

Interview with Lee Natti
Folly Cove Designer
October 27, 1995

Lanesville

PM: So, what I was trying to get a sense of was that there was no...I don't remember where I grew up if there was any group like the Folly Cove Designers.

LN: Yeah.

PM: And I keep trying to get at what it is that...what contributed to that group; why that group developed. I think it is very much a part of where it is. Up here.

LN: Well, the reason that I got involved with it was through my job.

PM: Because you came down to take the lessons?

LN: Because I was working at ^{Houghton Mifflin} (home) and came down to study with George. And, it certainly was an eye opener to me because I had never seen anything like life drawing classes, or anything like that. And, certainly the town where I grew up, Reading, was a bedroom community for Boston. They had the local antiquarian society and my mother belonged to a group called the Magazine Club that read and reviewed magazines and passed them around and things like that. It wasn't devoid of intellectual talent in that sense. There certainly wasn't anything like the Folly Cove Designers that I would have seen as a model growing up at that time.

PM: Did your mother work outside the house?

Jinnee

LN: She painted lamp shades during the depression to earn money. It was pretty grim. She had been to art school. She was a much better artist than what was used on the lamp shades. I think she painted three Chinese junks on each one. By the time I got here, GINNY was already teaching Folly Cove Design. So I wasn't here as it began and can't really talk about how it grew from one neighbor to another. It was a group of maybe 10 or 12 people by the time I came in.

PM: What was your life like when you were married and came here; you lived on Woodbury Street at first.

LN: We rented a house and Robert was teaching in Gloucester and I had become pregnant when he was going to graduate school at Harvard and then I lost that baby at eight months. So my life was pretty much trying to pick up my pieces and get myself together when we lived on Woodbury Street. That was when Mary came to visit me. So, I did start writing a book that winter.

PM: You had written two plays before you came down.

Jinnee's

LN: I started writing The Rocky Summer and pretty much living on that street that winter I was either taking Folly Cove Design lessons with ^{me} who lived down the street or working on my book or going down to GINNY'S and playing the piano. Our social life all revolved around GINNY and George's house because Robert used to like to play poker with GINNY and George, and I didn't like having to play poker because we didn't have ten cents. I got to be a very ugly point.

PM: How did you think of yourself then?

LN: I was still divided up between writing and the design coming in and starting to think about building a house, so that was beginning to be a part of our lives. Just enjoying the group that I was getting to meet. The life in the area was that interesting that there was always something to do.

** change throughout to Jinnee*

PM: Did you think that you would make a career writing books?

LN: I always knew that was what I wanted to do but I wasn't sure that it was going to be that possible. Actually, when I wrote *The Rocky Summer* it was almost non-fiction at the beginning and then ~~Gene Crosby~~ who followed me as an editor at Houghton-Mifflin said to turn it into a story. And I thought why have I been trying to write about the quarries ~~read~~ and putting the story in them and that kind of set the whole thing. I wasn't sure of my abilities at that point, to write a long story. But it worked out alright.

PM: I'll be interested to see your reaction when I send you the book; the woman, Kathy Davidson, went to Smith and I think in the 40s, maybe the early 50s and she talks about how although Smith, the rhetoric was that women could do anything really that they wanted to but that there was no suggestion that women would and that the idea that she and her friends had was that they would maybe do something for a little while but then they would get married. There was no preparation for that at all. I wondered if that is how you felt.

LN: Well, I think that if I hadn't already sort of had a career, as an editor, I might have just settled into family and house and what have you, and not gone on to do that. In which case maybe the design aspect would have been more important, being a designer. And I would have spent more time on it. Certainly, in that first ten years what I did was write during the summer when I could hire a babysitter for the mornings and during the winter when I had the kids all the time, that was when you could do your design because it was something you could do, you could be interrupted at and not lose your whole thought process, the way you would if you were trying to write something. I hadn't thought of that before. I had always liked to draw and paint and done things like that. So maybe I would have been much more serious and maybe I would have gone on to really study with George and really try to do more with the drawing. But, by the time we had been married for four or five years, I had two short books, the plays, and one longer story published, and was already writing another longer book. For there on, the balance was more on the writing end of it.

PM: How long were you married before you had, is ^{Susanna} ~~Suzanne~~ the oldest?

LN: She is the oldest surviving one.

PM: How long were you...

