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## Mary McGavick and Cassandra Peters

Mary McGavick

Cassandra Peters

Maria Brescia-Weiler  
*Kenyon College*

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KENYON COLLEGE  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Stories of Knox County

Mary McGavick and Cassandra Peters  
Interviewed by  
Maria Brescia-Weiler and Jordan Guy-Mozenter  
On  
March 24, 2017

Kenyon College

Oral History Project  
Stories of Knox County

Interviewee: Mary McGavick and Cassandra Peters  
Interviewer: Maria Brescia-Weiler and Jordan Guy-Mozenter  
March 24, 2017

Maria Brescia-Weiler: So this is Maria Brescia-Weiler and Jordan Guy-Mozenter, is that right? Yeah, ok, with the Stories of Knox County Project interviewing Mary McGavick and Cassandra Thompson on their experiences with life in Knox County. Today's date is March 24, 2017 and we're speaking at Knox County Public Library? Mount Vernon?

Cassandra Peters: The Public Library of Mount Vernon, Knox County.

MBW: Ok, there we go. Thank you for participating, can you guys please state your full names and birthdates?

CP: It's Cassandra Peters, recently married, it's Cassandra Peters now. I was born July 20th, 1983.

Mary McGavick: Mary McGavick, Public Library of Mount Vernon—wait that wasn't the answer. September 21, 1957.

MBW: Ok, cool. So how long have you lived in Knox County?

CP: I've always lived here, I've lived here since I was born. She doesn't actually live in Knox County. But she's worked here forever. Well, not forever, I mean that's mean, she's worked here since I was born, if that's helpful (Laughter) that was not something that she particularly (Laughter)

MM: I live in Delaware County.

MBW: So how long has your family been here?

CP: Oh my gosh, um, my great grandmother came here with her family in 1911. They came to run the Bell Telephone, the new one that had just moved to Fredericktown--we're from Fredericktown--they came to run the Bell Telephone office. It was just her father, you know, it's small, but they came here and her last name was Turner at the time. She married into a family that had been well established here, they're one of the founders of Knox County, they're the Hozaks (sp?). They were horse-owners, actually they started out with a, they made wax stamps,

like wax sealing stamps, and they were one of the only places you could get them, that made the wax for sealing stamps. They were who the department of defense used for all of their correspondence in that time. She, love my grandmother, she was not from a rich family. She actually married one of their, one of the Hozak boys--there were, I can't remember, there were four or five of them, all boys. After the sealing wax factory closed they bought a horse farm in the same place, the built a horse farm for race horses, preferably Sockeye horses, that's what they raised. The ones, I'm always told, that the ones that didn't raise the horses bet on the horses, that's where the family money went. Um, my grandmother married into that family in a particularly not great way. She was from the wrong side of the tracks, literally the wrong side of the tracks, and she was fourteen, and she married their thirty year old son, who we believe had already been married but we don't know, we never found out. He got disowned when he married her, obviously, cause got her pregnant, she was fourteen, he was thirty. They were helped by, and now I can't remember her name, they were helped by a lady in town who was actually, who the Eastern Star in Fredericktown was named after. But she took them in, let them live with her, you know, let them, you know, have the baby and all of that good stuff. Um, they, he was still disowned until his father passed away, but by that time the family had lost most of the money, you know, betting on horses that didn't win. Betting on your own horses, not always the best idea. There was only, from what I understand there was one brother that made it out with money. He moved to Mansfield, his name's Cyrus, he had a large family. I never met them cause we were disowned, so. But that's what happened to their family. He owned, my mother's grandfather which was my great grandmother's husband, the thirty year old, he bought the drugstore in town, the general store, ran the general store for years. My grandmother, my great-grandmother, her name was Eve Hozak, she ended up opening the, being the first female business woman in Fredericktown. She opened a sewing store, you know, like a sewing shop, underneath his general store. And it was her own business and she owned it and ran it. She ended up being, they got a lot of real estate in Fredericktown, um, and she became a weaver, she had her own looms in her basement, she became a weaver after she retired, and, you know, they bought a lot of real estate. And he passed away when my mother was six, so '63 or '64 is when my [great] grandfather died. And then my great-grandmother, Eva Hozak, lived until 2003? Or 2004? She was very very old when she died. But she was awesome. And she pretty much raised my mother. My grandmother had a, was severely bipolar, had, you know, lots of problems working, but Eva raised my mom pretty much. But yeah she lived for a really long time. Um, let's see, is there anything else? Oh, so my grandmother, the one that was severely bipolar, she, when my mom was about ten one of the funeral parlors in town went out of business. And before they went out of business my grandmother called and said "Can I buy your house?" And we still live there. (Laughter) Funeral parlors are really nice houses, if you've never been to one. So I live in, it used to be--I have to get the name right, ok, it used to be the Bowlinger's (sp?) funeral home in Fredericktown. The new, in Fredericktown the new annex of the housing development they're building behind Hot Rod's, it's named after the family that used to own my house. (Laughter) Yeah, so, the story is I heard when they bought the house, cause you know, it had

been a funeral home, there was no one in it between them and my family, so there were five gallon buckets of embalming fluid in the garage, and there were display coffins in the basement. So, like, display coffins are half of coffins that they set in the window for displays. So they were in the basement. They sold the embalming fluid--I guess it's worth quite a bit of money--so they sold all the embalming fluid, but they kept the half coffins because they had these giant halloween parties I guess, the whole time my mother was growing up, and they'd have like seances in the basement, and it's a creepy basement, I mean, it's like an old, historical, creepy creepy, you know, like dirt floor creepy basement. But yeah so they kept the coffins for that, but it's, people were creeped out by it. It's a good house, it's a good house, I like it. (Laughter)

MBW: So have you ever lived anywhere else, or considered living anywhere else?

CP: I went to Bowling Green, I was, I lived at college in Bowling Green for a couple years. My parents actually moved, okay, so when I turned eighteen, instead of me moving out of the house, my parents moved out of the house. They moved to Texas, and then now they're in Washington. They love it there, but you know, it's the family home I still live there. They're the ones that wanted to move, 'cause they had never left, you know, they had always been here. So they're out enjoying Bellingham, in Washington. They love it, it's great. But, yeah, I have not lived anywhere else except for college.

MBW: So what brought you back, after college? Or like what, why have you never thought of living anywhere else?

CP: We, um, the real estate that my great grandmother bought, we still own all of it. Someone had to take care of it. My parents, like everyone likes to refer to my parents are very free spirited, and, um, they wanted to do stuff, so I told them I would take care of, you know, all of the things. They gave me a free place to live, you really can't beat free places to live. Especially when they're, you know, decent historical houses. So, I take care of all of their stuff that's here that they left, and you know, they're in Washington.

Jordan Guy-Mozenter: Do you ever think about, today, do you ever think about moving and joining your parents in that free-spiritedness?

