INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR LINDA KERBER

Shannon Amick and Sam Styler
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Key
SA: Shannon Amick
SS: Sam Styler
LK: Linda Kerber

Shannon Amick: This is Shannon Amick and Sam Styler interviewing Professor Linda Kerber. So we when we were assigned this, he was explaining who everyone was and we thought that you were very interesting because of everything he was telling us, so we thought that we would definitely want to know more. So tell us about where you attended college and—

Linda Kerber: Things like that. Like your first question. You'll see on the CV that I gave you some of those answers. I didn't go here. I'm from New York as you probably can hear still even though I haven't lived there in a long time. And I went to Barnard College, which is the women's college of Columbia University. And I think that's significant in that when I came here, and started teaching women's history and I'll tell you a little more about that. Lots of people asked me, they still ask me, are there any men in your class? As though having the men in the class is what validates having the class. It was a strange question for me because I had grown up in classes where everyone were women and that was the normal and graduate school was coed so that was a difference. And it made me realize that coed schools are their own culture and they're not necessarily normative. So I went to a small college, which contrast with Iowa, but I went to a pretty large graduate program at Columbia in New York. And my first teaching job was again at a small women's college in New York, it's on the CV. It's called Sternum College and that was very comfortable to me even though I was not an orthodox Jew. I'm Jewish but I was not observant the way they were, but the idea of the women's college was very comfortable. And I taught for a little at Stanford, and then I was recruited here. I am in a way to Iowa that is more common now, but was very rare when I came in 1971. I came as the partner of someone who the medical school was recruiting. My husbands a cardiologist, he's still practicing cardiology as part of the medical school. And this is 1971, and people in the medical school reach out to recruit him and we are living in California. So we have come from New York, to California, we're not even sure which side of the Mississippi Iowa is on. I am not making that up. There was a Saturday evening gathering at someone's house where we actually took out maps and found Iowa. And so it was a very distinguished medical school and a medical department, and he said, "well, you know I'll just tell them that we're not gonna move unless there's a job for you." I already had my PhD and I had taught at the small college, I had taught for a year at a public university part time, sort of what we would now call adjunct at San Jose State and then I taught for a year as a visitor at Stanford where he was getting his training. It was very hard then, it is hard now, to get jobs in history and there were very, very few women on university faculties. We were fond of saying that the student body was coed but the faculty was not. So we said he would

be interested in exploring the job but of course he did have a professional wife and he wasn't going to explore this job unless there was a future for her. Three years before that probably that would've ended the conversation. This was 1970 and all over the country, women are doing street theater. They are raising the question of can we have a coed faculty and they're sitting in university presidents offices, they weren't sitting in the presidents offices here about faculty jobs, they were sitting in about child care. But they were protesting, they were raising the issue and as it happened we had, at that time, an extraordinary university president, Sandy Boyd, who embraced us, he didn't need any persuasion, and an extraordinary history department here that you are engaging in now. And I'll just tell you some hooks later, but Bill Aydelotte was still in the department even though he had retired as chair and Sydney James was the chair. And you will learn about the ways in which some individual members of our department had been harmed by the McCarthy, by McCarthy's and the Un-American activities committee and this place had not rejected them, in fact there was no loyalty oath at the University of Iowa which was quite unusual for many, it was a loyalty oath at the University of California with no loyalty oath here. So we already had a department that was open and had already situated itself as not always joining in other peoples nastiness. And I've always felt that a number of a surprisingly large number of members of this department, male members, were married to a number of professional women. A higher proportion than at Stanford at that time, and I was coming from Stanford. So with all of this, the department, Sydney James's response. Oh I also have heard and someone else will tell you the detailed stories, when Trudy Peterson comes she can tell you, I learned only last year that in this little interlude where the guy at the other side of the river said "you need to explore this with my wife whose a historian and they had said well send her CV over for us to explore, I had no idea while the department was contemplating this the women graduate students marched in the chairman's office and said we hear that you are thinking about hiring Linda Kerber. We want you to pursue this. So I am here because of a grassroots movement. I am not here because I'm brilliant. I really want that on the record. I am not here because I walk on water. I was a perfectly reasonable, but not dazzling new PhD. I am here because of street theater just like has been on the Pentacrest list the other day, that's what got me here and my whole generation of feminists historians, of women historians, who came to our jobs in the early 70s. We didn't just get it. It wasn't time goes by. I was the first full time regular woman in the department and the reason I'm so cautious about those words is because a few years before I came there was a period of time and you can check the exact years when a distinguished literary historian Rosalie Colie was member of the department she was a literary historian and she was hired in a joint appointment with the English department and she was here for a number of years and then she went to Brown where she joined the English department. So ya know if you call me first, I'm sort of first, I'm not quite first, but sort of. And she, of course, was a very distinguished predecessor. And then a couple of years after I came, President Boyd hired May Brodbeck. And May Brodbeck, whose picture is here…he hired her as provost. She was a distinguished philosopher of science who at that time had been dean of the graduate school at the University of Minnesota so it was a natural thing you'd think if you get to be promoted then you get to be promoted and she was very widely known. I've always felt that this is very heart moving, I don't know whether you want to call it tragic or comic or what but piece of the historical thread. May Brodbeck had grown up, I forgot exactly what her birthdate is, but she is in college during World

