

Transcript -- Beverly I. Dubrin Nanes '63

Narrator: Beverly I. Dubrin Nanes
Interviewer: Elizabeth Bernstein
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Track 1

Elizabeth Bernstein: This is Elizabeth Bernstein. It's January 11th, 1986, and I'm in Walnut Creek, California interviewing Beverly Dubrin, class of 1963?

Beverly I. Dubrin Nanes: Yes.

EB: Fifty-three. She has already signed the release and filled out the required forms. So, this is going to be divided into three parts.

(break in audio)

EB: We're going to start with pre-Brown, biography type things. We'll start with the biographical information, and then once you got to Brown information, and then some after Brown history.

BD: Okay.

EB: Okay.

(break in audio)

EB: [00:01:04] Okay, starting with your family background, did you have brothers and sisters? Where did you come from?

BD: Okay, I came from Boston, and I have one sister who is four years younger than I am. That's it for family.

EB: What did your parents do?

BD: My father worked for Shell Oil Company. He was I guess retail manager for the Northeast. And my mother was a housewife. I think she worked until I was born, which was quite a while before that. But she was a legal secretary when they first got married.

EB: Did she go to school? Did she have any college?

BD: No. No, neither of my parents went to college.

EB: Did your sister?

BD: My sister went to a couple of junior colleges, but she did not go to a four-year school.

EB: So (inaudible).

BD: Yeah, well, I went first. [00:01:59] So yeah, it was -- I think my parents came from a time that school, in some cases, wasn't an option. My mother wasn't even born in this country. She was born in Russia and came over when she was really little. And my father was born here, but was first generation. So I think there was a value of education, but maybe that was a luxury at that time.

EB: So they encouraged you to go to school, even though they didn't?

BD: Oh yeah, I always thought I would.

EB: That's good. Okay, and what about Brown? Why did you choose to go to Brown?

BD: At that time, high schools were less broad-based, and I had it in my mind that I wanted to -- I had a couple of things in my mind. I wanted to major in math. That was my thinking when I was in high school. [00:03:00] And I also wanted to go to a co-ed school. And I didn't want to stay at home. And I went to high school in Wellesley, and one of the options could have been to go to Wellesley College. However, if I had gone, my parents would have encouraged me to take a scholarship, and scholarship meant you had to stay at home.

EB: Oh, really?

BD: Yeah, so I didn't even apply. But what I did do was go to a variety of -- I don't know what they're called -- college days. People came to the high school, and various alumni groups did have teas. I remember I was very interested in Vassar, even though it was women's school at that time. And my parents discouraged me from that. I think they felt there might be too much social pressure there.

So we went around to schools, and we didn't go out of New England, as I recall. Well, I think I applied to Cornell. But pretty much, we stayed within New England [00:04:00], and I applied to a variety of schools, Tufts and Brandeis, and Brown. I think I applied to Colby College in Maine, and University of Massachusetts, and got into Brown. That was --

EB: Was it your first choice?

BD: It became my -- I think it was. I mean, I was a little bit up in the air. And I remember when we went for my interview, my father got into some sort of an argument with somebody in the admissions office.

EB: How scary.

BD: Yeah. I said, "Daddy, we've blown it. We've absolutely blown it." [Laughter] It was kind of like when I got accepted, it was partly, you know, they took me in spite of him. Or maybe it was good. And I was very impressed. I think I had never seen Brown campus, even though --

somehow, living in the East, distances become very big. And so, 40 miles from Boston to Rhode Island was a big deal [00:05:00], and Rhode Island wasn't anyplace we just went driving around to. And I was very impressed with the Brown campus. I was impressed with the student who took us around. I mean, I was really quite excited about Brown, so there were a lot of factors. But I didn't do early administration. I don't even know if it was an option or anything. But that was definitely the right place to go.

EB: You said your dad, or your parents, didn't want you to go to Vassar because of social pressure. Was that something specific to Vassar, or because it was all women?

BD: Now, it wasn't the all-female. I think they had an image of Vassar as being a school with wealthier students and perhaps more status and social implications. I think they might have felt they couldn't have supported me through that, although we had enough money to send me to school so [00:06:00] I wasn't on scholarship. So, I'm not sure what all the factors were, but they pretty much discouraged it, even though I was fairly impressed with the women that I met from Vassar.

EB: Okay, family expectations. Did they expect you to get a job? You said you were interested in math. Did they expect you to go into that field (inaudible)?

BD: I'm not sure. I think my mother expected me to get married, and my father never said.

EB: What did you expect?