CP: Oh, all the time. But you know, there's a fear that no one's going to care about the stuff here as much as I do, which, it would be hard to find someone who actually wanted to take care of it. You know, the house was originally a church in Batemantown, the central main part, so it's like 160 years old, or something like that. And they moved it on logs to where it is now. And then you know it's been added on to. But I, you know, I don't trust many other people to actually take of it. And then one of the other houses we own actually used to be, they call it the old Foote Foundry Mansion. There's a company, an old factory in Fredericktown that's shut down now,

but it's, you know, what most of the town was built around, and it's the Foot Foundry, they made, um, part of the steps for the Statue of Liberty. You know, my family married into their family, and all that stuff, but we own one of the houses that was their mansion. And it's one of the rental properties we rent out. They would also have to find someone who, you know, cared enough to take care of all that. And it costs a lot of money to pay people who have to take care of those things. So it would be nice to move, but there's a lot of things tying me. And I have decent work, which is also, you know, hard to find around her, so that's, you know, another thing that makes me stay.

JGM: Can you talk about how you began working here at the library, and how long you've been working here?

CP: How long have I?

MM: I don't know, you've always been here.

CP: (Laughter) I, huh, I actually, okay so this is random, I went to college to become a glassblower. I have most of an art degree. I ended up, no one wanted to teach me, no one had the actual thing I wanted to learn, I mean that happens a lot. My glass blowing is not furnace glass, it's torch work, it's different, and you have to go to a craft school to teach it, most colleges teach furnace only. So I couldn't, after I was in school for eight years, I couldn't get what I wanted, but I had taken so many credits that the government wouldn't give me money anymore to go to school. Like they'll pay for 300 credits, I took 298, which is effectively eight full years of school. Okay, so I got my English degree so I could have a degree, because I figured eight years of school and no degree is kind of ridiculous. So, I got an English degree, and then I was sort of like, what am I gonna do with this? At which point in time I stumbled across being a librarian, and I was like, I could do that, that doesn't sound bad, you know. So I looked into it, I got hired rather quickly in Richland County, which is Mansfield's county, right north of us. I worked in Lexington as a clerk for a little while, fell in love with, decided I wanted to be a librarian, so I started looking for another part time job as a librarian. I got in here as a reference assistant and then they loved me enough that they let me work full time. (Mary laughs) And so then I quit Richland, came here, have been here ever since, and then just started library school last fall?

MM: Mhmm.

CP: Last fall. (Laughter)

JGM: Library school, can you talk about that?

CP: Oh yeah, I just started at Kent State. It's actually really nice, all online, which is beautiful. So, you know, I work here sixty hours and then I go home and do no tomorrows of homework. But it's okay, it's really interesting. Right now I'm working on a focus in collection management, which is, you know, the nice job of getting to buy everything that we circulate, which is awesome. And hopefully, they love me enough to give me that job in the future, which they're promising, but, you know, promises are promises. (Laughter)

MBW: So does the library get a lot of use?

CP: Um, we have...

MM: We think so.

CP: We like to think so. We have regulars who, I don't know what they would do without us. We have a good deal of them. Our children's programs do really well, story time's a big thing, they're always full. And you know, they have to, you actually have to get places for them, story time's huge. And they do, you know, special baby story times and, um, family story times, stuff like that. We do have three other branches, and an outreach which is the homebound and nursing homes. But Fredericktown actually, the city, okay we don't own any of the buildings but this one. The other little towns they actually have to provide us a building for our libraries. Fredericktown, they, in the early '90s, or mid '90s, got together and built their own new building. The old library used to be in a Methodist church that was behind my house. And it's one of the oldest buildings in Fredericktown. But they had mold problems?

MM: And I believe bats.

CP: Pigeons!

MM: That was it!

CP: Pigeons.

MM: You couldn't go upstairs.

CP: No, they come in my yard, they're awful. And upstairs has been closed for years, even when the library was in there.

MM: Yeah, I begged to go in there and--

CP: Yeah they won't let you cause it, the upstairs was condemned but they were still using the ground floor for a library. It was weird. (Laughter) Now they use it for a historical museum, which is almost worse actually. (Laughter) But um, it's a really old building and the historical society loves it, but it's, you can't go upstairs, you have to--it's a nightmare. (Laughter) But you know, it's an old building and it's a turn of the century like, oh I wouldn't even--but you know they're not gonna tear it down or anything. The town gave it to the historical society, so they're never leaving, cause it's free. But, it's not in great repair either. (Laughter)

MM: But we worry that the world changed, and libraries don't get the same kind of use. So...

CP: We're sort of, libraries are in a weird place right now, we're sort of trying to find ways to be more useful in the future. Because, well you know, we've got a problem with everything's in all sorts of formats. You know, you can get the same thing in like six different formats. We can't purchase the same thing in six different formats, we'd lose all of our money. (Laughter) We try to be as accomodating to everyone as we can. We are partnered with the Ohio Digital Library, which is actually really nice, and, you know offers a lot of e-formatted books and stuff. But, you know, we still have lots of people who want print material, and you have to have that for them. And they refuse to use iPads and whatnot. We have a large number of computer illiterate people in our county. That's not anything new to us, it's constantly people who don't have email addresses, people who don't know how to turn a computer on, people who don't know how to get on the internet, like, literally things like that. They're not all amish. I mean we have a large amish community, who actually come in and will ask us to use the computer for them, because they're not allowed to. So, we get a lot of requests from amish to look up things, cause they can't. But they're allowed the information, they're just not allowed to use the device. Yes. We get a lot of that--less, than you would think. More older people who just refuse to use the internet, which, I don't know, if you've never had to use it...

MM: And, you know, the classic is, they wake up one day and wanna go see that grandkid in Florida, and they gotta buy a ticket. And the airline will cheerfully assure them that the people at the library will help with this.

CP: Not that you should ever buy a ticket on library computers for any reason.

MM: No, no.

CP: Everyone who works here will tell you that.

MM: Do not put your credit card--

CP: But people do it all the time. (Laughter)

MM: To a totally public computer.

CP: Yes. I mean there are, there are security things, but they're not that great, and you're taking your life in your hands if you do things of that nature.

MM: But that's the only option, and that's the way that a lot of companies are built, is, somebody else will do that for you, thank you.

CP: Well, the public library will do that for you.

MM: Yes, so, one of the gifts of Cassandra, and our other colleague Erica, is infinite patience, that I just don't possess.

CP: You've just been doin' it too long.

MM: I have. (Laughter) And, it's just, to watch them...

CP: But she had to be a reference librarian before google was something, so, that's different. (Laughter)

MM: I was google.

CP: I can type it in, she had to know where it was. I mean that's a fully different thing.

MM: And so sometimes, I'll be like, it's in that file (CP laughs) It really is I swear to you.

CP: And half the time we're like, I'll just look it up, it's way faster. I'm like, I know that book's over there but I'm just gonna type it in.

MM: Oh my gosh, yeah. So it's trying to serve all those layers of community is weird some days, um...

CP: No it is.

MM: We keep coming back to that word weird. It's just, cause you gotta sort (pause) Somebody comes in and asks a question and our next response is, how ignorant are you? In a loving way. (CP laughs) You know, to go into a hardware store, you know, they gotta figure out, do you actually know what a screw is?