LN: Let's see, I was married when I was just 25, (just!)...24 or 25, and we just had our 50th wedding anniversary. That was '45, she was born in '48.

PM: So you had three years where you didn't have the demand of having a child.

LN: Of course, when we were first married, we didn't have a car, so I was with her continually, especially after we build the house up here, all the time, with no way out of here, unless I pushed her in a baby carriage down street and back again.

PM: How did you feel when you were here with her all day long, Robert's at work.

LN: I was not a very even tempered person. In fact, I'm surprised that Suzy is as forgiving. Sometimes I hope some of it won't surface from her first two years. You know, you have to get through it somehow. Because in the summer, Robert was gone from four o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock at night out fishing with the boat that went out from Lane's Cove.

PM: So that was his summer job?

LN: That was his summer job for a couple of years. Until he got to be a playground director for the schools in the

summer. And that didn't have him going off as early in the morning.

PM: But it is still long hours. There is in the transcript of your first interview, a theme that weaves its way out, and that is the shortage of time for you. I marvel at how you are a mother and a wife, a housekeeper, a writer, a designer. And those are just roles, and then there is your social life.

LN: We didn't have a great social life.

PM: But you did things with Ginny.

LN: That was really the center of it. It wasn't really until our kids got into school and I began other mothers and other parents that we began, well, probably my closest friend other than Mary lives in Anasquam. I met her because Robert was in a play in Anasquam with her husband and couldn't get to a rehearsal one night because I was sick with the flu, boy was I sick. But I had the two kids and no help. So, Dave Murray's wife, Grace arrived on the doorstep and said, "I'm taking your kids, I hear your sick." That was how I met Grace. It was in an atmosphere where people were community minded, you just had to sort of find out where they were.

PM: I think you said in one of the interviews, we were talking about Hokenland,

LN: ^{Mahler} Maten and Mattie who? Betty?

PM: And, I said how much was he a part of the group, Folly Cove Designer. You said, well, not a great deal and it was a short time that he was here. He joined because of his interest in the design and in the craft, what he could learn. And not because of an interest in the whole guild and group concept. What I wondered then, was whether the designers became for you, who lived this very, not isolated, but, a job where you were essentially home all the time. Whether or not that became something you welcomed because here's a chance to be with...

LN: Yeah. ~~It was~~ the other part of my social life was certainly being a part of the designers for a long time. I still had my contacts with my publishers in Boston, but I usually saw my editors if they were visiting on the Cape or I went in to Boston to meet them for something. That certainly was not a strong part of my social life. I used to love to go to Boston to meet an editor and have lunch.

PM: I did that once with my editors, "Would you like to have lunch...?" We had lunch on Beacon Hill, oh, it was just so much fun.

LN: So, you have really been thinking about the framework of the book now and what you're going to go for.

PM: And I think, initially when I started, because my field is education, and I was always thinking about tenure and what is going to buttress my tenure decision, that, and I'm glad I started looking at that, how do people teach one another. Look at this interesting learning community and so on. Now, that I really have the freedom to do what I want, I think that the education is part of it. Adult education is a part of it. But that the really, the more interesting part of the story is the context in which this group appeared. And one of the things that I have been thinking about, was the designs themselves, is how could I ever organize a book like this. And I think of maybe like a runner, a long runner, with a block here, a block here, the way you all did it. There is the story of the Finns and there is the story of Granite which maybe both together, and there is the story of Rockport and the influence. That has to have influenced this area in many ways. So there is Rockport, and maybe Virginia Lee Burton, that kind of chapter, that I would start each chapter with a Folly Cove print that I think could exemplify that. When you put this whole thing together you have this story of this particular place at this particular time in this particular group. The explanation of what I think is this very special group, how it grew.

LN: One of the interesting things is that when it began it was for people to develop their own interests and do things

Domesticity

Irma
for their own home. I think it was Josh Tolford and ~~Arena~~ joined the group, they had a shop in Rockport, then the opportunity arose for people who were doing design to earn some money. That had not been the primary purpose of the group to begin with. If Josh and ~~Arena~~ hadn't had access to a shop or hadn't had a shop, that avenue maybe might not have taken off when it did. I hadn't thought of that before.

PM: That it might just have remained an individual thing or Ginny might have given courses for people who were interested in doing things for their home.