BD: And I didn't, either. And I didn't expect to get married. I remember when I met my roommate, and we started talking about our dates. And she'd come home and she'd say, "You know, he was very nice, but what kind of a husband would he make?" And I remember looking at her and saying, [00:07:00] "Why is she thinking about a husband? Why can't she just go out on a date?" So she had different expectations than I did at that time, and this was 1959.

I really didn't know. I can truly say I had no ambitions. I knew I was going to go to school. That was just part of what I was going to do. Certainly when I started Brown, I had no

clear idea of what I wanted to do or become. And I didn't major in Math. It turns out, I majored in economics. But I think that was part of my own awakening to other things. I didn't know about economics when I was in high school.

EB: Why did you want to major in math?

BD: Because I guess I was good in math, and I liked mathematical things. Summers, I used to work for Shell Oil Company in my father's office, so I had some idea of office, working for a big company. And [00:08:00] of course, having a father who worked for a big company gave me that orientation. I definitely didn't have any ideas about working for myself, but that came a long time afterward, too.

EB: Yeah, it seems strange to graduate and (inaudible) work for yourself.

BD: Yeah, so I really didn't know what. And actually, by the time I got through Pembroke, I was thinking about graduate school, which I didn't do, or I did slightly, but not as a full-time thing. So I guess I didn't really want to be anything [laughter].

EB: Ambitious.

BD: Yeah, I wanted to graduate.

EB: When you got there freshman year, what was your first impression? Did it live up to what you were expecting?

BD: Yeah, it was wonderful. Yeah, it was really wonderful. I'd never been away from home, except for maybe a couple of weeks at a camp or something like that. And it really was wonderful. I just loved everything [00:09:00].

EB: You loved your roommate?

BD: I loved my roommate. Yeah, we're still good friends. We roomed together for three years, and our senior year, I said I wanted a single, and she just about broke down into tears. And so, we lived next door to each other. So we stayed friends, so that was very important.

EB: That's lucky.

BD: Yeah, it was really very nice. And I still -- a lot of those people from -- we lived in houses when we were freshmen, and several of those people from that house are still friends. So I think that concept of living with, I don't know what it was, maybe 20 people --

EB: Do you remember where you lived, what house?

BD: Mary Woolley.

EB: Oh, I lived in [Emma?] Woolley.

BD: Oh, really?

EB: It wasn't a house anymore, right.

BD: Right, it's a big dorm. But I think Brown [00:10:00] just was a good school for me. The size was probably right, being smaller. I think I probably would have gotten lost in a big school. It was just, it was very good.

EB: And the men and the women seemed socially, academically integrated to you?

BD: Well, I think there was a lot of the men didn't want to bother with the women.

EB: Oh, really?

BD: Yeah. Yeah, they would go get dates from other places. Well, Pembrokers were thought to be smart and (inaudible) and ugly.

EB: Oh, wow.

BD: We didn't live in the same dorms, so we could say how ugly they were, too. But, we were certainly integrated in classes, and I still have some men friend, and I had boyfriends. But there was certainly a large body of men who didn't want to have anything to do with Pembrokers.

EB: Wow.

BD: Times are different now.

EB: Yeah, really.

BD: Yeah, they'd go to Wheaton and they'd go to Wellesley [00:11:00].

EB: It's too much trouble, now. I guess they got lazier.

BD: They're getting lazy [laughter]. Yeah, and they'd import, and they'd have girls come in for dances and stuff. The fraternities would do that.

EB: Wow, how insulting.

BD: Yes, I know. Well, we'd stay home and study.

EB: Would you? What did you do?

BD: Well, we'd go out. I mean, I think there was still social life.

EB: But it was more female Pembrokers just socialized with each other?

BD: We did. We certainly did. But we lived in dorms with each other, so lots of times, certainly we'd go to movies and go out to eat. And I didn't do this very much, and I think it was partly because I came from Boston, and I didn't see any reason why I had to go back, but I know a lot of my classmates had symphony tickets and things. They'd take the train into Boston and use Boston for cultural things that they couldn't get in Rhode Island.

EB: Do you remember [00:12:00] where you lived the other three years?

BD: I lived in Andrews Hall my senior year. That's where I had the single, right over the terrace. Now, I can't remember the name. I lived in one of those side dorms leading up to Andrews.

EB: Miller or Metcalf?

BD: Yeah, I lived in the one; as you're facing Pembroke, it's on this side.

EB: I think that's Miller or Metcalf. I'm not sure which one.

BD: I lived in one of those. That was my sophomore year. And then my junior year, I lived in what was the new dorms, which are, gosh --

EB: Morriss, Champlin?

BD: Morriss and Champlin, yeah. I think I was president of my dorm that year.