CP: Well, yeah, you come in and you're like, I need a six inch nail, and they're like, wait wait, for what? (Laughter) What are you gonna use that for? Yeah it's like that a lot. Cause someone, you know, they get in their minds they know what they want, and they'll come in and be like, I need this direct information, and you're like, well I can't get you that, but what are you trying to do? I mean maybe you're not going about it the right way. That happens a lot. And then, you know, they know they're doing the right thing.

JGM: I'm just curious, like, how do you guys think about, cause like what I'm hearing is that the library is between this new technology, and then it's also still existing as a public space, so how do those two experiences of receiving information compare? And what would you like to see for libraries in the future?

MM: More room! (Laughter)

JGM: What would a future library look like in your imagination?

CP: Ooh, that's a hard question.

MM: Community spa--I went to a whole wonderful, glorious [meeting]

CP: Community space.

MM: With like 300 librarians in a room with that question. And, more space for meetings, more space for people to visit, more space for people to do small group studies. When we really got rollin' it was like, we would like a lawyer.

CP: Oh, that would be beautiful.

MM: We would like a lawyer (Laughter) right here, cause a huge amount--

CP: Oh, even a paralegal, I'd take a paralegal.

MM: Yes, yes, a huge amount of our day is...

CP: We print off legal papers for people who can't afford lawyers. That's, um, we unfortunately aren't allowed to tell you what you need. Even though we've seen it a hundred times, we can't tell you what papers you need because if something went wrong you could sue us. The courthouse also can't tell you, because the people who work for the courthouse aren't lawyers either, so they can't tell you what you need either.

MM: It's applying your knowledge, to a situation, to the law, is practicing law.

CP: Yeah, they can totally sue you for that.

MM: Yeah, and we're just, we're ignorant. And we're very aware that there's a, as librarians, what we say has a force. And people will come to us and ask, and we may mean it to be, I got nothing, and that is not, unless we're extra explicit...

CP: Well, we're generally the second people they've been to who have told them they can't tell them what they need.

MM: On a horrible horrible day in their life. If you're lookin for emergency custody of your grandkid...

CP: Oh yeah, nothing good has happened to you.

MM: ...many things have gone bad.

CP: And now no one will help you.

MM: Yeah, so we try to be kind.

CP: Yeah unless you're gonna pay sixty-five dollars an hour for legal help, yeah, that's, it's bad.

MM: Yeah, nobody loves you, and I say this to people all the time, nobody loves you when you say you need to talk to an attorney.

CP: Oh, yeah, they get upset. And they say, oh well why are we here then? Like, I don't know. (Laughter) I guess, I was just reading an article in library journal that was saying that libraries exist to help raise people to a common level. So say you can't, you know, like you don't have online access, you don't have any of that, but you know, people here in public school do. It's to help close that gap, you know, so the information isn't kept for the rich people.

MBW: So what do you think is the function of a library in this community specifically, or in a community like this, versus a library in like a city, or somewhere else?

CP: Actually, us and cities have a lot in common. I only say this because I had to work weekends at Richland Main, which is Mansfield city library. All communities regardless of how small have homeless populations. It's very important, libraries are very important to them. Shelters do not let you stay from nine, what nine in the morning to seven? Six or seven? You're not allowed to be in a homeless shelter. That involves even if it's minus twenty outside. Most restaurants will kick you out, you know, if you sit there too long without buying something, they're gonna kick

you out. We can't kick you out unless you're doing something weird. So lots of homeless people spend their days, especially in the wintertime, in the library because it's heated.

Clara Roman-Odio: Do they read?

CP: Oh, they do lots of things. They, they get on computers, you know, the internet's a big thing, they read a lot. You know, it's free entertainment for them too. They don't have much entertainment, they can't afford it. So you know, they come in, they read a lot, newspapers, we have lots of newspapers...

MM: When we're talking about the homeless, they're, I mean, many of them are lovely people...

CP: But they're not necessarily homeless, lots of them, you know, have to rent a one room house, you know, like shared twenty to a bathroom type deal. They're not necessarily *homeless* homeless. They don't have anywhere to go during the day.

MM: Right. But they're lovely people, and we respect their right to be here. It's when you get into the people who will not or cannot be compliant with the norms, then there's a problem. We're lucky that we have two really good, basically kind security people...

CP: Oh, they're very nice. I mean even if they ban people it's not like they're...well, Sharisse. Poor Sharisse.

MM: Yeah.

CP: We have a lady who, she's, I don't know what she would be classified as but, I mean she has a handler, like a case manager, but, she's a very nice lady, but she has a problem with panhandling while in the library. She also has a problem with smoking while in the library.

MM: And she can't...

CP: She really can't help it. But obviously we can't let that happen. She's been banned several times. And the poor thing'll call our manager of security to ask him when she's allowed back in, he's always really nice to her (Laughter) but he gives her a, you know, a length of time that she has to stay out, but yeah, they're very nice people. But yeah, the homeless population definitely, is very real.

MM: It's very real.

CP: Even in small libraries it's very very real. Um, what else would...

CRO: How about high schoolers or middle schoolers?

MM: We're lucky to have good, strong teen Makerspace, which is a little room in the middle of the building, and we can talk about that more, it deserves its own story.

CP: And our children's is pretty good.

MM: Our children's is good. We don't...

CP: And they have the, what is it, how many books before five? Isn't that a...

MM: 5k.

CP: 5k before five?

MM: Yeah, something, it's some huge number, and if you've lived with a toddler, you know you read books a lot. And so there'll be, you know, some little kid who's burned through all of them, and there's a bunch of them, and they love this, and they get small prizes,

CP: Yeah you get stuff for it.

MM: And you can write down the same book as many times as you want to, we don't...

CP: And we're real big in the summer reading program, you know. There's always like parking lot party and all that good stuff around here.

MM: So it's engagement. We know we're not close, some libraries are in a neighborhood, and we really aren't. You gotta walk here. Well, I mean, there's a few houses, but very very few. When the middle school was rolling we would have, you know, herds of young teens come in, but now the school's further away, and many (pause) Americans hate talking about class, class is huge. If your mom and dad have enough money to get you an electronic device, they will do that, and if they don't, you can't. And so that's one of the reasons we have two iPads down there?

CP: Four.

MM: Four. I bought em, I should know.

CP: (Laughter) She did buy them.

MM: They're always in somebody's hands.

CP: There's four iPads and two computers in the teen Makerspace, for teen's use only, so that they don't have to be with the adults, they don't have to deal with adult things. The Makerspace is really nice—coding, crafts

MM: Buttons

CP: All of that is down there. We have a, I think he's sixteen, who is currently learning to do robotics down there. He's actually really good.

MM: He's very good, and he's a good teacher, so he's teaching the staff

CP: Well, he's teaching the girls that work down there how to do coding, it's quite amazing. Um...

MM: Sewing, hand crafts...

CP: One of our girls that works down there is really big in cosplay, so she's helping, what, like four of the teenagers make their own outfits for stuff, it's pretty cool.

MM: And they're very much, I don't know what do you wanna learn? Kind of thing, which is, it's glorious.

