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Rural Volunteer Fire Fighters

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# Linda Campbell

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**Interviewee:** Linda Campbell

**Interviewers:** Hartley Thacker, Abigail Vaughn, Mushal Alsaif

**Transcribers:** Jen Carson, Abigail Vaughn, Mushal Alsaif, and Hartley Thacker

Hartley Thacker: Where are you originally from?

Linda Campbell: Well actually that is a complicated question to answer. I was born in Bethesda Naval Hospital my dad was in the Navy. I went to thirteen different public schools.

HT: Oh wow that's hard.

LC: I went to a military academy in the sixth seventh and eighth grade because I lived in Japan and then ended up in Virginia Beach. So I'll tell people I'm from Virginia Beach.

HT: That's a fun place. That's a fun place to claim.

LC: My father was nice enough to get out of the Navy when I went into the ninth grade so I got to go to one high school.

HT: That's great. That's difficult to you know- to just get up and move. I personally have like lived in the same place like all my life so I don't really know.

LC: See I didn't have any problem with it my sister cried all the time I would just walk into the classroom and say "here I am, aren't you glad I'm here" you know. My mother got lots of notes home from me because I um well not to toot my own horn I'm pretty intelligent and I caught onto things quick and finished fast and then I would talk or entertain you know how it goes.

Today is November the seventh. It's muggy.

HT: So how's the harvest sale been going so far?

LC: Well we've got all nice collections and such the only thing against us right now is the weather.

HT: Yeah.

LC: So hopefully, I've been posting all week long on Facebook and um up until 16 months ago my husband was the president of the fire department and he'd been in the fire department forty-four years.

HT: Wow.

LC: And he'd been in the bottom, he'd been the Sergeant of Arms, property manager, secretary, assistant chief, and then chief. He was chief for a long, long time but when you get to a certain age you sort of roll out of the chief part and then the department is divided into twos there's the business part and then there's the operating part where the chief is the top of the operating part and Al's the chief now, the other part is the corporate part where the treasurer, secretary, vice president and president and then my husband was president. My husband was president I don't know ten years fifteen years.

HT: Wow.

LC: He was a very likeable man, so, but anyway. I've been doing this since we got married in 74, my poor dad had a lot of payments that year. I've been doing this for forty years so except for one year I had a baby, but anyway she's thirty now.

HT: Oh wow.

LC: She'll be out here in a little while- she's six foot two she's six foot and she has red hair and she's a certified correctional jail officer so you don't want to mess with her.

HT: Nope we won't.

LC: And she's pretty too.

HT: Of course.

LC: And she finishes her degree next month she'll have a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Averett University.

HT: Wow that's wonderful.

LC: Took her long enough

HT: Well you know what as long as you get it done.

LC: That's what I said. She's had a lot of life experience she's been married divorced and all that crap so anyway moving on.

HT: She has to say her little disclaimer Abigail

Vaughn: This interview is for the purpose of Longwood University present are....

HT: Hartley Thacker

AV: Abigail Vaughn, and....Mushal Alsaif: Mushal Alsaif.

HT: Could you say and spell your name please?

LC: L. i. n. d. a. C. a. m. b. e. l. l.

HT: Ok thank you. It's just a necessary evil. How did you get started with the fire department, like how did you get involved?

LC: I married a member that's how I became involved it was part of who he was and for me to be with him it was just a natural thing, plus the fact that both of us believe in giving back to our community and this is the best way to do it in Prospect.

HT: Right.

LC: Because when you came from a big, big city like I did you didn't really get involved with people but when you live in a place like this you're involved with people.

HT: Yeah.

LC: There's very few people that I don't know. In fact when I first got married I thought I was related to everybody so I just waved at everybody. They thought Howard's wife was very friendly and I was because I didn't know who I was waving at and I was afraid I would make somebody mad if I didn't but anyway that's how I began. But then when they started the auxiliary and I don't know the exact year I decided to, I didn't want to be a firefighter, ok, I haven't done stuff like that I mean I've driven trucks to a fire, I've stood on 460 and waved traffic, I've done all that because during the day there's not really very many people here since it's all volunteer. My husband would just grab me and stick me in a truck and say "drive here" and I'd go "sigh" but because they're not huge but they're big trucks so I got involved like that. Both of us really believe in giving back to the community so this is how we did it. That was in 74, 1974. 41 years.