EB: Oh, you were? What responsibilities [00:13:00] did that entail?

BD: We used to have house meetings and try to get along with the housemother.

EB: The housemother is one thing that's been abolished.

BD: Oh, really?

EB: Yeah, we have resident councilors.

BD: Oh, okay.

EB: You know, who are sophomores. Are housemothers really -- they're not students?

BD: No, they're not students, and some were nice, and some weren't.

EB: Kind of like (inaudible)?

BD: Yeah. But we had younger ones, except for the one in Chaplin. I guess I was in -- Chaplin?

EB: Champlin.

BD: She was this older English lady, and none of us liked her. She was very proper, and didn't seem to have a sense of humor.

EB: Could she impose rules on you?

BD: Mm-hmm.

EB: (inaudible).

BD: [00:14:00] Well we had to be in at certain times, so I guess there was the disciplinary thing. So she had some responsibility to find people who didn't come in. But, otherwise, I think we had quiet hours and things like that. I don't think she had much real authority.

EB: She just enforced what she had?

BD: Yeah. Well, but she was sort of a thorn [laughter]. But some of the others were more pleasant. I know the one in Andrews, she may have been on the faculty, as well. You know, you could get those. I think some of the phys ed teachers were housemothers, as well. But I know the one in Andrews was nice. In fact, that's where I learned how to drink Constant Comment tea. She always had tea. And you know, her room was always open when she was -- or many times open. She was a comfortable person to just go in and chitchat with. So I guess it did provide [00:15:00] an adult, if you needed. Yeah, but I think they probably were there -- I really don't quite remember -- I think they were there to make sure you got in on time, as well. So they could have some, you know, I don't know if they could do the disciplining, but you'd be sent to a dean or something.

EB: Do you remember what courses you took freshman year?

BD: Oh, gosh, you're asking?

EB: I don't think I can remember. It would take me a while.

BD: I don't necessarily remember the sequence. I know I passed a language proficiency exam and never took a language, which made me very happy at the time. But subsequently, I've developed an interest in languages, and to this day, still study French.

EB: (inaudible).

BD: Yeah. But I never took a language, on the basis of college boards or something. But I think - I [00:16:00] don't remember what I took. I really don't. I think I took a history course. We had to take these requirement courses, distribution courses, so pretty sure I took a history course. And I think that might have been the year I took physics.

EB: Any math courses?

BD: Yeah, but I'm trying to think what kind of math. I took this sort of logic course.

EB: Were you outnumbered by males?

BD: Yeah, yeah. I was also outnumbered by males in economics.

EB: I'm not surprised.

BD: Yeah. In fact, there were only a couple of women who wound up graduating in economics.

EB: In economics?

BD: Yeah. And I always took literature courses, but I -- oh, I know, I did take -- I took this wonderful course my freshman year with Professor Waggoner, who may still be there, or may just do a --

EB: I'm not sure.

BD: -- just have left. But he's American Literature, and it was a semester on T.S. Elliot and a [00:17:00] semester on Faulkner. And it was really a good course. I mean, it was really wonderful.

EB: Sounds good to me.

BD: Yeah, it was very good. And so I did take that. I was taking some math course freshman year, because I broke my leg freshman year, and I had to temporarily drop it because that was the one class I couldn't get to. I was in the infirmary, and I couldn't keep up on it. But my memory, I took History D1 or something exciting like that, one of those big survey courses. And I don't think -- I don't remember any art courses.

EB: Did you take any art courses?

BD: Yeah, I took art appreciation courses and I took some of the architecture courses with Professor Jordy. Jordy may not be there, either. But I think he headed the architecture department.

EB: Did women outnumber men in your history and lit courses, or was it --

BD: Those were pretty even. Those were pretty even. [00:18:00] It was more men would outnumber women in the math and the sciences.

EB: Where were the rest of the women when you were in math classes?

BD: They must have been taking language. [Laughter] There was a language lab. I did take some [sosh?] courses, but you know, there were a lot of courses to take. I'm just trying to think about some of my other women friends. I know several majored in political science. My roommate, who wanted to be a teacher, and in that time I think a lot more people wanted to be teachers. I don't know if there were any teaching courses, but (inaudible) my roommate became a religious studies major. So there were philosophy and religion, and those kinds of courses, most of which I didn't take. So I don't know where the women were.

EB: Did you feel like an exception for taking math?

BD: No [00:19:00]. I don't really quite know why.

EB: Were you an exception?