CP: And we get the same, we get the same repeat teenagers.

MM: Oh yeah.

CP: I mean I don't know what they'd do without us. But there's probably, what, a group of ten of em that come in all the time.

MM: And there's more, but

CP: Oh yeah, there's more, but there's ten that we see at least once a week. Um...colleges, we help colleges.

MBW: Yeah, so, with the colleges thing, obviously we go to Kenyon, so we're just wondering, how do you guys see Kenyon fitting into or relating to the rest of the community?

CP: Well, see, we do more with Kenyon than we do with the Naz. But that's cause you guys are more, open to us helping. (Laughter) We also have that problem with a lot of the public schools, is they're not super

MM: They don't remember to call us.

CP: Yes, yes they don't realize we're a resource.

MM: But when I came here the folks at Kenyon were always very very kind, and willing to answer crazy questions, cause remember, I did not have google. So I always appreciated that, and always regarded them as, we are in this together.

CP: We don't do a lot of work with the Naz, that I can think of.

MM: No, but I send people there because when we get somebody who's been in, we also do interlibrary loans--

CP: Oh yeah.

MM: When we get somebody in here who's clearly working on a project, we'll loan stuff

CP: We don't get a hold of textbooks real easy. We are not a member of OhioLINK, in case you guys don't know what OhioLINK is, which is beautiful, we are not a member of OhioLINK. Mainly because if you destroy one of their books they will charge you a hundred and twenty five dollars and there is nothing you can do about it, you have to pay that. Our patrons do not care for that very much. So we are not part of the consortium.

MM: [inaudible]

CP: Oh yeah, I've been there, I know how that works. In fact in Mansfield we had a gentleman working on his doctorate in theology and they sent him a book from the early 1900s, like you could tell it was from the early 1900s, and the spine broke, because it was gonna happen, I mean, it was just so old, and they charged him for the broken spine, it was a hundred and twenty five dollars. He was not happy with us. Search Ohio also is not a thing we do. It's another consortium, you can get almost anything from Ohio. They also charge you for little minor defects you might do to the book. I had a lady who, literally a spot of kool-aid, like you could make it with a pen, it was so small. Twenty five dollars. On a paperback that would have cost you six bucks to replace. Yeah, no. But they are wonderful and you can find almost anything.

MM: Mhmm. But we'll send people, people find it easier to get to Nazarene, to get that OhioLINK card. And,

CP: I, in fact, I think I'd send them to Bellville but that's me.

MM: That's true, I forget about Bellville. So, we will send people to these, cause there's academic library questions. Ashland used to write up a introduction to the library sheet and we'd, oh we'd get students coming in and it was a wonderful document because you could not do it outside of their building. And so, it was kinda like, it wasn't quite a, what's inside the front door? But it was close.

CP: They might have one of those. I had to do one when I was in SCAP. For Kenyon, for their library.

MM: It was, so we'd be like, we're happy to see you, super glad you're here, you gotta get out.

CP: (Laughter) We're not gonna help you.

MM: Academic questions we'll turn over to academic libraries.

CP: Well, except now we have, we do have access to decent data bases thanks to the state of Ohio who pays for them. And it's like ones you'd be familiar with, like Academic Search Premier and, what else is there?

MM: True, you can do periodicals better, but when you get into monographs,

CP: No. Oh and journals are, I don't know if you know this, journals are really expensive to have. Even like, just ridiculous journals that you would think are insane—so expensive per prescription. Just insane.

MM: And they set up libraries kinda,

CP: Right, but they do it on purpose cause they know you'll pay for it, yeah.

MM: But we do, I think that's one of the things that we have to do is we send people to better collections. And we're a small town rural library, okay, there's a limited number of things we're ever gonna have.

CP: And ever since we had to start buying things in multiple formats, it's even smaller.

MM: And I've many times told people, you're an hour away from Columbus. Columbus is a world class public library. Pick up, get in the car, go there.

CP: And for that matter Richland or Licking could get you almost anything.

MM: Oh my gosh yeah.

CP: 'Cause they're larger libraries in bigger cities, they're connected to more things than we are.

MM: And we're just, we're just where we can't—we strive to be, oh there's a brilliant sentence here, we strive to be all things, most things, to our people community, but if you want the resources of a bigger library, I think we owe it to you to tell you, this isn't it.

CP: That's not us, yeah. We do have lots of community involvement. We try very hard.

MBW: So like what kind of community involvement?

MM: I have, I've been saying this to everyone in the county, but I have a family obligation on Earth Day, (CP laughs) but we're making plans for the new remodeled Earth Day—do you guys know about this? You know it's been in the Sports Palace, for five year

CP: Sports Palace, haha.

MM: I know it's got another name. But now this year it's moving over to the Brown Environmental Center, which is gonna be very nice.

CP: And I think it's going from, it used to be like a day of vendors

MM: It was a circus

CP: Yeah to more like a, now it sounds like it's more of a festival idea. It sounds cute, yeah.

MM: Yeah, it'll be very nice. But they're doing it on grass, in Ohio, at the end of April.

CP: Yeah, exactly, exactly.

MM: I see drawbacks. I have to be somewhere else, but so you know, we've done the various events with y'all, and just

CP: What else? Oh, all the programs, we try to involve the community. Hospital, health department. What else do we do? Humane society.

MM: Yeah, we do a movie every month, I think they're gonna do "The Secret Life of Pets"

CP: Oh the mental health people, I forget what they're called

MM: Is it NAMI? Whatever it is locally, but, yeah they wanted us, sometimes they come up with suggestions and I'm like, I'm so glad that was from you. Cause they did "What About Bob?" and "Silver Linings Playbook"

CP: What was the one that was really cute with the cartoon?

MM: "Inside Out"

CP: "Inside Out," that was adorable.

MM: And, I'm so glad, and they'll come up and you know,

CP: And then they'll hand out suicide prevention pamphlets and all of that, that works out well.

MM: And a good time is had by all.

CP: Oh it's nice, it's nice.

MM: Sometimes, I'm terribly hampered by, sometimes I think things are going to be in dubious taste, or something like that. No, everybody's happy.

CP: Yeah. Ohio Bird Sanctuary. Who else did we do?

MM: Oh that was cool.

CP: Yeah that was really good.

MM: That's coming to Earth Day.

CP: Yeah, well I guess you can dissect owl pellets, if you really want to.

MM: They do that anyhow.

MBW: So, beyond like your work in the library, just as an individual who lives here, what are the ways that you interact with the community? And I guess also, someone who works here.

CP: She's worked here for a really long time. (MM laughs) I mean, no, just saying that cause you'd have to deal with, just all the people.

MM: Except I don't--there's a real drawback in that I get outta town. Now, I'm marginally part of Kudos, which is next to Down Home Leather, if you haven't been there you should be.

CP: It's a artists co-op, it's cute.

MM: Yeah, it's very nice. A lot of fine artists, and me.

CP: She makes jewelry, it's nice. Regardless of what she says.

MM: But they're, they're good.

CP: The soap, whoever makes their soap is awesome.

MM: Jami Ingledue.