PM: That brings up another interesting thing that I had forgotten, that the purpose was to make things for one's home. I guess that we keep coming back to the home. Most of you worked at home. You worked at home, Ginny worked at home, Mary worked at home. I keep thinking that this period of the mid 40s-50s, and I think here, even the 60s, is a special time in the life of American women. And the 1910s, from 1890-1910, and 1910-1920, maybe the 30s, that this is kind of a watershed kind of period for women and that is why I am so interested in what you're...

Freda
LN: Certainly until Betty ~~Ferdand~~ came along. And I remember being highly intent, Betty ~~Ferdand~~ went to Smith and she said that! Because it was a shocker. You went along in this group, expecting to be married and have children, and this, that, and the other. Then, somebody comes along and says, you should have a career, you should be an individual. You should do this. Even though I had done that as a writer, writing was one of the few things that was open to women as a career. Writing and editing. None of the men wanted to have anything to do with the children's books until it became the golden egg in the 70s. It was mostly all women who were all editors in New York for the juvenile books.

PM: Do you think that if you and Robert had been married five years ago, and you had the same experience in Boston with Houghton and then moved here, do you think that you would have said to Robert, ok, well, now were here, but I'm taking the train to Boston everyday and I'm going to have a career as an editor.

Alan
LN: I think it would be very different now because you could have three days at home with your computers and all. I was thinking of Suzy who does all her illustration work at home. ~~Allen~~ is on sabbatical and when they added on to their house, she got a wonderful studio upstairs and his study upstairs is right across the hall. On the sabbatical, he has to get his own phone line because if he is using the modem and she forgets and she picks up the phone, there are these anguished cries from the other room. Some transmission has been shot because she forgot. Anyway, he is getting his own phone. You can do so much more out of your home.

PM: Would you have liked to been able to spend more time on your writing?

LN: I think probably not, because I did 27 books in that amount of time and I enjoyed having the design as a contrast. I also, when I would get out of the cellar and I would get away from the printing, I liked to go to the beach in the summer.

PM: There is, it's interesting, in the first interview, which was '91, it's almost four years to the day, that we first talked. There is certainly a note of impatience and maybe resentments, I was down in the cellar. All those people were upstairs, running around, going to the beach.

LN: At that point the printing had just gotten to be too much physically to be happy with it. I think that is why I had a note of resentment, I'm sure.

PM: But why did you then continue?

LN: Because financially it helped, really, it did.

PM: I just thought that maybe you felt an obligation to this group..

- LN: Well, it was that too, we had gotten down to such a small number of people at the end that there was, either we closed down the whole thing for everybody at once or you just kept on with it.
- PM: But before that, let's say in the late 40s and early 50s, did you then feel a burden?
- LN: No, because it wasn't until I had a lot of different designs to cope with. I didn't make ten cents in the first eight years that I belonged to it because I was paying for my material. It was like having a backlog of books which doesn't exist anymore because publishers don't keep them in print. Once you have a body of work, then you don't have to sweat quite so hard but you have to...it's fulfillment in a way, if you have a certain number of designs out there and people expect that they can get the stock in it. And you're fulfilling their expectations. And that was what was hard for Ginny because she finally had to get ~~no~~ ^{ENO} to print for her.
- PM: And I was thinking, when you talked about the ~~apple seed~~ ^{ENO} in the catalog and that was a burden for you, an enormous amount of orders, and that clearly had to be... You said in the first interview, said something about you writing books, you said, well, I wouldn't have wanted to work outside of the house, or if I hadn't had my books I would have worked outside of the house and I didn't want that.
- LN: I would have hated to go to Boston. I don't see how ~~no~~ ^{ENO} did it all those years, getting on the train at some ghastly hour and getting home late at night. That would never have been the kind of thing that I could have coped with, a steady job in Boston.
- PM: Because of the wear and tear, or philosophically?
- LN: I just think it would have been very boring to be in a routine like that. And also, at the beckoned ~~ed~~ ^{ENO} call of other people, I'm not pretty cooperative. I like to make my own time, I guess.
- PM: Did Mary feel the same way that you did about her art. She did not have anything paid the way your books and your...
- LN: I think she would have like to have done pastel portraits of children and I think she would have liked to have sold more of her paintings.
- PM: Did she sell??
- LN: She sold I think one or two or three or four. And of course she gave up trying to do the pastels of kids early on because she just couldn't concentrate on it with her problems with her kids. I think she really did get a kick out of it when somebody did buy a monotype or something. And that didn't happen until say the last ten years of her life.
- PM: Is that because she...
- LN: She never had enough time to develop a show or for people to see, a contrasting number of her works, or for her name to be around, or to get things into galleries.
- PM: Is that because her family demanded all of her time?
- LN: Yes. I think that sometimes she got a little impatient with the designer aspect of her life because she would have really enjoyed the painting a lot more than that. But she never let it show. Maybe Ethel could give you more perspective on that in the more recent years.
- PM: When I think of the rest of the designers, I try to think of Peggy. Is Peggy still alive.