HT: So you said you've been volunteering for 41 years so ok how has it impacted your life?

LC: Well, personally, for me it gives me a sense of purpose it feels like I'm doing something. One thing about this fire department that might be the same in all fire departments is we also have a very strong religious belief we're really believing in the community and God and whatever it doesn't matter which one, it could be a different one because one of our members is Muslim religion but we believe in the goodness of man and doing for man so we help and do everything, that's one of the reasons why that's my personal reason. Another one is a sense of community, we have dinners once a month and this is where everybody gets together and you find out what's going on and you get involved in kid's lives and like the lady in the red up there up there at the snack bar putting something in her mouth she's here yet her mama just died Thursday so they're having the funeral tomorrow instead of today so she could be there that's how dedicated the people are. And it gives you a sense you know that you're a part of something.

Which I think all humans want to be a part of something most of us do. So that's the reason I guess, it's not the work like right now I'm sweating. My husband's on this shirt by the way.

HT: Right here?

LC: Yeah and the little on is his father.

HT: So how does firefighting affect how you value yourself and your work?

LC: Well it shows you how you can react in an emergency situation. So that you can be a positive influence in that situation instead of a negative influence. For example my husband and I were pulling in our yard and he had all the radios in his truck and there was a frantic call and this person was screaming on the radio she'd just hit somebody, she'd just hit somebody and she was hysterical she'd just hit somebody. I live on 460 the back of my house is on 460 and she'd just hit him right behind my house so we both jumped back in the vehicle and running up there and I ended up they put me in the police car with the girl that hit this woman well this woman had, unfortunately, been trying to commit suicide for some time. So unfortunately this poor little girl that was going to Williamsburg to meet her friends ended up being the instrument this lady used. So I'm in the car and I'm thinking "what do I say" you know and we ended up having a nice conversation and then a whole group of people came up who were related to the lady and they were all screaming a hollering and she's looking in the mirror and she could see it all and you could just see her going to pieces you know for some reason some God just stretched and hit the mirror and things like that came to me as I was sitting there. It wasn't preplanned or anything it made me feel really good that I could help this lady through this terrible time ok and then the thing it when you have fires and they ruin the whole house this community comes together and finds somewhere for them to stay and we'd get clothes, we'd get sheets, we'd try to help get them back on their feet you know that's really cool too just things like that.

HT: Has anyone been affected by a firefighter and that's obviously yes?

LC: Oh yeah hi how are you? Doing good, she just got her mama out of the hospital with pneumonia. Anyway she's my cousin, see this road right here it's called Campbell Hill Roads, that tell you something?

HT: Yeah. LC: My name's Campbell and it's called Campbell Hill Rd but anyway. Well my house actually caught on fire.

HT: Really?

LC: Yeah it was February 9th. I don't remember the year. It was 9 degrees outside and we had an old furnace and it cut off and my nose got cold and so I punched my husband saying "Howard the furnace cut off again because he would crawl underneath it and reset it. But when he crawled underneath it and he reset it but it didn't come back on and the next thing I know he's yelling at me "call 911" of course you know he had high blood pressure so he's having a heart attack I didn't know what was going on so I said "what for" and he got sort of mad at me "just call it" "I can't call if I don't know what I'm calling for" and he said "argh" well the house was on fire the inside of the wall was on fire and so of course we called 911 and Pamplin which is the next department up the road and Prospect and everybody came it was nice. I got my daughter, my granddaddy's dog, my cat, got them all out and put them in my husband's truck and turned it on to stay warm and went running back in there. And there's this table my grandmother gave me this table that her great-granddaddy had made and I had always promised to take care of this table, that table came out of that and my husband, I'd never seen him take pictures off the wall so fast because fire hadn't come through the wall yet but you could hear it crackling so I was taking pictures off the wall and everything. But anyway when those trucks came up the feeling of "oh you" and they went in there and it hit the wall and just burned in so we were fortunate for my