War II. She goes to, I want to say Hunter but I'm not sure; she's in New York. She comes from a family that has very little money but she's a chemistry major and she gets a job on the Manhattan project which is the development of the atomic bomb secretly in the basement of the physics building at Columbia University so she is being a baby scientist on the Manhattan project. The war gets to be over and she decides she wants to go to graduate school in physics or in chemistry and she cannot get funding. Zilch. None. Even though she's been on the Manhattan project. She is a girl and she's Jewish, end of conversation. She has no options. I learned this from her brother at her memorial service who spoke of it, she never did. So she applies, and she applies again. And somehow, and she keeps getting denied. And somehow, she crosses paths with a very distinguished refugee at the University of Iowa. His name is Gustav Bergmann; we've got some of his papers in our archives. He was a refugee from Vienna, Jewish refugee, who had gotten here as part of a Rockefeller foundation project to get like scholars at risk now to get people endangered scholars visas and get them here. And he had been a mathematician, psychologists, and a philosopher in the days when philosophy and psychology were actually originally of the same department and he was then chair of the department of philosophy here. He runs into May Brodbeck and he had been a scientist you see, he hears her story, he understands it. He says to her okay try one more year to get funding to study science. I, you know in those days chairs could do anything, will get you a scholarship to come to the University of Iowa and study the philosophy of science. So that's how she got to be a philosopher of science and because she was so smart she became a distinguished philosopher of science. Nobody gave me a job easy, but nobody told me I couldn't be a historian. So you see the sort of progression. And she was provost maybe two years after I came. After her death, in the early 80s, a chair was created in her honor and memory. And I have always felt very touched to have been the first holder of that chair. And a chair, an academic chair, is an honorary situation in which the university provides additional research resources for the holder so that they can do their work more vigorously and that's what I lived on from the mid 80s on and when I retired a couple years ago the chair was transferred to Sam Chang, the director of the writers workshop. There is no requirement that it go to a woman; May would've hated that. It is to go be allocated on the quality of mind but I do think that I tried to live it in her spirit and I know that Sam Chang has the same residence. So I've been talking and talking. Oh, one more thing about May Brodbeck I want you to think about. This is her picture and I keep it in her room and it was taken sometime in the 70s and it has these dark glasses it looks very dated to me anyway now. So if you go to the Iowa Woman's Archives, they have a portrait of her painted by Gustav Bergman's wife who was the first Ph.D. to do I think at the university to do a dissertation on African Americans in Iowa. It's an American studies Ph.D. and she was also a painter and her painting is very evocative. It doesn't have any detail and so it feels to me like May. When I look at this I think, "Well yes, I guess." So I think that's an interesting observation. What else would you like to know?

SA: How do you think that the University has changed since you started working here in 1971 until now? Are there a lot of differences you've seen in the University itself and the department, more specifically?

LK: That's a big question. I tend to think of what it was when I came. I think sometimes your first impressions are the most powerful and then as things change they change so bit by bit that you're hardly aware so this is a very interesting question for me. I would say that when I came the university under sandy Boyd and then May Brodbeck was truly distinctive in a number of ways that I cherished, that made it possible for me to have the career I had. And when I look at it now I worry that how robust those qualities that I noticed so sharply in the 70s, how robust they still are. And I will identify a couple of the, when I came I remember that early on someone in the department sat me down and said, "We want you to be the best historian you know how to be. We are not going to expect of you." Well basically they weren't going to keep pulling up the carrot to see if it was growing. They were going to let me be free. They wanted me to do fresh research and if I did write textbooks or materials for learning, that was supplementary. They were interested in people that would push at the margins of what was known and the way they made that real is that I came in 1970, the only teaching of women's history was happening in the predecessor of Saturday and evening classes, which was then and you may know this called action studies. Do you know about action studies? Okay then another piece of history you. So this was a program done by students who said "hey wait a minute, you are not teaching X, you are not teaching. We have no courses in African American history, we have no courses in African American sociology, or we have no courses in women, and we will do it." And they worked out a deal with the university that graduate students or students I mean they just made up the courses and if they could get a faculty member to joint, to authenticate it, to sign on, to essentially not to teach it just to observe and say "yep I observe this has credibility," then people could get credit for their action studies course. This is actually how women in the law started in Yale so this is going on all over the country. It was student driven. It is student taught. And there was a course in women's history it was taught by someone who was not even a graduate student in women's history, when she went around to persuade a faculty member to sign and back it. It's always been interesting to me that it wasn't the young, male faculty members; it was one of the oldest and most senior. And he joined it, Lawrence LaFleur, one of the great members of the department, and he joined it in part because his mother, because he was old, his other had been a suffragist, his mother remembered her first vote, he didn't need any persuading. He knew there had been a women's movement once upon a time. He was glad to see it come back. So you have a world in which women's history, in which college university women are learning nothing about. I can do a quiz, after you're doing this I'm gonna quiz you; there's some basic things about the history, our history, that I've been, I thought by now 40 years later, 60 years later, people would know and I wanna know if you know them but that's different and if you know them. So all over the country nobody is learning any and in fact I brought these, you can look at them later. These are textbooks from my husband's college curriculum at Columbia University "man in contemporary civilization, chapters in these were their basic core courses" and these were used all over the country once they were set up, I did the count. Western Civ, what they're gonna learn about western civ. There are twenty five selections here this was published ion 1955, all published by men, famous men, good men, good stuff. *Man in Contemporary Society*, there are 44 men selections in this, I mean these are good men, they're Freud, and two by women volume, one by a woman in this volume. So what was being conveyed to everyone, men and women who took their basic introductory courses was that women never thought a thought. All the important

