

Transcript – Beverly Adele Moss, Class of 1945

Narrator: Beverly Adele Moss

Interviewer: Mary Murphy, Nancy L. Buc '65 Pembroke Center Archivist

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Mary Murphy: Okay, so here we are. It is April 11, 2018. My name is Mary Murphy and I'm the Nancy L. Buc Pembroke Center Archivist. I'm here today in the home of Beverly Moss Spatt, Pembroke class of 1945. Beverly and I are going to talk today about her life and work. So Beverly, class of 1945. My first question for you is tell me a little bit about your background and what brought you to Pembroke College. Let's start from the beginning.

Beverly Moss: My background. What background?

MM: Your childhood.

BM: Oh. My life has been a matter of serendipity. I was born as an accident. But though my mother worked for Margaret Mead, you know Margaret Mead? How she got pregnant I don't know, but you know those days they thought if you were nursing... she was nursing my sister June, who also went to Pembroke. And I got born accidentally so ever since my life has been a matter of serendipity.

MM: And your you said your mother was working for Margaret Mead?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: Did you say your mother was working for Margaret Mead?

BM: She was a volunteer.

MM: (overlapping) She was a volunteer?

BM: Was it Margaret Mead? The one with contraceptives?

MM: Mhmm.

BM: Yeah, she was a volunteer.

MM: Wow, very interesting.

BM: Yeah my mother was pretty progressive.

MM: And where did she do that work? Here in...

BM: I don't know. I don't know.

MM: OK.

BM: I never planned anything. But it just automatically happened. Now where are we going?

MM: Yes. So going back. So you are a surprise child.

BM: Yeah, but uh fortunately I was very loved by my parents, they were good parents and they were very—my mother was very progressive. She went to John Dewey lectures – you know who John Dewey was? And my father, I had a great relationship with. So... that was my life and... I'm sort of an introvert even though I was a commissioner and I did very well. In terms of myself. You know I have a few really good friends intimate, but I'm not that social person.

MM: So I read in a number of articles about your life that you did have a close relationship with your father. Did he help steer you towards attending Pembroke? Tell me about how you came to decide on attending Pembroke College.

BM: Well my sister went to Pembroke and my brother went to Brown in '38 and I guess it was natural. My father who was a very charming Southern gentleman from Chattanooga,

Tennessee, he went up with my sister June and Dean – I don't know whether it was Dean Moore or Dean Morris – they loved each other. So my sister got accepted and then I got accepted and I applied so. I wasn't great on the test where you had to put one-word answers.

MM: You didn't do very well on that?

BM: No, though I graduated from, I was graduated from high school with cum laude but...

MM: And what high school?

BM: (overlapping) I'm not a one-word person. I do well with writings, reports, and things like that but I'm down to one word, choose one word...

MM: What high school did you attend?

BM: Well I was at James Madison High School which was a great high school—

MM: (overlapping) Here in New York—

BM: –but then my sisters were away at college and so I decided I wanted to go to boarding school. My parents were very permissive. And uh – I went to a southern boarding school. My parents didn't want me to go, but they let me go and after one or two months I left it.

MM. Oh, because it was too strict? Or...

BM: I wasn't a... It.... I really can't... even though my family was – I don't talk about it, but it was very well off during the Depression. My father was a partner at a law firm things like that. And they are very well of. We had a house, you know we weren't really part of the Depression, though my friends were. And I'm aware of it. I never thought we had money, just it wasn't a thing in the family discussed. And when I went to boarding school I realized I just came from a middle-class family. Even if they had money. And these women were divorced parents, you know one parent, and... they smoked right after dinner, and I didn't smoke.

MM: These were your schoolmates at boarding school?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: These were your classmates at boarding school?

BM: Yes. And you know they were either diplomats' children with parents were always away.... I came from what you really call good middle-class family and not a question of money. So you know it was until recently that I realized our family was so well off. And I left. My father came down.

MM: How long were you there?

BM: Three months.

MM: And what made you want to go to boarding school?

BM: Well first of all, my parents didn't object. And my father probably thought it would make me a Southern lady.

MM: That's funny.

BM: Because he came from the South. And I also was a horse woman and I would go horseback riding every day. My sisters were away at college so I was home alone but I was very close with my parents. And I'm lucky they love me. And... I don't know...

MM: An adventure...

BM: It was a dumb thing. And no one objected so I went.

MM: So three months later you come home—

BM: And I went back to James Madison. I was a junior.

MM: And that's here, James Madison, here in New York?

BM: The school—

MM: The school—it's here in New York?