husband and I to make people feel the way I felt that day it's a good thing, it's a really good thing that you know you are helping. Now my husband he was affected in a fire when he also was in 1976 he contracted North American Blastomycosis (?) I don't know if you've ever heard of that but it was a fungus in his lungs so he really couldn't go in fires. So he was in this fire even though he wasn't really supposed to and that was back before they did all these air tanks and stuff you know where they would just go in the fire and you know they called me and said you need to go to the hospital and I'm like "gasp" but he just had a nail in his head, but he was ok. Nothing ever stopped him. And when you're the wife of a firefighter and it goes off, they go. It doesn't matter what's going on. They go. Middle of church, middle of Thanksgiving, middle of the night, daughter's graduation....

HT: That happened?

LC: Yup at the end of it. But that's ok.

HT: Well it's probably just in his blood.

LC: Yeah it was he started when he was eight with his dad. Papa Mutt, his dad's name was Mutt because he had 7 brothers and sisters and all of them were 6 foot and Papa was only 5 foot 5. Anyways so they called him that anyway.

HT: So do you do anything other than like firefighting or auxiliary anything like that?

LC: I do the auxiliary. The auxiliary goes to auctions and sells food prepares food and they do the dinners here we have pancake in February we have spaghetti in April I don't know what we have in March we have chicken and barbeque all those different meals in fact next weekend we'll be at the Christmas show at Steps in Farmville selling food and the next weekend we have a barbeque dinner this month is just slammed. But that's because we were supposed to have this in August but then that hurricane came so October it is. Yeah, we do things like that. And, then



we do things where we donate money to people and we donate to the auxiliary people too. Like when my husband was in the hospital in Richmond when he died they gave me money to help pay for the transportation, stuff like that, they do that too.

HT: Do you do anything aside from the auxiliary?

LC: In the fire department?

HT: Yeah, like do you have a job or anything other than the auxiliary or anything like that?

LC: I'm retired, I taught high school for 33 years, that's the reason I'm a little batty[laugh]

HT: yeah

LC: You got it, you got it-

MA: yeah

HT: High school is tough.

LC: No comment [laugh] in Appomattox County, yeah, I was there for 33 yrs.

HT: How has firefighting affected you family?

LC: Well uh let's see....

HT: It is your family

LC: Yeah, I was about to say, it is my family. If it hadn't been for these people I don't know what I would have done when Howard died. They prepared—you wouldn't believe the amount of food they prepared. They had a row of tables [pointing] from about here all the way to the end of food. See my husband was really popular. He was a board of supervisor, he was president of Southside Association of Firefighters. And so family night (where people go through) over 900 people went through and at the funeral they had to have it at the high school, Prince Edward High School because there were over 600 people there. He also was carried from Farmville to the grave site which is right over there on the back of a fire truck, when they came out of where

the high school is, they had ladder trucks up with the American flag hanging down and the fire truck went under it and his casket was on the fire truck. And it was rough, I was like...just in shock because my husband had just died of pneumocystis pneumonia in July and he was just 63 and it was like bam. Just hitting a wall and so these people just took care of me. They took me in. They had all this food—all the food that was donated, they wrote all the thank you notes for all this food. They wouldn't let me do a thing. That's why it's so important

HT: What sacrifices have you or your family made as a firefighter?

LC: Well there's some monetary sacrifices because it does cost some. Each one of their turnout gear is \$1500-\$2000. And you have to, according to insurance, have them redone and most of the guys have two sets, they have to have a set here and a set in their car or trucks in case they are out and come upon it. They don't just do this fire department, Pamplin is up there Farmville is up there, Hampton Sydney has got one Darlington Heights and (disruption). They all fight together. Buckingham will send some over it's like they work like a group, sometimes if you stand there in the middle of them they sound like they are mad at each other like their arguing and hollering they always—they have a difference of opinion from time to time but you know it gets done, it gets done so anyway. What else was it?

HT: Just what sacrifices you or your family have made?