thoughts were thunk by men. And that's what I consider academic malpractice. Its intellectual malpractice, okay? In the early 70s when therefore were starting to hear of people who are teaching courses directly in women's history all over the country, women of my generation think this would be an interesting thing to teach, we raise our hands say "we would like to teach this course" and all over the country everyone I knew had to go to a curriculum committee, had to persuade the curriculum committee, that this was a serious, that this wasn't a fad, that there was material to learn, everyone sometimes there were knock down drag out fights in colleges and universities. Here at Iowa, we chose what were going to teach ya know and were very collegial choosing what we do and I said, "Ya know I'd like to teach a course in women's history" and the only question I was asked was, I swear it, was "you want to teach Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday" that's it. Terrific. So it's that kind of spirit that characterized Iowa. When May Brodbeck came from Minnesota, one of her perceptions was that there was insufficient research support for the intellectual work of faculty on campus. You could apply for a Guggenheim, you could apply for national science foundation money but the university was not supporting it. It had nothing that was generally called sabbaticals. We had no sabbaticals we had once had them but they hadn't developed, so we had to sabbaticals here. And what there was was a small amount of money that the office for the vice president of research had allocated. And there was something called a research council and I was put on it by my second year because there was no girls on the faculty and there were a lot of people that wanted to make that gesture so I was visible, so much younger than I might otherwise have been, I'm on the research council. The research council is I forgot how much money and everyone from the college of liberal arts, I think it was college of liberal arts, maybe it was also the school of, it wasn't the medical school, but lets say college of is applying for some money to do their research and there were so few if you just took that money and divided it up by semester salaries you might get 20 in a faculty of 1000. So then there was dean of vice president for research and what he did was he had us rank these proposals and then he'd go to the department and say "I'm not going to give you the full salary to free a single person, could you replace that person maybe with a post stock and ill give you money for the post stock and I'll continue to pay that persons salary and in this way sort of nickel and dimed the twenty research fellowships into 40 but considering our peers considering peer institutions this is really pathetic the other thing that was pathetic about it, very few people have talked about this. I'm very happy I have the chance to put it on the record. Is we were a group of people, I forgot how big the research council was but we didn't represent every single specialty there might be a sociologist and no political scientists, there might be a chemists and no physicist, there might be me from history and maybe no one from the English department but we did our best and what I remember was but historians write in English persuasively and the history faculty generally did pretty good in persuading the research council to give us money. When it came time to look at an appeal by a mathematician everybody sort of looked and turned to whoever on the group used math, if we didn't have a mathematician, but used math in their work and I remember these very funny moments where everyone is staring at the physicists and he's saying, "you have to understand, I only do applied math, I cant really evaluate it and there would be this silence and someone would say "well take a stab at it, do your best" well that's not peer review, that's junk. That's not honest. And we are back to that situation. Let me tell you how we improved it. So May Brodbeck comes and she looks at the situation and she says "this is nuts