CP: Yeah, her soap is great.

MM: Her soap is gorgeous. Um, so we're part of that. I wish, without wanting to do it, I wish we were better at things like being part of Kiwanis, and Rotary and all that. My boss and I are both more introverts, and he did do his time with those.

CP: He tries, yes. Mainly his is just his church now, right? He does a lot with his church.

MM: Yeah. So on the one hand I wish we were more out there, but...

CP: To be very fair, neither of are very religious people, in a very religious community. So that's kind of strange. Mainly because, I'm sure you're aware of this, we have more Christian denominations than I knew was possible in one area. I used to work for a photography company, and on our slow days they informed me that, well why don't you just write down all the churches, and call the churches and see if they're, you know, willing to do a photo thing. Alright, it was, and I am not joking, four pages back and front. Just in Mount Vernon there's something like twenty-seven or twenty-eight Christian denomination churches, just in town. The Fredericktown that I live in, I live right in the middle of town. There is a church across the street, there is the Presbyterian directly across the street from my house. Down the block from Presbyterian is the Nazarene. On the other side behind my house is the Baptist, what is next to the Baptist? There is a Masonic lodge right next to the Baptist church. And then if you go to the

high school there is a Methodist next to the high school and then a Church of God directly across the street. That is only the churches in town, there are more churches out in the country.

MM: And being unchurched in this community, you're missing a big layer.

CP: They actively do not, there's a lot of community involvement you miss if you aren't a member of the churches in one of, mainly because people don't know who you are. Most of the things that involve town involve churches. Especially Fredericktown, Danville, Gambier areas. They're all related to church stuff.

MBW: So, growing up here, was there, like was there ever like a time when you were religious or... (MM laughs)

CP: Okay, um, okay so my parents

MM: You set that up perfectly.

CP: My parents, in the nicest way possible, they're large hippies. Big hippies, always have been. They're weird to this are anyway. We grew up, we were allowed to attend any church we wanted, you know, that's how they were. They weren't gonna go with us, but we were allowed to go with friends or whatever. They, um, the problem is is the people all know who you are and they all know who your parents are, um, this is where I shouldn't sign my name to stuff. Alright, so, growing up in this town, or in Fredericktown, to be fair, which is worse than here, I don't think I would have had the same treatment in Mount Vernon. But growing up in Fredericktown, which is a really small town, I mean if you know the town it's tiny, and you know everyone knew my family, and everyone knew my parents. My father, my mother grew up, you know, she had a better name, my father not so much. My father is one of fifteen. They were mostly boys and they got in lots of trouble. Anyway, so, and they've been together, my parents have been together since he was fourteen and she was seventeen. But, it was generally thought by most of the people that I went to highschool with--not the people I went to highschool with, their parents--that we worshipped satan. I was not allowed to hang out with a lot of people in my highschool because we worshipped satan. It was basically because we didn't attend a church, yes. I actively did not make NHS because I did not go to church. I was number six in my class, and debate team, speech club, student director of the plays, all sorts of crazy, um, on the swim team, didn't go to church, did not make NHS. My father, who was a National Merit Scholar in the same town also did not make NHS. He moved to Mount Vernon his senior year and they were like, what do you mean you're not in NHS? And they directly made him, because he's the National Merit Scholar, why would you not do that? Yeah. My brother who was, he had a much harder class, he was like tenth, but he graduated with people who were doctors by the time they were twenty, so,

um yeah. Accelerated doctor program, didn't know that was a thing. He also did not make NHS for the exact same reason.

MBW: So you've talked about your parents free-spiritedness, what were some of the family values instilled in you growing up?

CP: Oh geez.

MM: Independence.

CP: (Laughter) Yeah, no they were really big, my parents were really really big on making sure that we could take care of ourselves and that we were independent. I could use the oven by seven, I could do all of my own laundry by seven. You know, we could pretty much take of ourselves by the time we were eight and nine years old. (Laughter) They're also, you know, they're very lovely people and, you know, they're very non-violent, very, you know, forgiving. All of those good things. But, you know, I got lucky, they're good parents.

JGM: So, if this community does, if a lot of this community is going to church, where do you find that community for yourself and in your own life?

CP: Alright, so, I got lucky, actually have quite a few friends. Most of them are the incredibly, like, weird awkward socially unacceptable people that live in Fredericktown (Laughter) We, I have friends that range, you know, about ten years on either side of me. Mainly they are people who the other people knew who don't fit in with anyone else. We joke because we, most of them have really bad social anxiety disorder, but then we stick them in a room with all of the rest of them (Laughter) but you're like, well those people are just as freaked out as you are to be here, so they're totally okay with that. But, you know, we just got lucky. It's one of those, there's, um, they marginalize a lot of people and a lot of people find themselves in the majority and then those people tend to get together and be friends, that's sort of what happens. But I think that's, from what I can tell when my parents were children, it's sort of the same thing. I think that's just a continuous of just how religious Fredericktown tends to be and how xenophobic they usually are. But, you know, even the people who have been there forever, just if you're different they tend to exclude you anyway.

MBW: So how do you think, I guess, how do you think Knox County has changed, or not changed over the years that you've been living or working here?

CP: Well, I mean the heroin problem is bad.

MM: Opioids, it's just

CP: The opiate problem in general, it's gotten much much worse. Like, I know there are, people I went to school with are afraid to let their kids walk to school. When I was growing up that wouldn't have been, I mean, they would've thought that was crazy that you couldn't let an eight year old walk to school by herself. So that's a big difference. Cause, yeah, when I was growing up, you know, they'd let the kids run all over town and wouldn't care cause you knew that the neighbors would tell you if they were up to no good, or whatever. Now I don't see that so much.

MBW: Why do you think the opioid problem has gotten so bad?

MM: (Laughter) Million dollar question.

CP: Well, I mean, I tend to think it's, you know, the over-prescribed prescription medication, the fact that heroin is cheaper on the street than buying that prescription drug is, that's of course a problem. And then, you know, there's always the class issues that exist around here. And poorer populations tend to need something to help out with their lives, you know. It's hard. And the more expensive it is to live the worse that's going to get around here. Because, you know, the jobs, and like I said, Foote Factory, when they closed, they lost a lot of work in Fredericktown. I know in Mansfield when General Motors closed that was really devastating for them. Well, Siemens is getting ready to close, that's not gonna be good for us. I know when Rolls Royce changed, before Siemens bought it, that was really rough.

MM: The whole thing when the glass companies left.

CP: Yeah when the glass companies left it was real bad.

MM: And that's still echoing.

CP: Yeah. Lack of work. Lack of, not work, lack of good paying jobs.

MM: Nowhere to go, nothing to do. Entertainment--I would, I would desperately not want to be a young person in Knox County.

CP: Oh no, no no. (Laughter) It's boring. It's very boring. And they deter groups of young people from being together, because they think it's a threat. Which is unfortunate. I know Fredericktown, I don't know if it's still a law, Fredericktown had an ordinance when I was in highschool that three or more people, mind you Columbine, all of that happened, three or more students together was considered a gang. Three or more. So if you were walking around with three friends in town, the cops would stop you and ask you to split up because you were a gang.