LC: Time, time and then this, this deal here usually takes about a month to get everything you know collect all that stuff have all that auction stuff out there everybody else's junk is someone else's treasure actually I have a sofa in my living room that came from out here one time where can you get a sofa for 25 dollars right.

HT: There's nothing like a yard sale, me and my mom like to go to yard sales.... (Disruption).

HT: How much longer do you see yourself doing this?

LC: Till I can't breathe.

Mushal: Wow that's so cool!

LC: If I can't do anything—like tonight when I take the money for the food, I can do that until I'm 70 or 80 years old or until I can't remember myself. That's never happened in my family.

HT: What is some growth you've seen here in the fire department while you've been volunteering here?

LC: Ah man, when I first started the fire department was just that building just that part of the building.

HT: Just the brick piece?

LC: Yeah, just that art of the building and uh he has the state record for the fastest runner in high school and still has it I just said something (disruption)

HT: I bet you can still run that fast too can't you?

Unknown: A little bit but not really, I'm getting older now. I ain't nothing but 60 years old

LC: you're 60? I didn't know that what day?

Unknown: November 29th, yeah, I'm an old fart....

LC: I'm 63 so I'm a little older than you. Yeah he still has the record, do you believe that?

HT: That's great, he's showing off.

LC: He's a mess, always has been... So we build a whole new--all the offices and all this space and uh paved the pavement right there and did all the gravel and we bought all the land around us that's been since I've been here and all the trucks are new. A truck can only be 10 years old and if it's more than 10 years old then the insurance goes up. And, so I was involved in the last one, my husband and Al and a couple of the other guys designed it, actually designed it and went through the process of having it built and that cost \$345,000. We've raised this money- do you

see this? This is what these people do raise this money. Uh gosh the auxiliary has been formed since I've been in it um lots of things, it's really grown. We also have 50 acres on 460 for one day when we thought we would build a new fire department but who knows.

HT: What is some growth you've seen here in the fire department while you've been volunteering here? Uh I already asked that okay.... How has money played a part in the evolution of the fire department?

LC: Well the county had started giving us 60000 dollars a year to help us but all the rest of the money is just hard earned money, we just earn it the way, all week long I knew the weather wasn't going to be great all week long I been telling everybody you know last night I did a isn't it great to see these people come when you have an emergency I think i said something like every time I do one I say something like this is the day the Lord has made the harvest sale is on Saturday but anyway everybody just tries to promote it promote it promote it one of the guys wrote a grant, we get grants from time to time and there pretty substantial from the federal government money is like I said everything is not cheap so insurance on this building and the fire trucks and the members is like humongous and it's ridiculous the amount of money you have to pay for it and if you don't have it you can't run the fire department so a lot of money goes to insurance and one thing I don't understand is why people don't understand is if you live within a 5 mile radius of the fire department your house insurance is actually lower did you know that? It's actually lower and I keep trying to tell cause prospect serves this community and most people do live in that 5 mile radius and they do get that lower insurance and I keep saying we're helping you out help us out, but people have different values you know how that goes and people get tired of people trying to force their values on them. This is a little story of a gentlemen whom I won't name came in here and we had raised the price of the hamburger dinner back when we did

hamburger instead of barbeque see that guy there in the brown with the green hat with the glasses? He donates all the barbeque and he cooks- it's fantastic but anyways we had hamburgers and we raised the price the next year and it was a little more than what you can get a hamburger meal at McDonalds ok and this guy came in and was like he started to "raise cain" he was like I can go to McDonalds and get a cheaper hamburger and my father in law was like next time your house is on fire you call McDonalds and see what they do. People don't realize I wish we could put out there the budget of how much it actually cost to run a volunteer organization. None of the guys, are paid, it's all just volunteer. You could take stuff off your taxes but that's not much all the miles they travel and they have meetings once a month and there's a burn building down in Blackstone, VA just like you see on Chicago fire the burn building that came about since I been in the thing uh my husband was on that committee so they can practice I just don't understand why people just don't I understand people's money is just harder now I understand that real well anyway.

HT: What has been your best experience here at the fire department?

LC: I think my best experience at the fire department is being related to a guy who was really in charge and was dedicated to it. I think that's my best experience.