this is not a good way to run a university, the intellectual life of a university. Let me think about how we did it at Minnesota and I don't know really and what she did was she said were not calling them sabbaticals because then the public thinks we go to the beach and look at our navels. They're research assignments we assign them to faculty so that they have time and next years students are not getting outdated knowledge, you do not want your class that your learning in anything to be the same set of lectures that I gave 10 years ago, the public doesn't understand that. They understand it for sciences and they understand it for economics. They don't understand it for literature or philosophy or history and so she developed an enterprise that she called research assignments and in the general scheme of things you did make a proposal but generally faculty here were free from teaching for every 10th semester and that's the world that I lived in and if we ask myself how it is that I could do so much scholarship and do so much research its because I had an institution that gave me and my colleagues and robust base of support. What happened is that has been, from what I believe, has not been sufficiently well defended and in the last 5 or 6 years it has eroded and now the research assignments are fewer and they are reviewed by a group not unlike the group I came in with and people who are, cannot, in my judgment, make an appropriate evaluation of what counts. And I worry, one of my biggest worries is that the present and the contrast to the past is the erosion of internal support for faculty scholarship and this is very, very important its important for scientists because it seeds money for the NIHs and NSFs and its important for literature and humanities people because the amount of money out there is much less for us. So that's one big difference. One good difference is that the faculty is still pretty close, I don't know what the numbers are, but we are a pretty coed faculty. My sense is that if you look at the new hires and you look at the new people that are hired that year come in at the beginning of their careers and were pretty close to the 50/50. If you look at the incoming medical students they're 50/50. Because when I came in incoming medical students were 10 percent all over the country, law students were 15 percent women there were quotas, there were explicate quotas, sometimes they were formal sometimes there not formal, but there were formal quotas. We don't have them. And there's a lot of parody in entry. What remains and has not been well address, and it needs to be addressed, so these people come in and we have men and women understanding themselves that have been educated to have careers. The minute they decide they want to have children, this is whether they're same sex couples or they're adopting or one is biological, or heterosexual couples, biological or adopting, then we don't have solutions. A sociologist friend of mine is fond of saying that what we should take enormous pride that in 30 years, from 1970 to 2000 or so we broke open the pipeline. And there were people that risked their careers to do it. It was nasty. It didn't just happen. It was very…I have friends that lost their jobs but we did it. No one tells little girls they cant be engineers anymore. So now what? Do we say I'm not a feminist, its over we'll go save the trees? The next big intellectual work that needs to be done in the university in following the breaking open of the pipeline and simultaneously understand is that it is a racial that the barriers were racial and cultural as well as gendered. The next big thing is to enable people in our places which say were intellectual places, to enable them to have reasonable lives, to have family lives, we have no paid maternity leave, none. We have a tenure system and this is true all over the country and some institutions have responded better than others in which if women postpone pregnancy until their careers are stable, they are at the bare edge of their child bearing years and so there is a powerful

new study by Maryann Mason paid for by the American association of university professors which establishes and we've got some, oh there's one on the historians, I'll send it to you. That academic women are likely to have their first child only in their late thirties only in a context of bed rest and what you might call medicalized pregnancy so now we have an asymmetry that's different than we had in in 1970, men got into medical school, women didn't. We fixed that. Okay so the next thing why should it be so much easier for men to be daddies than for women to be mommies? There is a great remark made by Thurgood Marshall in the 80s. They were arguing whether maternity leave was vacation pay or sick pay, well you're not sick necessarily. And he said wait a minute its not vacation or sick its about the large question that men have work lives and parental lives and women can have work lives and parental lives. And I see that as the big challenge that faces us and I say that when I came to Iowa, Iowa was way ahead of the flow on the women question, way ahead. We were a poster child, people looked to us for models and for how to do it. And now we are on the family, about making a user-friendly institution for families, I think were way behind. So that's a comparison. How's that for a comparison?

SA: Yeah, that's good.

LK: Oh, I know one more thing. When I came and I meant to say when I came, what counts as tuition cost is very hard to compare because there's always inflation and deflation but and I don't remember what tuition was when I came but I came from new york where there was a robust system of a city university which was free, it was free like high school is free and it didn't change until the 1980s and so my cousins all went to free college and actually I could have gone to queens college, no big deal, it was available. The world, the community, wanted its students educated. When I came to Iowa it already looked expensive to me but it was expensive more because students mostly could not live at home and they cause for queens or the city university, I was from the city I would have lived at home. So I could see they had to pay dorms or apartments and there was a tuition and I don't remember what it was but I do remember that it was low enough, the tuition and expenses was low enough that a student could work during the summer and make the money to go to college, pretty much. Maybe a little help, but not that much and the summer work didn't have to be construction, they could be lifeguards. So it felt it was a public university. My last years of teaching in the arts, well I in general give a midterm and people would get C's, C-, D's, I always insisted that they come in to my office and talk to me and we figure things out. And sometime in the arts I realized that that conversation had shifted and it had become the following…person would come in and sit down with me and this is before I was unpacking so it was reasonable and they would start off by saying, "I know it was a crappy grade my roommate kept me up all night, I'll try harder next time" and I would say, "it's okay but just talk to me what are you majoring in, what year are you in, tell me something about yourself, sometime in the arts I would find myself sitting in this conversation I would find myself saying, "do you have a job" and they would say, "yes" because most people at Iowa are working one way another and I would say, "well how many hours a week? Well what do you do?" And it used to be what they did was work steady jobs that would be federal funded and were supported in some way and they checked out books at the library and in between they memorized their French words and sometime in the arts it became well m delivering pizza or