BD: Yeah, I was more an exception than not. But I didn't, but you're bringing up some interesting things, because I went into work where I was primarily the only woman and felt quite later on in my career. So there may have been a pattern emerging, or just getting used to being in that environment, because I never found it particularly uncomfortable.

EB: No?

BD: No.

EB: Not from your male peers or teachers?

BD: No. No, the teachers were good.

EB: So, and you got encouragement from faculty?

BD: I did. In fact, it was because of faculty encouragement that I thought in terms of going on to graduate school. And I worked in the economics department for a summer and before my senior year. And it was at the encouragement [00:20:00] of the head of the economics department that I changed what I did summers and decided to stay at Brown that summer. I was the only undergraduate working there. All the other people working were graduate students.

EB: Really?

BD: Yeah, yeah, yeah. There were no undergraduate students in economics.

EB: Wow.

BD: That I ever saw.

EB: You mean there was no lack of role models (inaudible)?

BD: I guess I probably (inaudible), yeah.

EB: That's good. [Laughter] (inaudible).

BD: Well, my favorite economist is still there. That's George Borts.

EB: I don't know (inaudible).

BD: Well, you should be.

EB: So, you had an advisor, you had a favorite advisor or teacher?

BD: Well, I don't remember a counselor [00:21:01] or somebody about taking the courses. I really don't, although somebody was (inaudible). And I don't quite remember how I decided. I think I know how I decided to major in economics, but it may have come from my own decision, rather than something outside. I started thinking about math. I took an economics course as part of my distribution courses, and I think I realized that (inaudible) human life (inaudible) of anything that they were (inaudible) on science and math. And I'm sure math didn't seem like something that I wanted to do. And I think I probably enjoyed the social implications of economics. So, economics provided me with a real nice kind of a situation, but still the ability to use mathematical content. So, it just happened.

I get a little bit disturbed, or I (inaudible) wonder how undergraduates can decide what they want to do without having many courses. Because at least when I was there, I don't think I could have, because (inaudible). But I didn't come with (inaudible). I guess (inaudible), and I don't think that the first two years of college certainly (inaudible) career choice over the long haul. (inaudible). But, you know, [00:23:00] I was (inaudible).

EB: (inaudible).

BD: Well, and I think (inaudible), and really, it's really a (inaudible) you have that, and you don't have (inaudible). So I took a freshman (inaudible) course in my senior year, because I really didn't (inaudible) use it. I had to get special permission to do it, because they said they (inaudible) takes freshman courses. Of course, I never took any music. I was (inaudible). I just loved it, and it opened up things to me that I just had to (inaudible). So [00:24:00] I don't how I got onto this [laughter].

EB: Did you have any extracurricular activities?

BD: I was, I guess I mentioned, I was dorm president at least one year. I was on something called Honor Council, which I (inaudible) that was kind of a judicial board for the school. And what I can't remember is how much real authority it had. But we were responsible for getting extended hours for seniors, so you could stay out later than --

EB: What was your curfew?

BD: I want to say 12:00 or 1:00. Yeah. [00:25:00] Well, it was really funny, because I used to get tired, anyhow. I (inaudible) having that extra hour [laughter]. So that was one of probably the big things that we accomplished was to get something through. I think the issue of living off campus came up, and that went through us, so I was on that. I did some modern dance. I can't remember what else. But I do know, after spending that summer working at Brown, I decided that a lot of the extra curriculum was just getting too much and too random, and I made a decision to work instead. So, most of my free time was spent working in the economics department for George Borts as his assistant. I used to, you know, do numbers on his calculator [00:26:00] or something.

EB: (inaudible).

BD: Is that what you do?

EB: It's what I do [laughter].

BD: Oh, I had another one. I was doing little file cards. Is there a zoology department or --

EB: Oh.

BD: It was somewhere --

EB: Unusual?

BD: Yeah, well, it was just a job. You know, I worked in the office and I looked for a job. But the economics job was very good, and I think that and being around the department. And I did honors economics, so I did have -- you asked about advisors. Probably George Borts, whom I worked for, and -- he wasn't my thesis advisor. I worked for him and Mark Schupack, who is also still there, I think. He was my thesis advisor. That working and whatever did lead to friendships.

EB: Sounds like it.

BD: Yeah, and [00:27:00] they really did want me to go to graduate school.

EB: Did a lot of students work?

BD: A number of us did, yeah.

EB: And you weren't on scholarship?

BD: No, no.

EB: You just worked to get extra money?

BD: Yeah, well --

EB: Experience?

BD: A little bit of both. I think I liked the money. Because I guess when I was in high school, I had a waitressing job towards the end of high school, and I'd always work summers. And I did use that money. That money was some spending money for me. I know my parents certainly paid for school, and I'm pretty sure I got some money, but I wasn't on scholarship. But, it didn't hurt to have money.