HT: What is the oddest call you all might have had?

LC: Oddest call?

HT: Yes.

LC: Oh, there was a year.... a couple years ago that they went to six car, um, accidents and there were no drivers.

MA: How is that?

LC: They all ran away.

MA: Oh.

HT: Oh my goodness!

LC: But my husband, my husband is sort of funny sometimes... he said.... he came in from the last one, the sixth one, and came and he said, Linda! And I said what Howard? He says, where are the log chains? And I go, log chains? I said they're in the garage. We need to go get them. (Howard) And I said, "Why?" He said we need to tie them on the corner so that they won't run off and crash.

All: Laughter

LC: And I said... What!? He said, that's another call we went and there was no driver in the car, it was just wrecked.... there was nobody around.

HT: Oh wow!

All: Laughter

LC: So, but anyway, that was funny. We... the worst one... the worst one we went to was the fourth of July... and uh, Fevers you know as in Farmville at the dance club.... and they had brought a bus down from, uh, Lynchburg, but these brother and sister missed the bus so they followed in the car, and then after at two o'clock when Fevers got out they started coming back up the road, and um, the bus is here and the car passed them, up here there's a curve, guy was coming down the wrong side and hit that car and lifted it up on the guardrail with all the people on that bus knowing those people in the car and it burst into flames....

HT: Oh wow!

LC: That was a nineteen hour call.... they had to stay on the call for nineteen hours cause two people died and you have to get the investigators and all that stuff. That was the worst one we ever went to.

HT: Yeah

LC: And yeah that was... that was....

HT: That gave me cold chills- that sounds awful....

LC: Yeah that was a really bad one.

HT: Ok so overall what's a lasting legacy you want to have here in the fire department? What's something you kind of want to live on forever?

LC: Um, that I was a valuable member.

HT: Uh... (Laugh)

LC: That's all. Just a valuable member. I supported my husband and actually it became a really big part of our... of our marriage.

HT: Mm hmm.

LC: That's why I'm still here. It was hard... last year I didn't stay long... but last year I had an excuse, my cousin's daughter was getting married on that day so I just came up here for a little while. It was really hard because it was only three months since he had died.

HT: Mm hmm.

LC: But after that I thought to myself, you know he'd be really mad at me if I wasn't up here doing what he had instilled in doing. But see cause you got to remember, cause of my background I don't have lifelong friends, because I moved to much... ok? And so, but Howard, like the.... oh well he's not there.... the big guy that was sitting right there, he and Reggie (32:49) had been friends since they were six, you know they were in the field, in the fields doing something with their dads when they were six, so he had all these friends. And so I had to change my mindset, and realize that, uh, relationships do last a long time, and they are really valuable, because in my world, relationships lasted as long as my daddy's duty did at that station, and then

we moved to another one. That's why I ended up at Longwood. Um.... daddy said he'd pay for me completely, I wouldn't have any bills afterwards if I went to college, which I was capable of doing, but I had to be one hundred and fifty miles away, I couldn't get married while I was in school, and I had to complete it, and if I didn't do those three I'd have to pay for it myself. Well I took the compass thing, you know whatever.... and Longwood was one hundred and fifty-seven miles away, because at that time I had a boyfriend and I didn't want to leave him....(disruption)...ok?

Um, the reason he said it that way is cause I was always just dependent on them, my mom, my dad, and my sister, because that's all we had to depend on all those times we moved, and he wanted me to grow, ok? Well I grew, I met Howard, moved here, and then I really found out what a sense of a community was.

HT: Mm hmm.

LC: I mean I know I was a member of a Navy community, that's no big deal, but here, when somebody hurts everybody hurts, when somebody's happy, everybody's happy. The minute you find out somebody is pregnant everybody is excited. You know... weddings are fantastic, and it's really just a great place to live, so I'm glad I'm a part of it.

HT: So how did you and Howard meet?

LC: At the bowling alley at Longwood.

HT: Really?