CRO: What is this event that you mentioned that happened?

CP: Columbine. It was directly after, so they got really strange about teenagers being together. Yeah. And then, I know that the pharmacy in town, two students aren't allowed in the building at the same time with backpacks. That's a thing.

MM: (Laughter) All this stuff I learned too. I spend a lot of my day going, what?

CP: Well, Fredericktown's a weird place. (Laughter)

MM: But you were, you've been there. You know, and you were a teen there, and that

CP: Oh yeah. Well we still have that backpack issues, did we ever figure that out in Fredericktown?

MM: That just gets so

CP: They, okay, so Fredericktown library, which, you know, is our sister library, but they do not let you take bags into the library. They're afraid of theft. They've never let you take bags into the library.

MM: So everybody comes in, drops em off in front of the circulation desk. This was unbeknownst

CP: (Laughter) To anyone but myself.

MM: Yes, no one knew. And the manager made a casual reference to it and my boss and I are going, you're making this up!

CP: Right, and they were like, I don't know if that's legal! And I was like, they've always done this. (Laughter)

MM: Apparently even, cause we contacted our lawyers, this is way not in this, and they're like...

CP: No, it's not legal, that's what we decided.

MM: Well, it's not not legal.

CP: It's not not legal, but they can't, the lawyers can't decide if we're accountable for the backpacks that they leave or not. Like, if the staff would be, like say someone came in and took like a pile of book bags, we don't know if we're accountable for it.

MM: It's a small town, someone would say, Junior, that's not your backpack. They know this, at the desk.

CP: Yes, it's all very strange. But, you know, small town life. It's really, yeah... (Laughter)

MBW: So what do you think is the biggest problem facing this community?

CP: Jobs, I would say it's jobs. Lack of higher income.

MM: Well, and jobs...

CP: Cause I wouldn't say, like, we need more fast food. No, we need stuff...

MM: High paying jobs.

CP: Middle class jobs.

MM: Middle class jobs for people with minimal education that are sturdy.

CP: Long term.

MM: Long term, with good benefits. Because all, you know...

CRO: But that's a different era in this country.

CP: Oh yeah.

MM: When I grew up, halfway between Cleveland and Akron, my peers were the grandchildren of immigrants, and all their daddies worked in factories, everybody had a nice car, everybody had a big boat.

CP: And that's back when factories payed enough to live.

MM: Right, but there was money rolling through, and my peers had, they knew they had a choice. They could do that thing, or they could go to college, and they got out. But they had that choice, and I think a lot of people are deeply confused, what happened to my choice? Because college isn't for everybody, we know this.

CP: Oh no. But what I'm running up against is, and you guys will be too, you know, no one over sixty-five feels like they can retire. Lots of them lost their pensions in 2008, no one has enough money to live on to retire, which means that people in jobs that should have been open to people who are about forty now aren't open to them. Which means that they have the middle jobs, that they can't leave now either, but they should be in the higher jobs, but they're stuck in the middle jobs. Well, so, people thirty and under get the low entry jobs and can never move up, because no one else can go anywhere either. That makes it really hard when you're trying to pay back student loans, or buy a house, buy a car, any of those things.

MM: Have a kid.

CP: Have a kid.

MM: Any of those expensive hobbies.

CP: Yes. And there's, you know, little to gain cause you're not gonna move up. And unfortunately you don't want those people to die, cause that's how, you know, that's how you're gonna move up, but it's, they can't leave, you know, they're in places they can't afford to live if they were to leave their job. Even though maybe they can't work very much anymore, they still can't leave.

MM: And it always comes back to benefits.

CP: Yeah, I find that hard. Also, I think there's a thing where you get people when you graduate high school telling you, there's a shortage of this, you should go into this, and so you get lots of people who do that. Well, by the time there's a noticeable shortage, there's already people trying to fill that. And then they tell you, go, when I was, when I first started college, the first time, it was teachers. There weren't enough teachers, there weren't enough teachers to fill anything, everyone needed to be a teacher, and of course, it's great, because you know you work ten years in a certain, like, underprivileged place and they'll pay for your school. So everyone was like, be teachers, be teachers. Well, what happened is when we all got out, there was a surplus of teachers, and none of them can get work, none of them--and it's been more than ten years and they still haven't gotten work, they now work at McDonald's, but you have bachelors degree in education. I know a lot of people who do that. But, I've seen that happen to teachers, and nurses, architects.

MM: Lawyers.

CP: Lawyers, that's currently happening, lawyer's the hot one right now. Don't be a lawyer, there's no jobs for lawyers, to the point where, my brother, who is a lawyer, essentially you are just another number, they say there's so many of you, it doesn't matter, they don't care how good you are. He's actually really good, they don't care how good you are, there's so many more of you, they'll just replace you anyway. And they might pay you a lot, but they don't give you benefits, they don't give you days off, they don't try to keep you, they don't care. So yeah, lawyers right now is bad. It's bad. And in 2008, I knew firms that had, like his valedictorian--he went to Ohio Northern--his valedictorian had a job offer she got the January before they graduated and it was, you know, she accepted it, it was permanent, it was with a great firm. Two weeks after she graduated they told her, I'm sorry, that's not a position we have anymore. And that was it. And she hadn't applied anywhere else. Yeah. But, yeah, no lawyers it's not great. But, yeah, never be whatever they tell you there's a shortage of, that's not gonna happen by the time you get out of there. But that's a problem. And then people aren't, we desperately need plumbers and electricians.

MM: Oh my gosh.

CP: But, you know, there hadn't been a need for them for a while, because in the '70s everyone was becoming apprentice jobs, and it was super hard to get because people kept those jobs for thirty years. Well, now they're all dying, and they need to be refilled really bad. So, that's what I would tell people to do. Get an apprenticeship somewhere. And, you know, they make good money. Plumbers make crazy money.

MBW: So we're sort of starting to run out of time, but how, just as like a, sort of one of the last questions, how do you think Mount Vernon, or Knox County, is perceived by people outside the county?

MM: She's different, I have, in thirty years, I've never met somebody who didn't have a positive response to Mount Vernon, and it's usually along the lines of, it's a beautiful little town. Because they drove through it.

CP: It is cute to drive through.

MM: I shouldn't say that, I've encountered like two people that didn't know about it.

CP: Well what's, the main librarian at OSU that we volunteer for, uh, Wes?

MM: Yeah.

CP: He said he loved it, because our bike trails are fabulous, and I was like, well they are that. (Laughter) But that's the only part that he knew of Mount Vernon. That and he wanted to go to Southside, he liked the diner. (Laughter)

MM: Yes! Uniformly positive, but so fleeting.

CP: Yes. Lots of people have no idea where Knox County is, anything.

MM: Yeah, no. Oh, but come on, I do the middle of the state thing (gestures with hand, laughter) So that's good?