BM: In Brooklyn, yes. I'm Brooklyn born, bred, wed, and dead. My husband is in Greenwood Cemetery which is a historic cemetery, because I was commission chairman of the commission. And I have a place there too. So I'm born, wed, and dead. I was wed at the St George Hotel. I walked around the corner in my wedding gown.

MM: Wonderful. And what year were you married?

BM: 1946.

MM: OK, right after, right after school. OK, so take me back. So you decide – your sisters, your sister, went to Pembroke, so you decide you're going to go to Pembroke as well.

BM: It was Pembroke or Wellesley.

MM: Or Wellesley. I was going to ask you who was the competition, so Wellesley.

BM: Yeah I... uh.... First of all, I'm Jewish. Not many Jewish women show had got into Wellesley in those days. I don't know if you know that.

MM: Mhm. How did you feel about the treatment of Jewish students at Pembroke?

BM: No problem.

MM: No problem?

BM: In fact I was head of the Jewish-Christian Association. And every Thursday, maybe

once a month, I had lunch with other people with the Dean. I had no problems.

MM: But at Wellesley...(overlapping) that could have been a problem.

BM: Wellesley – it was like my husband who was very brilliant. He went to Columbia and he knew he would not get into medical school of Columbia because he was Jewish, because Isaac Asimov – you know Isaac Asimov? Who was brilliant, a genius, he couldn't get in. They had a Jewish quota in the medical schools so he went to the University of Louisville which he loved. He had a great time in Louisville.

MM: Wonderful. So you enter Pembroke over Wellesley.

BM: Yes, Pembroke accepted me.

MM: That's right and so you enter Pembroke in nineteen... forty... one.

BM: Forty...

MM: '41, right?

BM: 41, 42, 43...yeah '41.

MM: So the war is...

BM: I graduated '40 because I made high school three years and I guess I waited until the next September.

MM: OK.

BM: So it was '41.

MM: '41. So the war, World War II is just rolling out, it's getting going. So do you have memories from the war years, being at Pembroke during that time?

BM: Do I have memories of it?

MM: Yeah, talk to me about that. Do you remember where you were Pearl Harbor Day?

BM: I love Pembroke. Dean Moore – I'm going to give you a piece of paper if we have it— Dean Moore was wonderful. They really were models for us and I think that part of my future after that was due to Pembroke and Dean Moore, or Dean Morris.

MM: My question is about World War II. And if you have any, do you have any memories of the war time—did it affect your family?

BM: It didn't, well, it affected my family only in that Father Coughlin, who you probably never heard of, Father Coughlin went all the way around Brooklyn and all of it ... Anti-Semitic talks at corners. And my father became head – formed – the Jewish Community Council to fight it and there were others who fought it too. But personally it terms of relatives, no.

MM: OK.

BM: Though, my husband's family had relatives in Germany and they were very involved in – sending things over and things like that. But we personally were not involved in terms of family. But my father was involved in terms of doing things.

MM: And then, but so you were basically in college during this time...

BM: Yes, and I called my father up and I said "what are we going to do?" And of course as a father and mother they said don't worry.

MM: Don't worry.

BM: (laughs) Famous last words. And Brown, what happened is a lot of the Brown men went to the army. We really were the college – Pembroke – then. There were very few there and

we took a lot of courses over at the Brown campus. Especially Shakespeare, I don't know if you ever heard of Hastings.

MM: Mm.

BM: You did?

MM: Mm. Well through my research with Pembroke, but yeah OK.

BM: He was wonderful in a big class maybe 100 students. And he said to me "would the men please stop knitting?" I was knitting socks for the army.

MM: Wow.

BM: And it was a wonderful course.

MM: But during class you were doing...

BM: I was knitting all of class.

MM: And you were sending...

BM: I got an A!

MM: Yeah and so you were sending your knitted goods to the war effort?

BM: Yeah I was knitting for the—sending them away to the soldiers, you were supposed to knit for the soldiers. I had no problems at Pembroke. I had friends who were Christian, I never questioned what they were you know. And I had friends who were Jewish. However, I was very friendly with.... Here's a picture of – this, that was one of the reunions. Where am I? I think I'm over there someplace. Uh... rice pudding. It was very nice to have day students there.

MM: Yeah, they were called City girls right?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: The day students they were called City girls. Is that a term that you've heard?

BM: I never thought of that. I never heard of that. Phyllis Berklehammer... she died. They all died, but I don't know about Irma. Phyllis lives there and she was wonderful. Her brother went to Brown. And maybe her sister went there too. So, you can have both of these.

MM: Wonderful. OK—

BM: And I'm giving you my yearbook.

MM: Oh OK, yep, we have, we have that yearbook. Uh, it's the '45 yearbook? Unless, do you have signatures inside that yearbook?

BM: Do you want it anyhow?