something else that has no intervals and I would say, “so how many hours are you working?” And the hours started creeping up and by the last couple of years I was hearing people that were working 30 hours a week, I heard people working 40 hours a week and I would say, “and how many courses are you taking?” And they’re taking 12 credits, I’m taking 15 credits and I say “whoa, whoa, whoa, wait one bloody minute you’ve got to drop something either you’ve got to work less or you need to drop something because unless you have your 12 credits you lose whatever financial aid you have and without financial aid isn’t enough to pay your apartment etc. etc. And they were stuck between a rock and a hard place and sometimes I would say if I had to work 30 hours, I didn’t work at all when I was in college, I worked in the summers and earned, and this was a private college and not a cheap one and the ratio was such that I could earn most of the tuition by working in the summer. If I had to work 30 hours a week, I still wouldn’t have graduated from college. What is going on here? And I would say that the faith and the pride that the Iowa public that the legislate takes in its university has eroded so substantially it breaks my heart. If you ask, they did a study here some years and asked people what citizens thought of when they said the university of Iowa, what comes to your head, and the first thing was either football or basketball or the University of Iowa Hospital. Now they do not pay for any of this they get them free and nobody explains that to them they think that they’re paying for it, they have no idea that they have starved the intellectual mission of the university and I am heartbroken I’m just heart sick about how that talk I don’t even think most students understand and they don’t understand at least there is a good piece of this is that we took some fighting on the part of the faculty some years ago but we have maintained a wall between moneys contributed to the football well we’ve maintained a wall between state money that’s contributed to the college of liberal arts what we call the general education fund. The college of liberal arts is like 95 percent supported by the general education fund and we have not let a penny of that go out to support the football team, and all over the country at peer institutions, some of that money erodes so I think that’s something that we can be very proud of. But I don’t think students even understand that they have to protect it because the value. Ya know you’re gonna go out from here and you’re gonna compete with people from all over for entry into graduate programs and entry into jobs entry in to even the Peace Corps you have to apply and be smart and I worry a lot about the erosion of support for the intellectual mission of the university and so that’s another and the pride in fact when I came here I went to private institutions where I mean Columbia took pride in having a losing football team. We understood that having a losing football team meant that these people were spending their time working at their courses so we thought that the losing football team was a mark of a good university. And we could not understand, my husband and I, why there was such fuss about the Iowa football team and one of my colleagues then in the early 70s said that when we have a winning football, basketball, wrestling whatever, the legislature takes pride in the university and gives us more money and that may have been true in the 70s but that’s certainly not true now, so we can have successful athletic teams but I don’t see them supporting us I see them just draining, draining energy and attentiveness.

SA: So would you say grades between your students, do you think they got worse because of….

LK: Oh yes cause I can think of the standard pattern becomes if they're working so hard they prepare themselves for class erratically. So lets say they're working during the week and not on weekends so they come to class on Monday very well prepared and then there speaking in class and they're being smart in class and I can hear the gears going in class but by Friday they're wiped out and then they're just not there. Or another standard pattern will be someone who is articulate and smart and is very good in class work but then it comes to writing a paper, well they don't have time to sit in a library for 3 hours and one of the things that I like to do and I think of myself as being a good teacher because of is I have ways and strategies of getting undergraduate students into the manuscript collections so that their papers even their 5 page term papers are new research and they have touched 19th century letters and they feel proud well you cant do that kind of work you cant take that stuff out of the library and work on it at night. The library is closed between 12-1 because we don't have enough financial support so what I see with those students is real smarts in the head and an inability to follow through in different kinds of work. They can talk well but they cant write a paper or write a paper because that happens on time that they can control but they can do miserably on an exam or they fall asleep in class. I had a student in a recent class and he worked in construction, he made a lot of money, but he fell asleep in class, so I persuaded him to work in the summer and not take any summer courses and then use that money not to work at all but that's what I that the stuff I never saw in the 70s and 80s. And I think students have trouble explaining that to their parents because parents who put themselves through college in the 60s or 70s don't always understand why their children can't do the same.

SA: Yeah, definitely. How would you say that you go so interested in women's studies and women's rights and all of that? What are your favorite courses that you've taught in all of that? Would you say you have some you like more than others?

