, have the men vote and then surely they'll give us the vote soon.' And it's sixty odd years, so voting in a sense is part of the complicated and very good scene that we have approached as elected an Afro-American [Barack Obama] with a wife who is his equal. And I think he'll fill our cabinet and office and so forth according to the ability and needs of the administration. But there is still this tussle. We got set up to oppose a white woman with experience against an Afro-American man who we weren't sure of was ready. He's ready, I don't doubt that, but there's the reverberation from 1860 that's a little worrisome. It's because we think so small of either/or we could figure, say how are we going to maximize it for everybody? It's not hard, not easy. Anyways, as you can see, I relate my whole life to my whole life here to prior generations. What else would you like for now?

LC: Well, I was interested in knowing, I know you said they were very welcoming when you first went to WPI and started teaching, but did you face hostility form anyone or were there certain people that were against you teaching?

BH: Well, there people who you could tell were not happy. Probably if I had interviewed with some in my department of biomedical engineering I would have thought about coming. Nobody was impolite or mean, certainly, they were modestly suspicious. When Danieli came to department head, he brought with him his research staff from Buffalo and before that London and more people I'll show you a picture of sometime named Audrey Muddleson-Harris. And I'd known her as a technician in London; our children were the same age. So here was Audrey, who could get, or I got one grant to establish a tissue culture lab, and she brought and was able to get a lot of, to renovate a whole floor in the building to do research. She was one of, I think, two people in the world at that point who could adeptly poke a cell, take out the nucleus, and transplant it to another cell. It's routine now, but WPI doesn't realize, I've told them but not enough, I need to fix my schedule so I can take them some of this memorabilia, they don't realize how central WPI was to this change to synthetic biology. Now, I happen to think synthetic biology is not entirely a good idea, and that's how I came to get involved in bioethics. But back to your

question, no, you know, it was clearly a good thing. There were women who would be good students and good engineers, but it was so awfully inconvenient. What do you do if women are going to go out to an industrial site? Do they wear a skirt because they're ladies, but on the other hand they are going to go up a metal staircase, so they should wear slacks? And as I said, when I chaired a committee, it put a certain tension in the room because it was the first time they had thought about chairman, madam chairman? I said, 'Say chair.' It was just crossing a lot of socializations, and I had not given it a thought. I thought, 'They've offered me a job, they've hired me. Thank goodness, I want to go back to New England.' So, I think that's what ends up being seen as a revolution that really in increments from people who, perhaps foolishly, think everybody is good hearted. The reason I mention Audrey is because we would be the only two women in the faculty dining room. And being both of a 'bug us, we'll bug you' kind of assertion, some faculty person would come by and he'd say, 'So, what are you girls doing? Plotting a revolution?' And we'd say, 'Yeah.' And after a while we began whenever he came into the dining room we'd start, like, 'Mumble, mumble, mumble, mumble, PLOTTING A REVOLUTION, mumble, mumble, mumble, PLOTTING!' That was not smart because we shamed them accidently by calling attention to them. It was very hard to accidently shame people. And, so, they weren't hostile, but we would attack them. That's accurate from at least my experience of that era. It's very interesting and also painful.

LC: When you were teaching or studying, did you ever plan on studying anything other than biology or did you know that was what you planned on studying from the beginning?

BH: Well, that's an interesting thing, and I'm glad you asked it. I went back and looked at snapshots of me as a child, and I'm always picking a bug out of the grass, or looking at my goldfish when I'm one and a half. So anything that I was interested in got maximized, so literally I liked bugs and grass and things, so everybody gave me books. But by college, I do remember the psychology prof saying, 'Look, we've done career tests, and you have dual peaks in biology and writing. You really ought to consider being an editor.' And when I left WPI, I was given a nice terminal year in training, the job I got after applying for a lot was at Ginn and Company, one of the fine developers of high school, at that time high school textbooks. And so ill prepared since I hadn't majored in English or taken any courses in editing, I was the head developer of a high school series.