LC: Yeah I was introduced to two guys, Joel Nixon and Howard Campbell, and I thought Joel was really, really cute. Now Howard, as he got older he got very distinguished looking, but he was more of a teddy bear type person. You know he was a little bit big, and he had this curly hair, and so I met them there and then one day I was walking across campus, and that's when



you could drive through campus, you can't do it anymore... you know.... drive through campus, you know where all those statues and stuff are?

HT: Yes.

LC: That used to be a road, ok and you could just drive through it. And he had, now this is in 1973.... he had a 69 Camaro.

MA: Whoa ah!

HT: That was a big deal!

LC: Yes it was! And uh, he pulled up beside me, and of course rolled down the windows because we didn't have electric, and he rolled down the windows and he said, Hey Linda! You remember me? And I said yeah.... You're um, um, Howard! He said yeah, want to go for a ride? Now today I would tell a girl never to do that! Ok? But no.... he had a 69 Camaro so I jumped in the car and the rest was history. And so, anyway.

All: Laughter

LC: My roommate wondered where I was because I didn't show up.... Where were you I was worried?! I got in this car and went riding with this guy, you know, you know.

All: Laughter

LC: I was still going with the guy down in Virginia Beach though... when I, when I did that. In fact, I got a diamond from Howard and I broke up with that guy the next day.

MA: Uh... are you serious?

LC: He lived here and he lived there so...

HT: They didn't know about each other....

LC: Okay, so do you guys have any questions? You don't need to write that down.

HT: We won't.

LC: Howard was just a really nice person. I can't say that enough. Howard's parents were so nice, everybody loved nana and papa just so nice- a little joke on Howard is they call him Pete here at the fire station okay, it's his nickname. My suitemate was dating Pete she saw his Camaro during the day and it was a green metallic color and I was dating Howard and I only saw the Camaro at night and it was a silver to me. We were dating the same guy.

HT: Oh my gosh!

LC: And we would sit across the table, you know, family dinner style and talk about this really nice guy we were dating. And we were dating the same guy.

HT: The same guy, oh my gosh.

LC: Sometimes I wouldn't mind dating a guy from the beach one time, I had a organic chemistry test and I came back early to study on Sunday and Howard was in the lobby and I thought how did he know I was coming back in my mind he was shuffling and I said it's really great seeing you but I got to study because this stuff is bomb you know and I went around the corner to the elevator and Joy came out and I said what are you doing and she said I got a date, well Howard was the only person in the lobby so I peeked around and they went out the door. Joy came back in 10 mins and Howard called me to apologize, so I was the one he wanted, I guess. He hated me when I told that story, I think it's funny.

HT: That's crazy, I guess it's just a small world.

LC: Howard Pete Campbell is what they call him really nice guy.

HT: What is a lasting legacy he and his father would want to know?

LC: This to continue, this to be the center of prospect community, for this to be the heart of prospect this is a very important organization for this, for this place when I first married Howard coming from Virginia Beach, there is nothing like it, there were very few restaurants it was just

nothing. The first night after I got married I couldn't sleep. Howard asked me why, I said it was because it was too dark, I couldn't even see my hand because I always grew up where there were street lights. The first year or so I was a little depressed my husband's dad, papa mutt would say, this is God's country Linda and I was like yeah, only God would live here. But he was right this is God's country, the people here really do care about you. We all come together in a crisis whether it be a joy or happiness. We are all interested in each other and all know each other. It's just a good place to live. I just don't see how you could live in a place where there wasn't such a sense of community.

HT: What is a lasting story you would want to live on forever?

LC: I think it would be something like if you could get a group of people get acquainted and striving for the same goal you could really form a sense of community where you would never feel like you are really, really alone, which I think is important for humans because humans don't like to be alone. I've gotten to the point where I'm alone now it's been sixteen months and sometimes people come and interrupt my little schedule and I'm like alright whatever I never would have been like that but since I had to be I realized like I don't like to be alone all the time I like being out, and we all call each other, we all go to dinners, we all do this stuff, you know and then um the Baptist church is really.... I'm not a member of it, but the Baptist church is really, really a big church here in Prospect, they intertwine with us too, and we end up doing stuff together, like one time they brought up a tractor trailer load of sweet potatoes in and dumped them on the ground.

HT: What in the world? That's a lot of sweet potatoes!