LK: When I, there are probably a lot of deep meanings in why somebody is drawn to one field of work or whatever. I was drawn to history and I now think some of it must have been, although I didn't know it then that because I came from a family where the grandparents were the immigrant generation and what they had been fleeing was very painful. One side of the family I know realize I didn't know when I was growing up was fleeing a programma in Russia in 1903 and they knew if they would've stayed everyone would've died in the holocaust and they weren't telling us a lot of history when we were kids because they knew it would've given us nightmares and I wonder whether I became a historian because there was this emptiness of some sort. I wasn't doing my own history I wasn't doing their history. I was doing American history. My first book was about the federalist opposition to Jefferson, and I think now I realize that was my way of connecting with the big questions in American history. But anyway I was in graduate school in the 60s and my dissertation was given in 1968 and while I was defending it my husband was in Vietnam so we are the Vietnam generation he was a medical student and then a doctor and essentially could not avoid the draft, he could postpone the military service, but he could not avoid it and so he was in Vietnam if there's anything that gives you a skeptical view of your country its when your husband gets drawn into a war that should not have been fought at all and I do not know how people in the military now bare it. So I am transformed into a skeptic from a patriot, into a skeptic, and there is a point in my dissertation, which is, as I say, is all about men.

Where I actually quote a report on manufactures written by Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the Treasury, and they're talking about how they can develop manufacturing in this country. And land is readily available and men can set themselves up as farmers where they're gonna get the proletariat the industrial poorly paid workers to run these machines like they do in England. Alexander Hamilton says that women are available for this and I quote him I forgot the exact words so at my defense are all these smart guys talking about what I have written and not a single person I had a very smart advisor, Richard Hoffstater, very famous, very fine historian. Nobody ever said to me, "hey Linda, those women and children, what's going on here? Why are they available?" They're the ones that are so desperate they'll take anything go follow that up go get that nobody says that and I get my degree. There are no girls in my dissertation expect and in the book that's published except one sentence then comes the women's movement breaks out in force. And it breaks out in partly because the cold war is in many ways eroding the ability the place where feminism had been during the Cold War was on the left and some of it was in the communist party. Betty Friedman was pushed on the far left, and suddenly it became possible and safe to become a feminist. And boy did women take it and run with it. So, then my advisor died and people are putting together a volume of essays in his memory and they say, "Linda would you like to write an essay for this?" And I look back in my old notes and I'm thinking about women now and it's just a year after I defended just a year or two, and I see I had tons of notes about women. But I was writing something important, so I wasn't going to make my dissertation about women and be vulnerable about something that's not important. I'm going to talk about Jefferson and Hamilton, but I had all of these notes and it turns out all these guys, the Jefferson's, the Hamilton's, about what the republic is going to be. What this new society that we're building is going to be. What the role of women is. What's the proper education of a woman in the republic? It's easy, it's no big deal, it's all sitting there. So I write that essay and as I write that essay I realize, oh my goodness, there's a lot more and it becomes my second book, *Women in the Republic,* I'll pull it off the shelf, it has a great cover. It's about women in revolutionary America, and there's a chapter on ideas. There's a chapter on the grand ideas of the Enlightenment, which nobody told me. Also had a lot about women. So I read Montesquieu, and then there's a couple of chapters about women involved in the war as spies, as fellow travelers, as women of the army. You know who the army are? There are no quarter master core. You need women to follow the army. If your husband, or brother, or father has gone off to war, there's no email. You have to follow if you don't have a farm to run, if you're poor, you better follow or you'll never see them again and men will cook but they will not wash. It is said that washing you could smell the army at bunkers hill a mil away and if you have a whole army of men who will not launder their clothes, you are gonna have a sick army. They're gonna have sores, they're gonna have open sores, they're gonna have burns and bugs and cockroaches so you need women to launder. Isn't that amazing? Anyway, I find them all over the place and someplace in here I also find the way the law treats women, which is very interesting. And I lay it out on what loyalty means for a woman in two chapters, which I'm most proud of having written. Those chapters are about the loyalty at the turn of the century and I don't think it's the concept of covenant in marriage, I think only now are we starting to appreciate it. So I would say the sum up answer to your question is that partially this book comes out of leftovers from the first book. You bounce off one research project to another, but the other piece is that the book itself which

has footnotes and looks very serious and has pictures the book, is also in result. I get permission from the women's movement to write it. When I started writing this book in the early 70s when I went into a manuscript library I didn't know what I was looking for. And I would say, "Do you have any papers about women?" If I had walked into a manuscript library 10 years before that, it was an active movement, you don't go in and say I don't know what I'm looking for, but do you have anything about women? They would've said, "Little girl turn around. You are not prepared; go home." They would've sneered at me. In 1972 or 3, when I'm going, they say, "Oh yes, we're so glad you're here. We just noticed that we have the papers of so and so." So I was given a collection. They don't like me to tell it, the big manuscript library in Philadelphia and they had a big family papers of a famous papers of a Philadelphia family. And they had a big box and they were careful organized, and calendared by recipient, and year. This box is a mish mash, and its labeled letters from ladies, and all the letters the women in this family wrote to their husbands or brothers. And they were a famous family, congressmen. They're every which way they've been pulled from. There they were found you can't tell what dates they are, who these people are. That was the so this is also a way in which a political movement could sustain things. I think were going to see the enthusiasm of your generation for environmental concerns being something like that. And I would say there's a women's dimension, a gender dimension in any topic you can find in environmental concerns. So that what I would hope would have having broken it open it doesn't become a been there done and we can go onto something else, but that we can what we know and move on into the next generation of knowledge.