LC: Oh, wow

BH: Yeah, we had a good manuscript. I forget why it stopped because this is the thing about careers; I've always called mine a wanderer path because you do what comes to hand and what seems like, 'Yeah, I can figure that out.' The reason our textbook project was cancelled, and we had the author, we had the entire manuscript, we had the art program. There were two reasons. One, Ginn had not been in the high school science field for a while, and they had to build the marketing force. And this was an age, well, it's an age, where you have to get the text book commissions of Texas and state wide Texas and California to put your book on the list or you can't recoup your costs, and it cost a

million exempt to develop one. And the marketing force looked and said, 'We don't want to deal with this creation. We don't know anything about science. How are you going to enter this?' So, I ended up writing, we wrote by Xerox a policy statement on how we will handle teaching evolution and not creation in a science classroom, or how we would handle questions about using live animals. My answer is: cherish and thank everything. You dissect a twig, you say thank you. Or a carrot, you look at bacteria, you say thank you. My learning will be valuable. You cherish life and you recognize it and learn not to destroy it, even to eat. But that was pretty advanced for the marketing force. And the second reason, and this is where you get tangled in politics and economics, the Hant brothers in Texas decided to see if they could corner the silver market. And they did. And so the cost of silver went so high that you could not, and you had to have silver developed in full to print a full color book, and you couldn't recoup your costs within the time that one edition would be worthwhile. I said okay. And it's funny because their sister, I heard her speak at Harvard, who's a flaming liberal, who gives laptops to women leaders all around the world, all of the money her brothers make, she gives in different directions. They had fun making a bundle and destroying projects. I don't think they knew; they were just having fun cornering the silver market. But you see that, to me, there were new learnings about how, even though you need a job, it's a first rate product, this book, you may not be able to go forward because of the economics. So, I was very good at it, the state college was half time permanent but full time professor eventually, but the other half of my income came from freelance editing of texts and helping authors and so forth. So, she was right, I should have gone right straight for a Master's in editing or editorial process because I ended up as a manager. But the other thing that caught me when I came here, I think I mentioned that informed consent forms did not exist in, say, 1973, and just at that time, the medical school was important in this, they had a Wednesday afternoon seminar series called 'Things We're Thinking about in Medicine' and what we would do with a fragile neonate, who, if fully birthed, will die slowly because they don't have an esophagus or trachea. You don't ever have to breathe. And that was a shocking thing for somebody to have to admit. They make judgments and have professional responsibility, and there were all kinds of things like that that followed from that era, and the ethicists who had been, I would say, fairly boring, rational, straight-line logical people, suddenly have this whole field. What do you do with a family who know they carry the gene for sickle cell Tay-Sachs? They or a, now I'm going to blank of what Ashkenazi Jews carry, and you know that if you have two parents who are carriers, the child will die of connection and brain wastage by the time it's two. And you can test with some degree of certainty the two and tell them if they're carriers, and they can make the decision of whether to marry and have children. So, the bioethics era and medical ethics became very rich and compelling. At WPI, there was a doctorate in social ethics names Tom Shannon. He was a former priest, Dominican, who had wished to leave the priesthood and marry and a former nun, and they had two lovely, albeit tall daughters because they're both over six feet. And Tom and I and a business person and later Joanne Manfra took this field called bioethics and developed a very large program that they still have at WPI because, and I hadn't gone into this at all, and the other thing that was interesting at WPI at that time was they had a lot of educational innovations of the 60s and 70s, and so to graduate, instead of course credits, you had to pass a comprehensive exam in your field, a research project, a library research usually that looked at the impact