EB: No, (inaudible). [Laughter]

BD: And I think I started thinking, you know, there's a certain amount of volunteer work you can do, and then there's work for money.

EB: Well, why not [00:28:00] too, why not get money?

BD: Well, I still feel to this day that with volunteers, you get not an irresponsible, but sometimes an unreliable source of worker who will, because he's volunteer, put aside the volunteer work when something "more important" comes up. If you're paying somebody, they have a different commitment.

EB: True.

BD: But (inaudible) it was a combination.

EB: Oh, about social rules, you said you had a curfew. Did only Pembroke, or did both Pembroke and Brown students --

BD: I don't think Brown did.

EB: You don't think so?

BD: They could go wherever they wanted?

EB: Did it occur to you that that was kind of unfair, or didn't that bother you at all at the time?

BD: I would guess sometimes it was unfair, and there were certainly people who didn't come home. And in fact [00:29:00], to this day, I still hear stories. One of my good friends told me that

they used to stay out a lot, but they would never tell me because I was on Honor Council, and they were afraid I was going to tell [laughter].

EB: (inaudible).

BD: Yeah, so you know, there's always ways to get around the system. Or they would sneak out, or drink in their rooms, or do all kinds of wonderful things that we weren't supposed to do. It didn't bother me that much. I think towards the end, I started thinking that it was unfair that we couldn't live off campus.

EB: Could Brown students?

BD: Yeah. Yeah, I think they had to live on campus for a certain amount of time, maybe a year or so, but then they could live off campus. But, again, it wasn't until after my junior year, and I think that also came from my having the experience of I'd never lived in an apartment [00:30:00] by myself, either. And that junior year, that summer after my junior year that I worked at Brown, three of us who were all undergraduates at Pembroke shared an apartment, which belonged to some boys we knew who lived there. You know, this was their off-campus apartment, so we sublet, yeah. And so, going through that was a growing experience for us, too.

So, I guess sometimes it bothered. It didn't bother me that much. And as I said, sometimes it was just a good excuse to get rid of a bad date. You know, I got to be in at midnight. In fact, I think sometimes you had more restrictions. You could say, you know, "I got to be in at 10:00." [laughing]

EB: And if it was good, you would just break the rules.

BD: Yeah, right. So again, it wasn't horrible.

EB: Let me see how much time I have left on this side [00:31:00]. Okay, we (inaudible).

BD: Yeah.

EB: Leave it and pick it up, and have it be just still.

BD: Yeah, I think it will click when it gets to the end.

EB: Oh, that's right. Who was the dean of Pembroke when you were there?

BD: Nancy Duke Lewis.

EB: Is she still there?

BD: Uh-huh.

EB: Oh, I wasn't sure. I thought she was there.

BD: Yeah, no, she was there. I knew her.

EB: Oh yeah? What were your impressions of her? Did you like her?

BD: She was a very wonderful woman.

EB: You knew her well?

BD: Yeah, yeah.

EB: So she wasn't a distant figure or anything like that?

BD: Oh no, no. Well, we were about half the size the school is now. There were only 200-and-something in my class, girls, and I guess the men were maybe about 400. So I think we were a total class of about 600. Yes, she was known.

Oh, I was on convocation committee. That was the -- I was trying to think of. And so, we were in charge of all the speakers who came [00:32:00] to speak at -- it was either weekly or monthly. And so, I got to meet a lot of not only "important people" at Brown or Pembroke, but to work on -- it was a committee that the chaplain sat in on, and I don't know if the dean did or not, but there was contact. And then we got to host, or hostess, the visitors. We had Norman Mailer as one of our visitors, and you know, spend the evening or the afternoon or whatever with those people.

EB: Neat.

BD: So that was fun.

EB: Wow, sounds so personal.

BD: Yeah, but I think that's one of the things I liked about that. I never felt there was anybody that was inaccessible. And Barnaby Keeney, who was president, used to come to those meetings, as well.

EB: So you had it good?

BD: Yeah, so it was very -- well, I think Brown is very egalitarian. [00:33:00] I rarely remember a professor that you had to call Doctor, you know, and a lot of people make a big deal about their PhDs. And they did call us Miss and Mister in class, which was kind of funny. You could go all semester and never know somebody's first name, you know what I mean?

EB: I had some teachers did that in my high school now. How did your years at Brown develop your sense of appropriate role, education, and jobs for women, if you're [going to do that?]? Kind of a (inaudible) question.