- LN: Peggy is in a nursing home, Seacoast, behind the Addison-Gilbert Hospital, the Seacoast. Nursing and retirement home. But, I haven't seen her for a year, anyway. The last time I saw her she was at an interval where she was at home.
- PM: At home?
- LN: Well, this was two years ago. Down on Leonard Street. And when I first came in she said, "Now how is Robert?" And I told her. We talked about varying things and you could see a little not quite so much eye contact as there used to be. But then again she said as I got up to leave, now you haven't told me how Robert is. So, she was with you in the sentence, but not in the paragraph. I have no idea what things are like now.
- PM: I was also thinking about her, as a single person, here's another pattern of a woman, who is a single woman, what does she think as...she was trained in interior design.
- LN: That was Dorothy. Did Peggy do it too?
- PM: Yes. She went to the same school.
- LN: You know more than I do at this point.
- PM: She went to the same school in Boston but then had that *car accident* and I think that that put an end to that. Then she came up here to recover from the accident, and then actually went back to Boston and then when her mother died, came back up here. I was just trying to figure out how, here's another example of a woman who is a lot older than you are and that makes the difference. I think she is ninety.
- LN: Gosh, I think she is fifteen years older than I am. Yeah, that would bring her up to 89 or 90.
- PM: Here is this very bright, strong woman. And what does she think of her life in this area clearly gifted.
- LN: She was very much a part of the Anasquam community. She did a lot with the Anasquam International Company which put on melodramas, and Robert acted in them. Peggy would do these wonderful silk screened programs, and costumes and all kinds of things, so she was very much a part of that,
- PM: What was it called?
- LN: The Anasquam International Company. When you're here this summer I'll drag some of the stuff out and show it to you.
- PM: So that was the name?
- LN: Well, it was just the name of the drama group. They put on a *melodrama* in the village hall for probably nine or ten years. Robert was a part of it for only four or five. I remember Ginny drew a thing like a Hershfield drawing, that he did for plays. Well, Ginny used to do that kind of stuff for the Transcript, the Boston Transcript. So she drew one of the Gloucester Story. I'll have to find that for you this summer. I've got it somewhere. With all the different characters. That was over the review in the paper Paul Kenyon wrote the review about it. It was great.
- PM: How is Weesy?
- LN: She's hanging in there. She's still at home. She has to move around with a walker. You look at her and she is not as focused and as bright as she was. Some days are better than others.

PM: She's still in her house?

LN: She's still in her house.

PM: Do you think that the life that you led here is very different from your mothers ^{in Maryland.}

?? in Reading.

LN: Oh heaven's yes. Absolutely. My mother would have been horrified at living way up in the woods. And I must say it took me a while to get used to it. She always did some kind of work. We had to during the Depression. She worked in the library. My father was a business manager for boys camp so she used to do a lot of the boys camp office work during the winter. She was a very organized person who always wanted something to do. She was really frightened for me when we moved way up here. My grandmother thought it was great.

PM: Your grandmother?

LN: My grandmother thought it was marvelous.

PM: Where did she grow up?

LN: She grew up in Chelsea back when it was a posh place to live.

PM: Why do you think she thought it was great?

LN: She was much more adventurous than my mother. She adored Robert. She had Finlandia played at her Christian Scientist memorial service. She was the one who gave us the two electric light poles to connect us to civilization.

PM: Really? Oh, I love that. Was it, you said that it took you a while to get used to. Was it very rural?

LN: Well, it was frightening for me because we had a bunch of men who were called the owl hoots who used to work in the quarries but it had deteriorated to become ^{lots} rather drunken louse, who used to walk through this area a lot. I was very frightened by one of them at one time when we were first living here. For the first year that we were living here, I think I kept the doors locked all the time. I just wasn't used to that kind of existence and Robert was away so much of the time.