MM: I mean oh well I'm happy if you would like to donate it. Sure, OK.

BM: You can have it I don't want it anymore.

MM: OK.

BM: I'm going to be ninety-four. I know I'm healthy.

MM: Yeah.

BM: But I, uh, I want, I have so much stuff...

MM: You're right. So—

BM: Yeah, uh, I never counted who was Jewish and who wasn't Jewish. I was very friendly, cause I lived in Metcalf.

MM: Mhm, OK, Metcalf Hall.

BM: It's different now.

MM: It is?

BM: Yeah.

MM: Do you remember being, yeah tell me if you could, tell me some of the memories that you have of being on the Pembroke Campus?

BM: Well we were in Metcalf and right across was, uh what was it called?

MM: Pembroke Hall?

BM: No.

MM: Alumnae Hall?

BM: No, it was the name of a, uh, it'll come.

MM: Oh the other dormitory building, yes, it's escaping me at the moment as well, yep.

BM: I'm looking for Cheryl Abbott, I don't think Cheryl Abbott... she came from Louisville, not Louisville no, St. Louis. And we used to nicely fight about the ball games. She was for the St. Louis...

MM: Cardinals?

BML ... Cardinals and I was for the Brooklyn Dodgers. So we had that in common, and uh,

it's interesting I don't see some of the, uh, women here. Well, Asa Dorian, I knew her.

MM: You said that you had a few close friends on campus.

BM: Yeah, and I gave you the picture of them. And uh...

MM: Tell me about...

BM: This is right... Yeah I was, see, I went to all their dormitories whenever they had, uh, things happening in the dormitories and I took their pictures. I had a Speed Graphic and a uh Contaflex. And, I was a photographer all my life. And, uh I was in Sayles Gym, right?

MM: Yes.

BM: And uh we set up a dark room there.

MM: OK. Who taught you how to take pictures?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: Who taught you how to, how to take pictures?

BM: My father was interested in photography, uh and I guess I had from a very... I had a darkroom at home. My grandfather built a dark room for me. And uh I guess, and my father bought me a Contaflex, which was at that time, I didn't realize, it was a very a Zeiss—you know what a Zeiss is?

MM: Mm I don't...

BM: Zeiss has the best ones, this... he bought me a Contaflex, and then when I later on, when I went to Pembroke, he bought me a, uh, Speed Graphic. I was also very close with my mother. She, she was very progressive. Besides the John Dewey, she also sat on Girl's boards, and things like that.

MM: It sounds like—

BM: They were both very philanthropic.

MM: It sounds like both of your parents were very supportive of you.

BM: Yes, and permissive.

MM: Permissive—

BM: I never was told to do anything.

MM: Do you feel that they were feminist in nature?

BM: My mother, probably. But uh, you know my father was probably the most significant person in Brooklyn. He was president of the Board; he was a philanthropist. And uh, in fact he gave away all of his money to the...

MM: He was, let's go back, he was president of the board of education?

BM: Yeah.

MM: Yes, OK.

BM: And he was head of the, uh, during the war, the Jewish Community Council formed, and he was very active in Catholic things and Protestant... he was, whenever they had an affair, or something, he was the speaker or else he formed it. So if he, if he was the head, they made a lot of money. In other words, he was very prestigious. It had nothing to do with religion, you know, he was, uh, active in other things. The, uh, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the um, Brooklyn Museum.

MM: Mhm. He supported all of those?

BM: As well as Jewish organizations. And he was probably the top person in Brooklyn at that time, not just among Jewish groups. And my mother was very active, she was on the Federation, the Brooklyn Federation for Jewish Philanthropies, which I went on later. And my father was on the New York Board. They were very active.

MM: So they were movers and shakers, they knew people in the community, and you do feel that they supported the education of Women?

BM: Yes, probably, because they never objected. In fact, when I, I owe a lot to the League of Women Voters. I was a director—

MM: Tell me about that.

BM: —With the portfolio of, uh, city planning. Not the chief director, but we had portfolios. Different directors, of city planning, so I was the director of city planning. And as a director of the board of the League of Women Voters, we were against surrogate court. We were for merging the different courts together. My father was the surrogate and I went out speaking against the surrogate court.

MM: What is, can you tell me more about the surrogate court, what is that?

BM: They are responsible for, orphans, for states. In other words, if you have someone who dies, they have to probate their state. And my father, well first he was a supreme court judge in New York, and, which he didn't like very much, and uh, then he was a surrogate. For surrogate, he was top, there was nobody else there, he was the only surrogate. And, uh, he, uh, if you adopted a child, you had to go to surrogate court. And also, if a person died, they had to probate their estate. This is when Sam died, my husband, the lawyer had to probate his estate. And they had to pass on it. That's the surrogate court.