BD: Yeah. Well, I think Brown prepared -- I think Brown well prepared me for the outside world. I think I had a good education. [00:34:00] I developed some good support people in the

faculty people. I also developed an identity as a Brown graduate, certainly on the East Coast. Moving to the West Coast was a different story. But initially -- I mean, I lived on the East Coast for another nine years after I graduated, so that gave me a sense of comradery and whatever.

As far as women in particular, well, I think I was well prepared to take a job and to go out and work with some confidence.

EB: Really?

BD: Yeah, yeah. And I went to work for IBM my first job. And Thomas J. Watson was a Brown graduate, so there was some [00:35:00] of that out there. And I actually think at that time, IBM was especially interested in recruiting people from Brown. And that opened a very significant career path for me, who still didn't know what she wanted to do.

So I guess I left Brown not thinking that I was particularly different because I was a woman. I wasn't going in the direction of what might have been traditional women's careers at that time, which would be teaching or social work, maybe some of the arts. But I certainly didn't feel I had any barricades. I mean, I found out I did when I got out there. But when I left, I didn't think that there was really anything I couldn't do.

EB: Wow, that's great [00:36:01].

BD: So, I mean, you know, and then came some of the realities. But Brown did not make me, and this is in the sixties, Brown did not make me feel that because I was a woman -- none of my professors or anything -- because I was a woman, I was going to get less. That didn't seem to be an issue.

And I didn't go out with those expectations, because we were still in the time then that women did in fact get less. But the whole "Women's Movement" hadn't started. People weren't asking for more. But I really didn't think in terms of that. And I did in fact go into a job where, at least initially, there were equal numbers of men and women, at least in the training that I started.

EB: And then, you said something about being the only woman somewhere [00:37:00]. That was later?

BD: Well yeah, but then I gradually -- I went to work for IBM as a systems engineer trainee, and it was an interesting -- probably the main difference was that here I was right out of school, and I was 21 or 22. Most of the men who were starting were about four years older, because we were still in the time that men had to do military.

EB: Oh.

BD: And so, they would have gone off and done their military whatever, and so we were all starting out, but here I was in a situation with men who were maybe 26 to 27. And probably the main difference in the IBM environment was both the salespeople and the systems people, who were kind of technical backup to the salespeople, went through the same training. However, to the best of my recollection, [00:38:00] all the salespeople were men.

EB: Really?

BD: Yeah.

EB: And what were the women?

BD: And there were more women who were going through as systems people. However, when I went out to work, when I actually got into an office and was part of a systems team, that's when I became the only woman. I think a lot of those women who went into systems went on into some of the education and training, so we'd lose some. But still, IBM and computers and data processing in the middle sixties was probably one of the more equal for women job paths to go. Because that whole area was just evolving, and so they had no precedents.

What I found going on -- well, I left IBM and went to work for Honeywell within a [00:39:00] year. And it was because I went to work in New York, and then changed plans and moved back to the Boston area, and couldn't transfer with IBM, so I went to work for Honeywell doing pretty much the same kind of work. And there, I became definitely the only woman.

EB: But you had no trouble getting hired because you were a woman?

BD: No, in fact it was no trouble getting hired because I'd come from IBM training, which was deemed so valuable and so transferrable, and Honeywell wasn't in a situation to provide that training. I was, you know, considered an experienced person. But it was then that I started realizing there were salary differences.

EB: Oh, that's not so great.

BD: Not so great, and those probably continued on.

EB: But do you think that you were the only woman because [00:40:00] they weren't the applicants, or they weren't hiring?

BD: Yeah, I really think that was the situation. And still at that time, there was the attitude towards don't invest too much in a woman. She's just going to get married and quit. So there was some of that. And to tell you the truth, I was probably -- there were other women around in the company, and I did get to know some of them, although it took a long time before I had women friends because also, I started being defensive, and don't spend too much time with the other women because they were either secretaries or, you know, you didn't want to be thought of being frivolous. So I started getting a little defensive about it.

But some of the other women that I remember from Honeywell initially were divorced women, women who [00:41:00] "had to work" because they had kids, or they had no other source of income. And I can even remember at Honeywell, we had a lot of Japanese people who, we had sort of a counterpart company, Nippon Electric, who would come and work with us. And one time, I was married at that time, I was talking with some of these men, and they wanted to know why did I work if my husband had such a good job? And that in Japan, that would not be an acceptable thing to do. And I had to explain that I liked to work, and I liked that lifestyle, and I liked the independence, and they thought that was really quite bizarre.

EB: What did your mother think?