SA: Yeah, definitely. I feel like there's those aspects in a lot of different things underlying.

LK: Yeah, let me say something else since you asked about the womens' history. Do you have another fifteen minutes we can take?

SA: Yes, of course.

LK: Okay so this is my show and tell. Okay, to sort of understand it, you're welcome to borrow those. So when we started talking about this in 1980, this is 10 years worth of feminist scholarship and an editor I knew and had gone to school with in college to become an editor at Oxford everyone was talking about integrating women into the classes. And she asked Jane DeHort and me, since she knew we knew each other, if we would put together a book that would be the kind of thing people could use if they were teaching an American history survey course. There isn't a lot of stuff about women if they could have a supplementary text you know that would not be terribly big. This one looks kind of big but it's the only one that's in hard cover. I did not say it should be the Iowa colors but I thought it was kind of cool. So what this is, is a collection of essays and some of them are quite old. Julie Kerry Spoul wrote in the 30s but it's a collection of essays, documents and memoirs that people could use in their assignments. And then I said that people are still talking about this is a fad. I said, "Well okay, maybe it was a fad." But I was going to identify that it was gonna be 10 essential legal documents. I couldn't not get it lower than 15. And then the message was maybe it will be a fad, maybe you won't do women's history or you won't do courses in women's history, but you will always have to teach about

Muller vs. Oregon. You should always tech Roe v. Wade. You will always need to teach the Comstock Law. But they weren't. They weren't in anyone's textbooks and there are still some things. I'm shocked in that that I didn't know about. So this was published in 1982, and they come back to us, and meanwhile there's this outpour in scholarship in women's history and it gets outdated. So we say it's time to do another edition and the Oxford people say fine then you have to take something out because we don't want to raise the price and this is a good size. So we say yes, yes and we hand them a longer manuscript and I love this cover. It's not really a posed cover and she's not really a worker because you see her out over the city without a net. I love it. One of our points was that the pictures were not mug shots, they had to be activists. So year every 4 or 5 years, this thing is still alive, we're doing an 8th edition. Sometimes when people ask me to come and talk about women's history over the years, I bring, lets say the second edition and the one that came out two years, where they actually has to enlarge the edition and the things that are in it are amazing. Did you know that the first immigration filtering law; we usually say that the first immigration filtering law was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1887? Well the first immigration restriction was the Paige Act of 1875, which requires that Chinese women cannot come in unless it is already proven that they were not already prostitutes. So they have a requirement that nobody else has. This proves to the satisfaction that it is the women. Some place along here I learn that it was the practice for much of American history that if an American woman married a foreign man, she would lose her citizenship. Did you get that in your survey courses?

Sam Styler & SA: No, no we did not.

LK: I've been teaching for forty years and this is the first I've heard of it. I have a little list of facts that I think that the ignorance of which represents academic malpractice. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know American women lost their citizenship when marrying an immigrant. It was a quite practice until 1907 when Consuelo Vanderbilt married the Duke of Marlboro, and congress went crazy. Couldn't the richest heiress in America marry a decent American to marry and they passed a statue the expatriation act of 1907 which issued women who married foreign men lost their citizenship. In 1913 California passed a women's suffrage law so earlier and a woman Ethel McKenzie who had worked really hard to get that law passed married the British consul in San Francisco but she didn't think she lost her citizenship she hadn't left the united states so she goes to try to vote in 1914 and they say, "no, no, no, no, you are no longer a citizen." So she goes to sue them and the case goes to the US Supreme Court. So you don't have to be a very subtle researcher to find this, and in 1915 the US supreme court says and we now have the case in women's America, McKenzie v Hare. That a marriage to a foreigner is voluntary expatriation so when American women are struggling for the vote in the teens one of the things you see, why do you need the vote? We need it so that were not denationalized. Men never put their nationality at risk by being married and the first thing they do is lobby for a bill to save the integrity of married women citizenship, and they get it in 1922, the Cable Act. But that only lets them keep their citizenship if they marry men who themselves are eligible for citizenship, and in 1922 Chinese, Japanese, people from south Asia, are not, and that doesn't get fixed until after World War II. And nobody taught me that in college, and nobody taught me that