PM: What was it like? Is it that the town looked pretty much like it looks today?

LN: Lanesville?

PM: Yeah.

LN: Yes.

PM: So, it hasn't grown a lot?

LN: It hasn't grown a lot. It's changed from the older people who used to inhabit the houses who had seen there large families of children go away to work in other places and now it's more people who have bought those houses who might have been buying them at one point for reasons of being here in the summer. But now, it's to a large extent people who use them as bedroom houses working out in Boston.

PM: So, the nature of the community has changed.

LN: We go down street now, and there are very few of us in our generation now, around.

PM: Will you speak a little bit more about how the nature of the community has changed?

LN: When I came down and we began living in Lanesville, and Robert and I were involved in the schools because he was teaching and I because at that point had small children. There were not very many people who had been off the Cape and been away to college. In fact, we often would say that people went over the bridge or they never had been over the bridge. Route 128 made a large difference in that with the accessibility to Cape Ann to Boston. That was really what began changing things more than anything else. Lanesville when I came was still pretty much Finnish culture. And that gradually changed.

PM: At one point, you mentioned Finnish and Irish. Did Irish supersede the Finns?

LN: They were at the same time.

PM: The Finns were really the...

LN: Well, Lanesville was the strong Finnish center and probably by the time I moved here and the old Finnish speaking Finns of Robert's generation started dying off, then it sort of didn't renew as far as more Finnish people moving here.

PM: When you would go downtown, was it common to hear Finnish spoken?

LN: Among Robert's parents generation it was common, and the church services were in Finnish. You'd get in a bus in Gloucester and you would hear Portuguese, Italian, Finnish, English, I don't ever hearing French and Russian on the bus, but there were French and Russian people around.

PM: Where did you shop? (for groceries)

LN: In those days, there were three stores in Lanesville, Mom and Pop stores, and they delivered.

PM: Ok, this helps. When did you get a car?

LN: The time Suzy was born, we had to borrow a car for me to go to the hospital. I think it was about the time, I remember driving when Peter was born. So somewhere between Suzy and Peter. Somewhere between '49 and...

PM: How did Robert get to work?

LN: He walked down and took the bus. Because he worked in the Gloucester schools. They had much more frequent bus service then than they do now. If I had to go to the dentist or the doctor in Gloucester, I'd take the bus.

PM: See that's, when you think about women's lives, but really any life. Rabid feminists say, how could they have stayed at home. And then you think, I had to wait and take the public bus to school or I'd walk to town. It is something as simple as that that helps you try and understand.

LN: The train service was much more frequent than that so that when I went to Boston I would take the bus to Gloucester and then take the train.

PM: When you took the kids to the doctor was that in Gloucester? Was that always the big city?

- LN: But I had to wait until Robert could do it after school. I'm paying for it now for not having driven in 30 years. I drive with great timidity and horror. I've never become comfortable with driving and now I'm paying for it.
- PM: Because you never had a car of your own?
- LN: Yeah, I didn't have a car for 30 years. We couldn't afford a second car. I think the only time we had two cars was when the kids were in high school.
- PM: Right. How ironic.
- LN: I know that Ginny hated to drive. She only would drive when she absolutely had to.
- PM: Do you know why that was?
- LN: I don't know. Except one of the few times that I drove with her is when she had to go to give a talk somewhere and she hated to do that so maybe that was sort of tied in to her reaction to hating to drive because she really didn't want to have to go and do what she had to do at that time. She didn't drive very much.
- PM: Think about where she grew up. Spending a fair amount of time in Boston when she would have been learning to drive. You didn't have to drive then.
- LN: I don't even remember what kind of a car they had then. It seems to be a little mental slippage going on here.
- PM: Well, we're trying to remember events that happened 50 years ago. What type of car. I can't even remember 50 years ago. Ginny hated to give talks?
- LN: She did not enjoy it. She didn't mind as much if it was to kids. But I remember having to go with her when she was asked to speak at either some college club or a women's group and they were meeting over at one of the Hammond estates over in the harbor where there was a big living room. She was so late picking me up and we were so late getting there that it was extremely embarrassing. I think we were three quarters of an hour late. It was just because she could not get herself into the car and go off and make. And I did the talking. I read something about her and did the discussion and then she answered questions and did a little drawing. She did not want to talk about herself. She was not comfortable in that type of situation.
- PM: Is it not wanting to talk about herself or not wanting to talk?
- LN: I can't sort that out at this remote time. I remember that she actually got an honorarium for doing it. They gave her an envelope with a check and I think I got a chrysanthemum having done all this preparation and talking about Ginny and carrying the ball. I was there as the ex-editor, you see.
- PM: Going back just for a second, to Lanesville, in the old days, as we say, was there, and Grace came over, and picked up your kids because you were sick,