BD: Oh, my mother still thinks -- she still can't understand me. After I graduated from Pembroke and I went to work, our weekly phone calls or visits or whatever was always -- well, for a while she used to ask if I'd met [00:42:00] anybody, which you know, she never --

EB: Typical.

BD: You've heard that, yeah. And then she started with, "When are you going to settle down," okay, which only had one --

EB: I am settled down.

BD: -- only had one meaning, right? And then, when I got married, she would still come up with that, but that meant when are you going to have children? And I have not had children. That has been a conscious decision, although it wasn't necessarily a strong decision from the beginning. It just turned out to be the most sensible option for me. And finally, she stopped asking, and I really got her to stop asking this year because I had a hysterectomy.

EB: Keep her quiet for a while.

BD: Well, it was really funny because I had my tubes tied nine years ago, and I never told her. And I never told her, because I knew what kind of [00:43:00] reaction I would get from her, which would have just been awful and why are you doing this. So I think she's had hope, even though I was 43 years old when I did this. But she was still waiting for those grandchildren. So she has never understood it, and it's probably a function of her peer group. My sister has kids, and they're wonderful, nice kids. So she does have some grandchildren, but she's never understood that. And she's never understood why I didn't just let my husband support me.

EB: Were you an exception of your peer group, to get married and still work?

BD: Probably a little bit more of an exception on the -- I guess I was more an exception of not having children on the East Coast. When I moved to California, I found and became friends with a lot more people who had lives closer to mine [00:44:00]. I know a lot more married people who don't have children and who work. And also, I know a lot more people who are married, who have children, who have always worked on the West Coast, and I didn't necessarily know as many on the East.

But of my very close friends, I'd say most of them did take some time, my very close friends from Pembroke, take some time out to raise their children, you know, a period of maybe five to seven years. At this point, most of them are back working. One of my very good friends from Pembroke went back to work when her second child was a year old, and within that year, her husband left her. And I don't know if this was -- it changed [00:45:00] his role. He didn't get all the goodies that he used to get before, like those little home-cooked meals every night.

EB: That's terrible.

BD: But there could have been a lot of factors. He also got through medical school at that time, and --

EB: So it turned out.

BD: Yeah, he left her, and so she was, even if she had been just exploring career options. But I think part of it, she became a different person, taking a job and having responsibilities and becoming someone independent in the sense of his "control," if you want. So that was perhaps too bad, but...

EB: Was that unusual, that non-husband or non-male understanding of wanting to work?

BD: There's still that macho, I think.

EB: Yeah.

BD: I've probably been exceptionally [00:46:00] lucky with the husband I have. I didn't get married right away, too. A lot of my classmates did get married within that year out of school.

Track 2

EB: Didn't hurt.

BD: But didn't hurt, and well, maybe we got married in sort of ideal situations. We were both out of school. He was teaching at MIT. We were both living in Cambridge. We basically just merged our apartments and continued doing what we were doing for another five years. And our move out here was related to his career, but again, I had input in that. I mean, if I had wanted to stay where I was, he would have looked for another job in the Boston area, and I agreed I was open to a move. And we also realized that we couldn't both look for a job at the same time, and [00:01:00] so we came to some sort of an agreement on what we considered acceptable areas of the country where we could live and where I could continue working in what I was doing, and we were lucky to move to the Bay Area.

EB: Yeah, I think so.

BD: But I was somewhat willing to not be able to find a job right away. And in fact, my contingency plan was that I would go and get an MBA. Because I had started an MBA program in Boston in just a small business school and realized night school and I really had a problem. If I was working all day long, it's just too much for me to do something serious at night. You know, can't play tennis and do some of the fun things, too. And so, I didn't pursue that, and I really did feel -- I still do -- if I ever were to return to school for something else, I would like to do that as a full-time activity [00:02:00], not a part-time one.

EB: Did your husband go to MIT?

BD: No, he went to Wisconsin and to graduate school at Yale, and he was teaching at MIT when I met him. He's about four years older than I, but he didn't do military. He had asthma, so he was one of those unfit for military service. I guess he had his PhD in 1964, and he started teaching. I didn't meet him until '67, so he was established, as well. Now he's working as a scientist at Lawrence Livermore, so he's not teaching. But he didn't get tenure, but it was, in his case, probably the best thing that happened, because he was glad to get out of academia.

EB: Yeah, it sounds like it.

BD: So, it worked.

EB: How did you meet him?

BD: Oh, this is going to be terrible [00:03:00] for the Women's Archive.

EB: Uh-oh.

BD: I used to take a lot of courses. I was living in Cambridge. I had a little apartment in Cambridge and really liked it. Kleenex?

EB: No, it's all right. I'm getting better. I'm not going to admit that I'm sick by using a Kleenex.

