

Interviewee: Harrison Burwell. (Got divorced. Took back her maiden name and added her mother's maiden name recently.)

Interviewer: Amy Rippe

*[Interviewee consents] Could you explain how you decided to change your name? I changed my name because I was going through a divorce, a legal divorce, and it's an option when you go a change like that as to how you want to be referred to going forward and it was an opportunity I took to restore my maiden name.*

*Ok, but you are kind of a unique case because not only did you go back to your maiden name, but you took your mother's maiden name. I did do that--mostly because when I was named at birth my mother intentionally only gave me a first and last name. She kept the middle name blank, which most people do have a middle name, and her hope was that someday I would hyphenate my name, my surname if I got married and hyphenate it to my new partner. She did? I didn't know that? That was her thinking, isn't that weird?*

*So when you got married why did you just take on your husband's name instead of taking on... I did legally use Burwell as my middle name at that time, but I did not hyphenate. I chose to be Rippe without hyphenating the Burwell and that was mostly because of a weak communication I was having at the time I was having with my father and I wasn't having a connection.*

*Did you do that through a legal process? I didn't even know you had Burwell as your middle name. Yeah I did--on my passport. Because when you're married you have the choice of how your name is going to be legally and at that time I used Burwell.*

*Ok. So, did you have any role models for changing your name to [Dana] Harrison Burwell? Actually no...No because none of my friends that I know are using both of their parents' names, but I did know girls that were getting married and using their paternal names and hyphenating it with their married name. I did know several of those girls.*

*When you were originally married why do you think you chose to drop your maiden name? Again, mostly because at that time i didn't have a strong relationship with my father, I did with my mother but not my father. So that name wasn't a connection.*

*Were there positive reasons behind it? Yeah, well the other reason was that I wasn't really on a career path-- if I had a career established I'm sure I would have kept my maiden name and hyphenated it. I think that was the trend at the time, for career girls, for career women...I didn't mean to say girls... Professionals. Ok. Today more and more women are keeping their names. Did you regret not having your maiden name until now? Or it hasn't really impacted you that much? With my lifestyle it didn't really impact me that much. No it didn't, but it was nice and nostalgic to bring it back.*

*Could you explain a little bit about, in the interview we did before, about your mother's side of the family and the Harrison side--and those women that you knew? My mother's mother was, her maiden name was Nelson and she married a Harrison, but all the Nelson sisters did...as you had mentioned my family was kind of a matriarchal family at that time. It was particularly strong on that side. There were three sisters on that side of the Nelson family. Anyway, my grandmother married John Harrison became my mother's family name. I was very close to those grandparents so I named my son, his namesake is Brad Harrison [Rippe]...I did the name Harrison in his name.*

[Talks about naming practices she read...] I learned that sometimes its common for women to pass down their female names to their daughters and I did not do that with you guys and you know, that instead I guess I did it with Brad, but I probably would have done it with you.

*Cool, ok. Even though you didn't decide when you were younger that you wanted to keep your name were there...well you also mentioned that friends weren't doing it either unless they were working professionally in some jobs, but I think you in particular had an interesting friend...Mrs. Koneck. Dr. Koneck. Dr. Koneck who was very involved. Could you say a little bit about her. She was a writer and then her profession was English, she was the dean of English studies at Wichita State University, but I think it was much more common for women in journalism and writers to keep their maiden names for generations. So that was her maiden name? Was Carol Woolf. Ok, so she was called Dr. Carol Woolf? She called herself at her school I think she was Dr. Koneck, but anything on paper was Carol Woolf.*

*Since you changed your name back [to your maiden name] have you gotten positive feedback from people, friends, family? Yeah! I have from lots of friends, lots of women and think it's nice that I've taken my name back. And, do you think the choice has kept your history from being erased [laughs]? Not yet. Sorry I'm tired. It's ok. The first interview was better. I'm just going to get that on record. Is there anything else that you can think of that we talked about that would be interesting for this project? No...but I think I would pass down to my girls to definitely consider maintaining some family name in your name when you move on instead of dropping it entirely. I think it's important. And I dont' know, it doesn't have to be Rippe--it can be any family name that you want to take on. But, yeah it's nice.*

*I'm trying to think, I'm interested in understanding what models of women were for you when you were at the stage of changing your name the first time and the second time. My models, everybody before me really, almost everybody before me, generations before me did not take on, did not retain their maiden names. It was with my generation I feel like it started happening much more so I would say...*

*So women that you looked up to in your community were dropping their names and taking on their husband's names? You were seeing both. More women were still taking their husband's names. I'd say one in three, one in four were hyphenating their name so it was still more common.*

*Would you say Wichita, Kansas was pretty conservative when you were growing up? Yeah, but at that time I was already in New York so I'm comparing myself to New York, but several of my friends from Kansas were in New York. That's right. Ok. [Says something she read about history of surnames] Ok. That's pretty good for right now. Thank you.*