[end of tape]

- LN: ...Anasquam, then Lanesville was the ^{source} stores of the domestic help for Anasquam, and some of Robert's sisters would go and work in those houses. There was a great looking down upon between the communities. Bayview was kind of in between. When we tried, before Suzy was in the first grade, I was on a committee that was trying to get a regional school build to replace the four old school buildings, I think I talked about this before, that were falling apart. It wasn't until Suzy graduated from high school that that school was build.

PM: That's right. That's an example of

LN: Of how things have changed.

PM: But then, the Folly Cove Designers transcends that because you have people from society.

LN: ~~Something that is an art calls out to people of any background who are concerned with art and who want a way to express themselves.~~ You can hop out of your little niche and do something else.

PM: In the '40s and '50s, how did people get together? There was the International Company..

LN: The Anasquam International Company. That was just summers.

PM: That was just summers? Oh, ok. What other groups were there?

LN: Well, Robert used to go bowling with the other school teachers. Robert and I early on, Robert was really interested in singing and he really had a wonderful voice, and I discovered that I did like to sing, which was something I had never pursued before, although I tried to play the piano, so we joined the Rockport Community Chorus, and that was a joy doing that.

PM: When was that?

LN: Oh, he was in it before I was and it wasn't until it was easier for me to get babysitters. I guess it was when my mother moved in here.

PM: I didn't know that your mother moved here.

LN: My mother moved here after my father and grandmother died and build a little house down next to the cemetery. She was there from '56 until she died about '64. Anyway, that helped us a lot with babysitting.

PM: Did she come up here to babysit or did?

LN: We would go and get her and when the kids were older they would go down if it was like I was going to Community Chorus and we'd be home by nine, we'd just stop and pick them up and bring them home. I loved that and we really had some great chorus conductors.

PM: And you performed...

LN: Well, let's see, we did three concerts a year: Christmas, Easter, and usually a popular summer time concert. Robert took singing lessons from a wonderful singing teacher in Rockport, Isabel Thorpe, a wonderful concert singer.

PM: Why did he do that?

LN: Mrs. Thorpe was singing in the chorus and she wanted to teach Robert who was then 40. And she kept saying, "If I had only had him when he was 30." He used to drive the accompanist crazy when he'd have a solo like in "Get Me To The Church on Time" in a summer concert, I just remember the accompanist throwing up his hands because Robert had his own tack timewise. But he really had wonderful tone.

PM: Was there a lot of music here then?

- LN: I think that the Cape Ann Symphony started 25 years ago, and Grace Murray's husband, David Murray's father, John Murray had played in the Boston Symphony, was a violinist. He played there for years. So Ginny and George always had Christmas Eve music. There was a strong commitment to music. I loved being part of a group singing because it was a wonderful physical activity. Singing is marvelous for you, all that breathing. You didn't have to talk to people, you could be in the midst of people. And you could you be doing something that really meant something to you.
- PM: When you write, do you have to be secluded, be isolated, be cut off?
- LN: Yes, I'm pretty easily distracted.
- PM: But Lee, I mean here now, you've got your Community Chorus, and just keep adding all these things.
- LN: But when you're in your 20s and 30s you have loads of energy. I look at Suzy now in her life and I don't know how she does it. I don't. And yet, she's at the age where you have the energy and you can put it out.
- PM: I guess I'm reflecting my age too. I can barely get to work and get home and do the dishes and go to bed. What about village things like baked bean suppers or would a baked bean supper be a church affair and therefore draw only...?
- LN: Well, I didn't get involved with the Finnish church. It wasn't a bunch of women that I had a bunch of women that I had anything in common with. I just didn't get involved. That kind of social life I didn't have anything to do with. That was about it as far as the village life. There wasn't any library for the center like there was in Anasquam where every Monday afternoon they had library teas.
- PM: So there was no library in Lanesville? But there was one in Anasquam.
- LN: Yes. It was a part of the village square.
- PM: Did you use that library?
- LN: No. Actually I was asked to join a sewing circle. Peggy Norton belonged to the sewing circle which was an Anasquam activity.
- PM: Was it a real sewing circle?
- LN: Yeah. They used to make stuff for the church fair or the village fair or what have you. Gert Griffin was very active in that. Gert still marches on. She's incredible.
- PM: Give her my love when you see her.
- LN: I usually bump into her in the grocery store. If you want more Anasquam background, she is still sharp as a tack and with us. That was the big activity. And at that point I didn't have a car, I couldn't get to Anasquam for meetings, and I just didn't want to put my time into that. I was not a joiner.
- PM: Do you think that when your children look back at their childhood that they would, if I asked them, if they would perceive your role in Folly Cove Designers as an important part of your life or as...
- LN: Suzy might. I don't think Peter was as clued into that. Actually Suzy would because she studied with George from the time she was ten to fifteen.