BD: Forty years from now, when somebody's listening to our colds... I took, when I was living at Harvard, I really liked that I would take courses at Harvard Extension Studies. So I took some art and architecture, and things like that. And then, I would take all these classes at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education. They had dance classes, and I made little silver things, and you know, I really took most of their classes. I was taking a tailoring class, because I always liked to sew. I sewed some of my clothes through school, and I decided I needed to expand my sewing horizons, so [00:04:00] I was taking this tailoring class. And there were eight women in the class, no men, and every week we were working on some major project with these other women, and you know, just chitchat.

There was this one woman in the class, and I really didn't like her. She was noisy and sort of bossy, and very opinionated. And one week she said to me, "Where do you work?" She knew I worked. She was married, and I think she was working on an advanced degree or something. And I told her I worked at Honeywell, so that was week one, and we went back to our sewing and so forth. And week two, she asked me what I did, and I told her I was a systems analyst. And she said, "Oh, I thought you were just a secretary." I thought, oh. And so, I just still went back and sewed and cut, and tried on my dress or (inaudible), whatever it was. [00:05:00]

Next week, she asked me if I was dating anybody, and I said, "Well, yes and no." I had this one boyfriend who was sort of -- it wasn't going anywhere and he was kind of a pain, but he was there. And I said, "Why?" And she said, "Well, we have this friend whom we would like you to meet, and he's -- "

EB: Who is we?

BD: She and her husband. "He's a colleague of my husband's, and we would really -- he's so cute, and he's so sweet, and we'd like you to meet him. Are you interested?" And I said, "Sure, why not?" Turn this off for a minute, you can say hello.

(break in audio)

BD: But anyhow, so she wanted me to -- so she asked me if I would be interested in meeting him. So, I guess I can say I met my husband in my sewing class. So, he called [00:06:00] me, and we went out on a date in April, and we decided to get married the next month.

EB: Wow!

BD: Yeah, I mean, and we got married that August.

EB: Wow.

BD: Well, there were other factors. The lease on my apartment was running out.

M: I want to hear the rest of this story, too.

BD: Yeah, you know the story.

M: Only parts of it. It wasn't (inaudible) get her away from her sister.

BD: Just be quiet.

M: My opinion is if you're going to do something foolish --

(break in audio)

BD: She has. You just came in as an example in the middle.

EB: I'm trying to figure out if getting married a month after you go on your first date would make your mom happy or make her petrified.

BD: Well, it was really funny. Well, we did wait. You know, as we said, we had a short courtship and a long engagement, because we were engaged from May until August. We called my parents, and my parents had moved from the Boston area at that time, so they were in Connecticut [00:07:00]. And I called my father, my father answered, and I must say I've always had a very good relationship with my father. And I said, "Guess what." And he said, "What?" And I said, "I'm getting married." And he said, "Anybody I know?" Because I think they sort of thought well, you know, I don't know what she's going to do.

So, obviously, it has worked out. But she was so surprised. And the woman who introduced us was so surprised, because after years of matchmaking, she'd never had it work.

EB: Really, it really worked.

BD: And it really worked. And she absolved herself of all responsibility for the marriage because she was so shocked that something was going to happen. But we've continued to be friends, and she has become a professor at Wellesley, and her husband still teaches at MIT [00:08:00].

EB: East Coasters.

BD: East Coasters. They were out here for a summer. They traded houses, and her husband did some combination of work at Berkeley and some stuff with IBM for one summer since we've lived out here, so that was a nice --

EB: Keep in touch.

BD: Yeah. But it was certainly an unlikely way to "find a husband."

EB: Or have him found for you.

BD: Yeah.

EB: Back to Brown, do you have any outstanding memories or observations? You liked Brown?

BD: I liked Brown. It was certainly, for me, the perfect school to go to. And you know, as I've said, I think Brown just gave me a good background. It opened my eyes to alternatives. I made some good friendships, both [00:08:59] with my fellow students. I'd say most of those friendships are women friendships, not men friendships. And also, with my professors, I still have an attachment. I'm vice president of the Brown Club here. I was class agent for my class for all the years -- which was the fundraising aspect of it -- for all the years I stayed on the East Coast. When I moved out here, it got harder to keep that contact, and so I'm probably not as active an alumni now, but certainly a supportive one. I would certainly encourage kids to go to Brown from here, and to have that experience. So, I think, you know, Brown certainly did me well.

EB: That's good. That's (inaudible). Okay, thank you.

BD: Is that it?

EB: I think so.

BD: Okay, well it was --

EB: Thank you.

- END -