CP: Actually, what I think would be a better question is the towns actively see each other differently, and there's, the towns all stereotype each other, it's really bad, like you would think. The town I'm from, I think it's funny because, okay, they're all, they're very snobbish people, they think they're amazing. They're not. (MM laughs) And the thing is, the thing is if you ask the other towns, and I didn't know it until I started working here, if you ask the people from Danville, they will tell you, well, you know, all the Fredericktown people, they think they're amazing, and they're not. And you're like, yep, that's them. And you know, cause you're like, yeah, that's them, they think they're a higher class of people who have more affluence and more money. They're not, you know, they just pretend they are. And that's so them. And I was like, no, you're right, that's totally them. But then, you know, poor Danville, there's stuff I can't say that we stereotype poor Danville with.

MM: Lost orphan child.

CP: And sheep, and what not. But, and then Gambier is, you know,

MM: Gambier.

CP: Gambier.

MM: And really, it's that tone. Gambier.

CP: Well, there's the college.

MM: There's the college.

CP: Yes. But, Mount Vernon is just the city, all the country people see it as the city, even though it's Mount Vernon, I mean, you know.

MM: And dangerous!

CP: Oh, dangerous! Terribly dangerous. In fact, this is awful, I don't know if I've told you this, so Fredericktown has decided to extend the bike path, which is awesome because it was years and years of getting them to put the bike path in. Well, they'll extend it to Richland County, which is Bellville, Butler, they'll extend it that way (Laughter)

CRO: Not this way?

CP: That's when the drugs'll come in! I'm not kidding you! They told me, that's when the drugs will come in. They won't extend it to Mount Vernon because they're afraid of the drug trafficking that people walking and biking at three in the morning will do. That's literally what they told me.

MM: Don't you see a bike with one of the trails on full of syringes

CP: No, seriously, seriously. It was bad. They took like, they asked people in town and got their opinion on it and that's what they said. They said, well, you know those people on the bike path at three in the morning ain't up to no good. (Laughter) But they'll totally extend it to Richland County. That's... (Laughter)

MM: (Laughter) I do this a lot. Okay, more questions.

MBW: Well, just quickly, how long have you been working here and--

MM: 12/12/83

MBW: And why, like how did you--

MM: I got one interview, I was working at Columbus Metropolitan Library, back when it was the Public Library of Columbus and Franklin County--I cannot have a resume because all of the job titles are very long--I got one, I'd just graduated from Kent, I had sent out, they had sent out my resume to one person, and I got a phone call, and there's a Mr. Chidester (sp?), which is a terrible butchery of his name, is on the phone. And so one resume, one interview, one location, all these years. Yeah it's a terrible thing.

CP: Then she got made assistant director.

MM: Yeah, I had a reference with **all me**. Um, assistant director. It's interesting. All these things you're asking about, it's strange and stuff happens.

CP: And anything that anyone says about this library, everyone who works here loves it, and it's really hard to get us to leave.

MM: And, okay, that goes back to some of the things we've hit on. We get amazing people. One of my colleagues is in Texas and is watching this huge thing on libraries and feminism program

CP: Our teen services librarian

MM: Yes. Talking about pay, it's like what? Our money comes from the state of Ohio, okay. We put out a job description, one of our rare job openings, we get amazing people. We do two days of interviews, and we're like, good, good (keeps talking)

CP: It's cause they wanna live here.

MM: Oh, she's really good. And then Cassandra showed up, and by the end of it we're like, you know that old poster of the guy with the amazing speakers like (makes a face)

CP: Well to be fair, they were like, do you know library stuff? I was like, yeah. And they started asking me stuff and I was like, yeah I know all that stuff. And then they were like, well do you know this area? And I was like, yeah. (Laughter)

MM: You were just fun. We wanted to just keep talking to you.

CP: Well I talked to Erica for another half hour in the hallway.

MM: I didn't know that. (CP laughs) The really funny thing was, she came in pretty covered up, and

CP: You don't go into an interview with this (gesturing toward chest tattoos). You just don't do that. This is not a thing that you, no.

MM: And Erica has a Honda tattoo on her foot

CP: The other reference librarian.

MM: The other reference librarian. And I have the hair. And Cassandra's like, okay, by the end of the interview

CP: I believe the question was like, so how do you guys feel about tattoos?

MM: (Laughter) Yes! Yes. We're like, show them! Yeah, no it was...

CP: But, no, every interview I have a turtleneck, like I just, you don't do that to people. You don't just come in and be like, Fire me! Don't hire me because of this, obviously. So, I, you know, it's how much can you cover everything?

CRO: (Laughter) By the end of the interview...

CP: Yeah, well the minute they're like, oh, we're fine, I'm like oh! (sigh of relief) It's like, I don't wanna wear a turtleneck to work everyday, please don't make me.

MM: She just, she just was amazing, and I will tell the story to everyone. But we get those amazing people, so we don't, we don't have to pay very much.

CP: Well, and then people don't wanna leave. I mean there's a reason they're going for this job. Most of the time it's, they have a spouse who has an awesome job, and they wanna stay here. They're born here, like my situation, there's reasons they're here, I mean I would have to still live here and commute, I don't even wanna know how long.

MM: We're real kid friendly. You know, if somebody says my kid is sick...

CP: Our benefits, I've never, our benefits are unheard of. For example we get seven hours of sick time every two weeks. I have never heard of that any where ever before. Yes, it's crazy. It's awesome, but it's crazy. Like I know people who are retiring that have built like four months of sick time, like just cause they've never used it and they get so much. Yeah. We also on top of that get emergency days, personal time and, I'm a paraprofessional, I'm not even a professional, I get two weeks of vacation plus a day for every year that I've been here. It's insane. It's absolutely insane, it is a reason not to leave. Yeah. So you know, you take that, like you know, they might not be able to pay you, you might be on the lower part of your career salary, but the benefits are amazing.

MBW: So do you have any closing thoughts for us? Or like anything else big that you think we need to know?

CP: Okay, I suppose, on top of everything I've said, the communities, they're very nice. They try to take care of their own very well. They are, they might be rather judgemental, but I mean they do accept people. And...

MM: I am super sorry can we just hang on one second?

[Break in recording]

CRO: Okay, how bout this amazing hair?

MM: I have bright pink hair, Special Effects Atomic Pink. Used to do Manic Panic, the mother of us all, but this is better. After I did breast cancer, my hair came back different, and it was very, it's white but it's very light, and I wanted, for a lot of reasons, to stand out. And here I know that I'm representing the library in some really deep ways, and it's working for me. So, I mean, it works for me as a person, but as a library person it's, um, useful.

CRO: In what ways?

MM: People remember me. People start conversations with me. Like I said, I'm something of an introvert, and the hair forces me out into the world. Next week we will go to Columbus and talk to our legislators and say, please do not cut us, seriously, and they'll remember me. It's worth it.

CRO: Yeah, it is. And it's amazing.

MM: (Laughter) So that's, I've been doing this for about five years. It seems like a couple years but it's way more. Yeah, so uh...And it's funny that now I see more kids in here, there's a young woman down in the teen space who has beautiful green, really good. And it's funny because, again, Fredericktown, we keep coming back to that, but early in my career there was a young woman who was not allowed to go to the high school because she had cherry red hair, and she couldn't go because it would be a distraction to others. Later she came, I was like, boy that is red. I'll admit, that is red. But everybody gets over it in a very short time, too, so that was interesting interesting story. There's more acceptance of hair and tattoos and things than, I think that's been a change over time.