of your major on bioethics. It was very hard for an engineering college to scrutinize the good and the bad, and what they ended up doing was making money out of it. Oh yeah, six courses, and that was the only one that was course based. And they are now back to course credits and so forth, but still the interactive qualifying project, one of them that has stayed, well, they kept the IQP, but the bioethics program is still strong. That was also problematic for me because the more I learned as an ethicist, took a few course and worked for people, the more I had questions about my own field. And there were talks on should we use human embryos or stem cell research? And that all starts back in our work in WPI. Not all of the work doesn't, but the fact that Audrey Muddleson-Harris could transplant nuclei meant that she could take an adult, or her technique was take an adult nucleus and put into an unfertilized egg and let it develop for a while. And, see, the technology always drives what you can do in terms of experimenting. But again, it was such a fascinating era, and at the same time very hard as well as real fun, but it's been a lot of change. I try to think about it in terms of, but my father worked before the car to the man on the moon, but I think that our era also goes from nice ladies helping to support their family and using their brains that way to you can do just about anything as long as you can do just about everything. With your family, too. So that's, I think you'll find other people in this era, not that I don't want to be the star, but we haven't talked enough with each other about it all, so I'm delighted to put this into the record. And I will see what else we didn't do, but I don't want to run over what time you want to do. But I don't want to run over what time you wanted to do, but if you have a few more it's okay with me.

LC: Okay. Well, you mentioned before that you supported, approved of Obama as a president, did you vote for him?

BH: Mhmmm. Absolutely. I think that his message of vision, as well as his practicality of, well, two things started at the grass root, there is lots of people that came into voting because of the Web. And because he, I'm pretty sure, will assemble a lot of advisors with points of views, and they won't agree with each other, and they'll have to work out things that represent a lot more of the country and it's goals and it's vision, I guess. Let me think of something that I would like to go further on that. Early on, and people find this odd because I am very much a feminist, I thought that Hilary Clinton should stay in Senate because they were going to fling everything against her that they had flung at Kerry and Gore, they would fling at her, and no matter what she does, stay with her husband or not stay with her husband, they were going to fling the kind of stuff that we put up with earlier. I hope that she will be appointed to the Supreme Court or stay in the Senate because the powerful intellect and the powerful ability… [Switch sides of tape] And I think she understood the fairness therefore, that we're due. Let me say one other odd thing, when we were developing bioethics and we were down at Hastings, which was new, there weren't bioethics institutes or medical ethics institutes until the 70's, and we, a couple of us, were interpreters at Hastings, and we asked questions about 'Oh, well I'm not hearing my value perspective?' or 'Does everyone reason that way? Have you ever asked women ethicists if that's how they reason?' They made the awful mistake of saying 'oh no, no, no, no. There's only one way to reason, and you know what would happen if we ask women and they had a different answer, then we'd have to have meetings about

women's ethics, and then we'd have to have African women's ethics and American ethics, and we'd have to have green ethics and what we used today. But I just got a catalogue from Georgetown University and one of the new books is 'Is there a distinctly African-American ethics?' [Laughs] We are the conflict, and it shows that we lose value and tend to be in clusters rather than rank ordered and that there are indeed women's styles and ethical reasoning that are now acknowledged, not even connected to all women do that now. But still the question of, and then there was another book about 'Are there ethical reasoning styles that are appropriate, obviously rational that come from other countries, or other cultures?' 'There are Asiatic ethics?' 'Yeah!' That's a lot of development. That's an enormous amount of change. It's the basis of post-modernism. Except it got off the track, they said. 'Oh no, if there are several styles there's no central truth, nothing to hold, and so all the deconstruction had fallen apart.' And no, what, all we meant is there are a variety of things all of which must be taken into account. Not that nothing has validity because there is more than one validity. And that's a change, there's still much to develop. I'll be quick. That's me, in '73, when I got my doctorate, [points at picture] that's my daughter, her first name is Betty, that's Betty, Betty, and that's my mother Betty, so this is the three Betty's. It was the summer of '73, I look at that and go 'Really? She's 48?' And you haven't been thought of probably [to KM and LC]. But that's just to tell you again that the eras have flown. That was enjoyable. And what do you next, well, besides dinner, what do you do next with all of this?

LC: Well, is there anything else you want to include before we end it?

BH: Let me think just a minute.

LC: Okay.

BH: I came saying, 'I need to be sure to tell the story of Worcester in the time I've been here from the position at WPI,' but that the whole city was caught up in the post-60's, we could call it. I wasn't here for all the wildness, I was in Dallas. And that was good; it was a lot more active. It was a conservative stronghold with a liberal presence that was excellent in Dallas, more than here. So, I think we covered the things I wanted to say. You had some very helpful questions about how co-education changed over the eras here.