LC: Yeah you know and you would think.... and you know it got there at like seven in the morning, you know and it was going to rain that day, really, really bad and we were all worried about all these sweet potatoes, but by noon they were all gone.

HT: Wow!

LC: Yeah the community....everybody passed out to people who needed....people came and they took it, and all the sweet potatoes were gone in about four hours.

HT: Wow!

LC: You know, and you know it's just that sense of pride in your community is something that you need to pass on.

HT: Mm hmm.

LC: I think that's the problem we have in big cities, people don't have that sense of pride in their community, because people are too busy to take the time to say you know, "Hey, how are you?" What are you up to? You know, it's just like one of our member's mom got pneumonia and she was in the hospital just yesterday, today's Saturday and she went in Thursday evening, I know when she went in, by the time she went in everybody knew, and you know everybody was texting her daughter, if you need something let me know! But ah, she's home now, she has pneumonia. And then you know, ah Howard's Aunt Alice is probably ninety, and she's fallen and everybody's, she's down at the Woodland, you know rehab and everything, and everybody knew. Everybody's there, she has a big farm so everybody is taking care of it.

You know it's just, just really nice. You know it's just like when Howard died, my husband, my house sits like this, and there's twelve trees here, and I made my husband have an imaginary line, like this, and he could put anything he wanted behind it, because he was a hoarder. And if anybody was coming to visit me and I didn't want them to see the back. I'd park my car here so

they had to park their car there so they couldn't see back there. You know it looked like Sanford & Sons junkyard. Ok? But that's just who he was and he all kinds of other good qualities, but it was, it was a disaster. This fire department spent one Saturday, they brought tractor trailers up there and got the metal, and put the metal on that, and sold the metal for me, they took the trash off and everything. They didn't have to do that, but they did. And then one day last fall, well it was in November, and you can imagine what the leaves look like now, and I woke up to this honk..... And I said what in the world? There was a guy out there blowing the leaves for me, one of the fire members. It's just the way it is. You just don't think about it, you just do it. So, but anyway, like I said, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. I wish the beach was a little bit closer but I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. I love the beach, so yeah. Is that ok?

HT: That's perfect!

LC: I felt like I was rambling but....

AV: No that was good!

HT: No! That was great! We really appreciate it! Thank you so much....

LC: No problem! This is fantastic that you all are doing this.

HT: Yes, absolutely, I enjoyed talking to you very much.

MA: Yeah we really had fun, thank you very much!

LC: Can you imagine me as a high school teacher?

MA: Oh ah yeah!

All: Laughter

LC: I get.... I'm sort of, sometimes I'm random, you know I'll be talking and all of a sudden something will pop out and ah my daughter, my daughter always says, Mama! And you know, and my mama has a hard time following me, she's eighty-five, and here I am and she's like uh

(sigh) ..... And you know, and my kids would do that in school, I'd be doing blah, blah, blah, and all of a sudden, hey! Blah, blah, blah, and one of the kids would look around and say what is she talking about? It's just the way I was! But, some of my kids have really turned out, this, this week I found out one of my kids, Sylvia Adams is a Rear Admiral!

Okay? At Bethesda Naval Hospital, and she's in charge of community health, something or other. And I was ah, because I taught science so I was really excited ah and, I was like oh yeah!! But anyway, and then one of them is a county minister later in Cumberland, and I've got a lawyer, and their really good kids, they turned out really good, I'm so excited! And then I've got a couple in the Federal Pen, but we won't talk about them....

All: Laughter

LC: I knew that when they were in class....

All: Laughter

LC: One time I got myself in trouble, because my husband worked at the jail in Farmville, and one time I had this.... uh....this kid, and I had him out in the hall and I said, you know what? You're going to end up meeting my husband if you don't straighten up. And then he found out that my husband worked at the jail so he went home and told his momma that I told him he was going to go to jail.

All: Laughter

LC: I basically did, but anyway, I got in trouble but it's ok.... I got in trouble a lot so....

MA: Cough... ah yeah.