PM: I didn't know that.

LN: George gave her a scholarship and Robert and I had a great debate because it was life drawing. There were men posing as to whether this ten-year old should be allowed to go down with all the adults and take life drawing from George. He said that she had talent and he didn't want to undo when she is older what somebody else has done. Send her. So we were those awful people up there in the woods who sent their ten-year old daughter to nude life drawing classes. At the same time, the girls in her age group were making pot holders and brownies. She was drawing. I know that the basis for the kind of drawing that she does in her illustrations came from George and Ginny both.

PM: Did she take a design course with Ginny?

LN: No. She was influenced by Ginny. By Ginny's work and by Ginny. Suzy was with George from the time she was ten until she was fifteen and then when she was fifteen she started working summers at the Folly Cove Designers selling. Dorothy told her what to do.

PM: Not doing prints.

LN: Well, no, just on the selling end of it and in the shop. You might this next summer and you're here, you might talk to her and get her take on things. That would be interesting too.

PM: And how did she react at ten years old? Was it very matter of fact.

LN: I think it was very matter of fact. And she said that when all the people took their break, and took their cigarettes, someone would give her some gum. She'd be late with her bicycle getting there and George would give her the eye. He treated her just like he did with everybody else.

PM: Did she take her bike from here all the way to his studio?

LN: There wasn't as much traffic then so it was safer to bike.

PM: She stopped when she was fifteen. Why did she stop when she was fifteen?

LN: Because she was conscious of needing the money that she was able to get at the Folly Cove Designers.

PM: She did this in the summers.

LN: In the summers. This was George's summer drawing course. By the time she was fifteen she was a little more conscious of the social consequences of studying nude drawing. I don't know.

PM: Was she taking studio art in high school?

LN: No I don't think so. When she went to Smith she kind of lost her faith in her drawing and her ability. When she went to Smith she majored in art history rather than going for studio art. She did take some studio art.

PM: Was it when she went to Smith that underlined, or was it before Smith that she lost her faith in her drawing.

LN: I think she didn't do any art in high school. So she wasn't. She kept drawing all the time but I'm sure she didn't take art courses in high school. Maybe she took Art 101 or Studio 101 when she was a freshman at Smith but she did major in art history because she really felt inadequate to do the studio art plus the course she wanted to take was taught by Leonard Baskin. His reputation was that he would latch on to three or twenty pupils and spend his time with three pupils and the rest could go fry. When she did take graphics, she went over to UMass and took a course

at UMass.

PM: Interesting.

LN: That was just the beginning of the five college exchange. It was a little more glamorous at that time to go over to UMass to take graphics.

PM: When she graduated from Smith?

LN: When she graduated from Smith she went to MIT as a technical typist and hated it after two years.

PM: Like her mom at the PBX board.

LN: Yeah. At that point, Peter's accident was in '73 and at that point, she had about decided that technical typing was not for her. She'd taken a year at ^{Montserrat} M_____ doing art and realizing art that this was what she really loved. I think partly she was afraid of going into publishing because you don't always want to go into the same field that your parents were in. But then she realized she really did want to illustrate. So her m_____ she went to Rhode Island School of Design for two years and didn't get another degree because she didn't need it.

PM: For two years?

LN: For two years. And took illustration there.

PM: And then what?

LN: And then, it was a time when you still started out doing color separations which was pretty wicked. And Rhode Island School of Design wouldn't teach anything as practical as that. She went to the Cambridge Center for Adult Education to learn color separation and began schlepping her portfolio around Boston and New York, leaving her stuff on file and eventually got a job with Addison-Wesley doing a book.