in graduate school. And it wasn't even in the textbooks. So when you ask me about women's history, I think that women's history is a little like the history of banking. It's a little, we do not say that when knowledge about banking has been absorbed into the history of economics that we give up on our history of banking courses. But a lot of people think that they can give up on women's history. So the enrollment in women's history has dropped precipitously. You can see whether people in your class have taken women's history. We have Landon Storrs and Leslie Schwan. We have some of the most significant scholars of their generation in our institution. Are people flocking to their classes? Are people taking and are they saying I'm not going to come out without some knowledge. When I came in 1971, the American studies program had established the rule that since black history and women's history were being invigorated, they just took the rule that no one gets out of school without taking one course in women's history and one course in black history they could specialize in. There was one more thing so I guess that one thing on here to say is the field remains very vibrant, very alive. Scholarship in it is changing very rapidly. It gets out molded very rapidly, and I am not sure that we have done what we might do to sustain that knowledge in the early 70s, in the first historical by the second wave feminist. They had studies of rape and the understanding of rape, and in a book that was pretty much a best seller by Susan Brown Miller that was called, *Against Our Will*, rape was understood to be an act not of sexuality but of violence through sexual violence and of crime. And in the early 90s in Bosnia international law as a result of the shock over Bosnia, now regards rape as a war crime, but a lot of people on our own campus haven't read any of that stuff. It has not been filtered into the knowledge that they need to go out into this world. And so I can think of a little packet of historical scholarship, some of which was around for 40 years, some of which in a book by Ester Freedman, which rape in America is brand new. I guess as a historian whenever there's a problem, I throw a little history at it. But I think we have a lot of history that we can throw at it just like we can throw history at environmental issues and so I would hope that we can throw more history at the matters oh and one last thing which is that as we learn from about women we also learn that no one is born they are born female but they are not born girls. They have to learn to be girls. Kittens are taught by their mothers how to be mousers, in Psych I you learn about that. And we teach people how to be girls, we teach people how to be boys. I remember that when thinking about women in the army the issue was do women have to register for the draft remember Carter's original proposal was that every 18 year old had to register for the draft and the opposition of it came from congress. But it didn't come from the military, and one of the military men I was interviewing for no constitutional rights said, don't think its easy to socialize an 18 year old boy really to fighting and killing they had no difficulty imagining themselves socializing girls. They were not worried about that they could do it or not as the case may be. But they were clear headed about it so what we've also come to understand in a way that we didn't when I started is that there's biological sex and there's cultural and socialized gender and that makes all of this complex and another reason why the classes in women's history should be coed. When I used to teach the civil war here before Leslie Schwan came and it was very clear nobody asked me how many women there were in my civil war class, even though there were 2 or 3 they were always from the school of education who required it. But they always asked me how many men there were in women's history and by the end. So I started noticing and I noticed that the men who took it were people who were mature. They were history majors, they had taken a lot of

courses they heard that I was not polemical, that this was a course that was interesting class and they were confident of themselves and they were not uncomfortable in a room full of women. Nobody ever asked the women if they were uncomfortable in a room full of men but they were the ones so there. We don't have time for more questions are there other things you're wishing you knew?

SA: I think we got a lot of good stuff.

LK: Oh, you wanted to ask what I loved the most and I did want to say that because I think its really interesting. When I started teaching the first women's history courses in the 1970s, there was an excitement in the room it was really, ya know, we were all doing something new and fresh and by the 90s I had the feeling a lot of people were taking this course because it was Tuesday-Thursday at 11 and they could sleep late and a certain amount of the energy the psychic energy had gone out of it. So when I started thinking about what I was going to teach as my very last lecture class in the spring of 2012, I knew if I just taught the regular women's history class it would just be a downer, I would be contrasting how I felt now, to how it felt when I started teaching; it would be miserable. And then I had the idea because a lot of people who don't call themselves feminists are involved in human rights work, so I called it American Woman in Human Rights, and I took the document that is the universal declaration of human rights everybody had it and I looked at the ingredients of women's America and I asked people to make the connections and every single issue for women in the United States that we put into women's history is a piece of the human rights. Every single one and the only one that is not fair in the declaration is the one about reproduction rights. And that is because the catholic church made sure that it could not be articulated explicitly so the universal declaration said something about the integrity of the family, but every single one so I called American Women in Human Rights and the registration was fabulous and people came from all over the university. It was the most interesting course, there were history majors, there were women's studies majors, there were journalists, engineers there was somebody from nursing, and counseling, and we had a really good time. So here we are. So good.

SA: Well thank you so much, we really appreciate it.

LK: Well thank you, I'll be really interested to see what you come up with and I want to give you a couple of things. I would like to give you, there's another history that nobody knows and this is basically the history of Schaeffer Hall, and I didn't have the chance but if you would go up to the office and ask them to Xerox copies for you, tell them I said so, and then you can just leave them in my mailbox. I think you will find this absolutely fascinating, and if you would like you can certainly borrow these and hang onto them. And if you decide you don't want to give them back because you want to read them you can keep them. And as you think about what you want to do for your own stuff this might be useful. And would having this be useful? Yes it probably would.

SA: Thank you so much.

LK: Good! This was very interesting, I didn't get to talk to you about what you do, I have a French lesson to run to.

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