CRO: Well, you look to me super empowered, super courageous. (MM laughs)

MM: It's just fun.

CRO: And beautiful.

MM: Thank you!

CRO: All of it.

MM: There's a guy of a certain age who will come in, and you can tell they're working on the question, they're like, is that natural? And I always assure them that it is, it just requires a little

assistance, and they're like, okay. You can tell they were compelled to ask the question, they could not not ask it, it's hilarious.

MBW: So, this is not the hair, but do you think that there are ways that, as someone who commutes into and works in this community your relationship is different to it than someone who lives here?

MM: Absolutely. Absolutely. I am not, but...my backup of that is that people, as a librarian, people don't mind, you know, we're that weird knower of things, so that I'm, because I'm not here they don't know me and that's not always bad. I feel bad about it for the community connection parts, but, and after all this time, you know, people don't remember not me, or my colleagues. It would be a better thing to have administration live in town, but...

MBW: Have you ever been tempted to...

MM: I lived here for a while, I'm very bad at it.

MBW: Oh, really?

MM: Yeah. I have a story about going to the store in the middle of the night, and for whatever reason was buying the biggest bottle of wine and condoms, and one of our patrons of course, now deceased, of course was like, whatcha got in the bag? I moved within like a month. (Laughter) 'Cause that's a perfectly normal small town question, I was like nope, nope. It was real.

CRO: That's a fabulous story.

MM: It was.

MBW: Do you have any other closing thoughts or like things we should know?

MM: It's just always interesting. You can tell, I adore Cassandra, I love this other level of community engagement that we just, you know, librarians talk about it all the time and then you get somebody who's really a lifer in the community and you, it tilts how you see things. And seeing, when we talk about addiction problems, and job problems, and seeing your little town reflected in national news, that is very strange. Cause I think we all like to think, oh, it's a special special place. No. And I listen to my colleagues--I've been gifted with being part of our statewide organization, so we talk to people from all sizes of libraries, and, this was years before, again we were seeing the opioid problem, and there was a reference to, in a little bitty town, well, I shouldn't say it that way, but not much smaller than us, but they were talking about the rise of

being able to rent like an office place, you know, with a computer on the desk and all this kind of stuff, and my colleague's immediate response was, we couldn't do that, people would shoot up and die in there. Oh. (Laughter) Well. Time passes, yep. Yep.

CRO: Let me ask you a question, if I may. There have been a lot, an injection of economic support and interest, knowledge, into revamping Mount Vernon, downtown Mount Vernon.

MM: Absolutely.

CRO: So there old buildings that have been reappropriated, or old buildings that have been destroyed, or old buildings that are closed and there, but there is this tendency, and you know, we have a new hotel, a new restaurant, or a new owner of a restaurant, three universities in downtown, a new bookstore downtown, an opera place, all kinds of things happening. How do you see the future of this town in light of this effort that is coming from so many angles, from so many people, or a few, but...

MM: I would love to see more small retail, but that's Kudos talking. Small retail, more shops to go in. I keep coming back to, I drove through North Canton a couple, decades ago, it was like, oh, let's not have that. Everything barred up, lets--anything that isn't death is good. And it's alive, it's just...The first time I went to Easton, I thought, this is what some people think a small town looks like, and now Mount Vernon is Eastonifying. And it's a strange cycle. But it's not dead.

CRO: Anything but dead.

MM: Anything but dead. And Karen and I go downtown on First Fridays, which is huge fun, and it's great, people are walkin' around, and they're talking to their neighbors and we're doing the whole, Hey, how ya doin' thing. It's great. It's one night a month but I'll take it.

MBW: So do you think people in this county are optimistic about the future of it generally?

MM: Boy I hope so. I don't know. We're hearing that the, how does it go? Is it income taxes and water taxes are going up? After really having been stagnant for most of my career, and you read, you know, rule one, never read the comments, but the comments are like, oh no, how can we possible do that? Well, do you wanna keep drinking water out of the spigot? Cause, I do, I like that. But people who are just holding on are terrified that these, the taxes are gonna hurt em. I had an argument, not argument, long conversation at this table with a guy when we went up for our last levee, cause it was, our promotion was, it's a dime a day, alright, for goods and services, and he was a consumer. That was a lot of money for him. And we got that. I think a lot of people

are really living on a very fine edge, and back to class, unless you're poor, you don't know how expensive things are.

CRO: So it's a mixed picture.

MM: It's a huge mix, cause there's a lot of money in Knox County. Some of these families with big old farms, there's serious money rollin around, but it's not even. Not that I want it to be, but...

CP: Did you know 5.7% of people in Mount Vernon have professional degrees? Isn't that...

MM: Wow.

CP: Yeah, it's larger than I thought.

MM: Huh. We've been talking about demographics a lot, and you do.

CP: The people with mental health disorders in this county is staggering.

MM: Yeah. That we didn't, that we should have pulled that out.

CP: But I think that's because MVDC shut down, or you know, is mostly shut down, and then those people were outsourced to the community, as opposed to, like, going back to where they came from.

MBW: What is that?

CP: MVDC used to be the state hospital, lots of people refer to it as the state hospital. It was a state hospital for mentally impaired people, usually MRDD. My mother worked there for twenty-six years. Recently, they have been shutting all the state institutions down. Most of them it's cause they weren't good, you know, scary stuff. MVDC actually was not, it never, it always passed all the state regulations, all the national regulations. But unfortunately, they've run out of funding, the government's cut their funding, so they've had to outsource all of their patients to group homes, usually in this community, which has raised the number of mental problems in our community way way up.

MM: And again, some of these folks are lovely, regular library users. There's one gentleman who's severely impaired and he will never ever get a title wrong. If he asks for a book, it's the right title. My boss is wrong more often than he is on a title request. It's beautiful. It's hard on

people's nerves. Middle class people's nerves. And again, back to, that was a, you could spend your career, twenty-six years, at a really solid interesting middle class job. Raise a family...

CP: Mhmm. She made enough money to put my father through grad school.

MM: And it's gone.

CP: Oh they employed a large part of Mount Vernon. I mean, I run into people all the time that worked with her.

MM: I forget about that as being a big employer.

CP: Oh, big employer. Big big employer. It's just like if the hospital closed.

CRO: Tell me something about this image. (pointing to map on wall)

MM: This was done, it way predates me. It used to hang over our circulation desk in the old front of the building. It has no cover on it, which is disturbing, we actually had a long argument on that. And it represents, there was kind of a guide to it, and unfortunately people kept picking things out of that, it wasn't really designed for use, but it's, it is what it is, you know. It shows the dairy farming and the courthouse and...

CRO: That's beautiful.

MM: It is gorgeous.

CRO: Do you have a small image of it?

MM: Like I said, we did, I don't know if we still have the book. Yeah, well, if I can get it

CRO: We would love to have access to it.