PM: Illustrating?

LN: Illustrating.

PM: Was it a children's book?

LN: Yes.

PM: Who is she with now?

LN: She does stuff for Viking and ^{Dial} ~~Dial~~ and Candlewick and she has done stuff for [?] ~~Dream-Willow~~. She has really worked with excellent people in New York.

PM: Is that a full-time job for her now?

LN: Yes. The only bad part about that is she's gotten into books that have turned into series so it's rather circumscribed what she is capable of doing because the darn authors keep writing about these same characters. It's bread and butter, but she would love to have a great big picture book to do.

PM: There is a classics professor who has a daughter, Rachel who is seven or eight, very precocious, and reads all the time. She was in the office the other day and she had a little paperback book with her and I said what's that? And

she said The Babysitter's Club.

LN: The Babysitter's Club.

PM: I said that I had heard about that. It's a whole series. I said to her mother, it's kind of like our old Nancy Drew series and her mother said no, there is something like 96 books to the series.

LN: Because this one woman who started them gives them the plots to other writers now.

PM: Are they published under her name?

LN: I think they are under her name.

PM: I think it's just so different.

LN: And there is a movie.

PM: Her mother said for her to tell me about what you get in the mail, you get the Babysitters Magazine, the Babysitter's t-shirt, Babysitter's decal....

LN: Marketing.

PM: I just remember after the war, my parents had no money and I would go longing looking at a Nancy Drew for months, probably years and then something would happen and I would get to buy one Nancy Drew. That was it. There wasn't any t-shirt. I just think how much there is to distract kids these days. Showing my age I guess. That there wasn't that much, even when Suzy was growing up, there wasn't that much to distract.

PM: Just a couple more questions. What were you reading in those days? For yourself. Magazines?

LN: I don't think we could afford to subscribe to ^{crasties} magazines. I don't ever remember...I loved to get the Saturday Review of literature because of the type of ~~cross~~ sticks, you know, and book reviews. My mother usually gave that to me as a Christmas present. It was the Gloucester Library that wasn't too convenient to get to. I think I borrowed mystery stories from Ginny. That's what I remember more than anything. Ginny used to subscribe to some detective book club that put out three deckers every couple of months. I would just borrow those and read them. Plus you didn't have an awful lot of time for reading. If I'm writing, I don't like to read, to read something that demands thought.

PM: I don't think you can. I can't.

LN: I pretty much just read trash. I still do.

PM: So do I. One of the things that I do before, actually I do it before any serious piece is ^{to re-read a} selected Jane Austin novel. So I can hear those clean, balanced, wonderful rhythms. I don't even care about the story. I just want to get away.

LN: That is another group that I belonged to. I belonged to it for 30 years. And that was a book club.

PM: You didn't tell me that. What was it called?

LN: There were some people in Rockport, and there were some people around Anasquam. Weezy Kenyon belonged. It wasn't necessarily a Folly Cove Designer group. In fact, we kind of tried...Dorothy and Peggy belonged. We would meet once a month in the winter and pick an author or a book and everyone would read that

author or that book and then...we had one fearless leader who would sort of look up biographical stuff.

PM: Was it just women?

LN: Yes.

PM: How many?

LN: We never could have more than fifteen or sixteen because of our living rooms. Basically we have sixteen now and five of them go to Arizona now during the winter so we're down to ten or twelve.

PM: What's the name of it?

LN: The book club.

PM: What do you read now?

LN: Next month I'm doing Edith P _____ and Ellis Peters because it fascinates me that someone who is so interested and so good at historical research and has done so many books under so many names could divide yourself and do so many pieces of writing and do them so well. Who did we read last time? Oh, it was Stone Diaries.

PM: How was that?

LN: I haven't read it. I didn't have time cause I was already. We'd do Secret Unsaid or we'd do G _____ or we'd do John/Ch _____. What we are all guilty of every now and then is saying, we've done that one. And they have done more writing since then. That was probably all of my serious adult reading was tied in to the book club reading.

PM: That's a lot of reading in 30 years.

LN: Mary was in that group. The group over the years has changed a great deal. We sat down last spring and made a list of different people who had been in it over the years and I think it was something like 30 or 35 people. Some of whom are still in town but are no longer ^{whinnying} ~~whinnying~~ with us.

PM: I guess I've covered most of the things.