LC: Teaching really did change though, when I started teaching in 76, I think it was, I had this one little guy who I see all the time, hugs me every time.... he was just one of those people who wouldn't sit still, you'd turn around and he'd be over here, turn around and he'd be over here,

and I'd say, Frankie! And so I'd take him out in the hall and I'd say Frankie come on! And we'd talk about what he needed to do and he'd say yes ma'am, and he would try for a couple weeks until he started again. This was seventh grade science at this time, and so he left that year, and I went, bye Frankie! And I went ah thank the Lord! Well guess what? They moved Mrs. Campbell up to eighth grade science, guess who walked back in the door? He walked back in the door and went, I'm back!

HT: Laughter

LC: Okay? You know, but you could take him out in the hall and talk to him and he would say yes ma'am and he would try. At the end of my career, you could take them out in the hall, and they would use four letter words on you. You would call their parents, and their parents would blame you. And it was like.... so April of the year I retired, all my paperwork's in, I'm done. I called this parent, about this young man, and she said that to me, well what are you doing to because him to act that way? And, the devil got in me, and I said, you know I stayed up all night last night trying to figure out how to get him in trouble and I succeeded didn't I? And she went, (gasp). Now you see, how not, how not intelligent that sounds? And she goes, oh yes ma'am. And I said, now could you just help me? Just get him to behave, that's all I'm asking, and she goes okay. I mean, I have one hundred and twenty- five students, I'm going to sit there and work on this one student... no uh. I mean I did bug some students, I know that, but that's the way it goes.

All: Laughter

LC: Because I saw potential and they wouldn't do anything, I would just get so frustrated with them, because then you have those who don't have much potential, and they work themselves to death. You know what I'm saying?

All: Mm hmm

LC: So those with the potential that didn't do anything I would get annoyed with them.... see I'm related to that guy with the beard.

HT: Really?

LC: Yeah I don't usually say that.

All: Laughter

LC: He's an interesting character, there he goes....

HT: Laughter

LC: He's in charge of all the school buses at Prince Edward County. Alfred is....

HT: Mm hmm

LC: Guy in the yellow. He's a mess.

HT: Well is there anything else you would like to share with us... or anything?

LC: No.... but this is really.... this is nice.

HT: Okay, thank you very mu....

LC: I hope you guys are lucky enough to find a community where you can feel like you're a part of it like this. I mean there's all different kinds of things, I mean a friend of ours was a member of the fire department but he wasn't comfortable with it and now he's in charge of all the fundraising for SPCA. Ah... and that's his calling, and he's in a community like that, people caring for animals, but that's okay! But you know, it makes him feel good so I hope that you all can find something that makes you feel good like that too. Anything! You know anything you want. You know, children, older people, you know. Um, people with diseases that need help. Just dedicate yourself to something. Give yourself some purpose.

HT: Mm hmm.



LC: Other than yourself. What's it called? Altra.... Altru.... Altruism?

HT: That sounds right....

LC: Is that right?

HT: That sounds right.

LC: Yeah, I always said words wrong, I always spelled stuff wrong too.

HT: Oh Lord!

LC: I'm a terrible speller....

HT: Yes

LC: So I told my kids, if it's spelled wrong on the board just tell me, I won't get mad. I have funky hand writing to so that always hurt it, so I never learned how to write because in third grade I was in three different schools....

MA: Oh.

LC: And so they printed, wrote, printed... so my handwriting... like my name Linda, like "L. I. N. D. A.", so it's separation, separation, separation. But you know when you're writing on the board sometimes....

MA: Yeah

LC: What is that Mrs. Campbell?

HT: Laughter

LC: Mrs. Campbell what's wrong with you? But anyway...

HT: Um, okay, could we get a picture with you? We don't have to it's completely up to you.

LC: That's fine. I'm sorry, I am what I am.

HT: Okay! We all are what we are.

LC: I uh, I a long time ago... I've always been big, always, my whole entire life, so a long time ago I just decided, that's just who I am. And then you see these skinny people walking around, they're the ones that balance me out. You know with nature, everything is balanced out, you know it's like I have thin hair, some people have thick hair. That's all... Wayne you want to take a picture?

Wayne: I'll try.