MM: So with the League of Women Voters you basically—

BM: (overlapping) Spoke against it—

MM: Spoke against that court.

BM: But he was very proud of it.

MM: OK, your dad was? Mhm.

BM: He didn't mind in the least. And, uh, also, as director of city planning at the annual meeting, I had to speak and I spoke. Because I had to say what we were doing over the year, and all of a sudden I looked up, and there he was in the back. Evidently, he left the court and came to listen to it.

MM: (overlapping) That's really, he's proud of you—

BM: He was gone before I finished.

MM: But you caught, you saw him there.

BM: And my mother was, I was, don't – off the record. [redacted]

MM: Okay, so I'm trying to, um, work this interview a little bit chronologically, so I'm gonna bring you back your memories, try to come back to Pembroke for just a little bit longer. So, um—

BM: I loved Pembroke.

MM: You loved it, OK. Tell me, uh, tell me your favorite memory.

BM: Uh, during the war I was a, uh, fire war- – war or warden, whatever it was called it was a fire warden, war warden. You know I went around to make sure all everything was blacked out and things like that.

MM: Oh really?

BM: Yeah, we had a few of us.

MM: OK.

BM: (laughing) It wasn't a great accomplishment.

MM: It's very interesting, though. And so, you would go around and make sure that, what, the drapes were pulled for blackouts, and things like that? Lights were off, turned down. Um, okay, and that, and you did that with a couple of friends of yours or something?

BM: Yeah and I told you that every once a month we would have lunch with uh, I, was the dean, and Howard, who was our who was head of our was our head of our dorm. She became, assistant dean, or maybe she became she became one of the assistant deans. Howard, do you remember the name?

MM: Ooh, I'd have to go back. So you had, you would have, ss uh, meetings with that—

BM (overlapping) Excuse me?

MM: (overlapping) You would have lunches with the dean?

BM: Every, like, every once a month. Maybe before that we had it with Dean Lore.

MM: OK.

BM: I don't remember.

MM: And do you remember some of the things you would talk about at those lunches—

BM: Hold on, I'm sorry.

MM: Do you remember some of the things you would talk about at those lunches or...?

BM: (overlapping) No, but it was very nice.

MM: (overlapping) Happenings on campus? Yeah, you just remember them being nice.

BM: I love Pembroke. And I, there was, I understand, off the record, [ignore] I understand they really didn't have many blacks. I don't think you see many blacks looks like maybe one or two, but there weren't really many blacks in those days. But yet, there were, uh Jews and Catholics and uh I didn't find any prejudice at all against anybody.

MM: Mhmm, I think 1968 was the first year where a larger group of black women came in.

BM: There was a lawsuit.

MM: Yeah there were six women who came in.

BM: We didn't – it was a different time; it was a different time.

MM: Do you remember talking about race on campus?

BM: No, but I knew that the Jews didn't have a fraternity, well enough of fraternities, they didn't have sororities. But uh, I had a boyfriend, and uh he belongs to a fraternity. And I remember once we were out and he wanted to go back to the fraternity party, but I didn't want to go. Uh...

MM: He was—

BM: There were no Jewish fraternities...

MM: And your boyfriend at the time was, non-Jewish?

BM: He was Jewish.

MM: He was Jewish?

BM: No, he was non-Jewish.

MM: He was non-Jewish, right. And so he invited you to go back.

BM: Well we were out, and he said we're having a party, do you wanna go back to it? And I said no. Uh, and I think that they had, did they live in there all together?

MM: Well, uh, that, the Greek system at Brown is all over the place. I don't have a great knowledge on that cause it doesn't touch us, but—

BM: It was a, uh, like a, there was a house, but it wasn't a fraternity. For Jews.

MM: Yes, and there's still that, for uh, Jewish Students' Association house. So and were you, did you participate in that, in the Jewish Student organization?

BM: In the men's house?

MM: No, did Pembroke have one? For the women? A Jewish—

BM: We have sororities like one. I don't believe in sororities.

MM: You don't, OK. And tell me why.

BM: What?

MM: Why?

BM: Well, I don't believe in cliques. And I don't believe in – I think everybody's equal. Uh, we're all equal, natural law.

MM: Do you support fraternities?

BM: Do you know what natural law is?

MM: Yeah – do you support fraternities?

BM: I beg your pardon?

MM: Do you believe in fraternities for men?

BM: No I don't believe in fraternities.

MM: (laughs) None of it, yeah.

BM: No. I don't think any of my children or grandchildren are in fraternities and I have a Catholic grandchild. But I don't think he was in a fraternity.

MM: Not very many Pembroke's do support fraternities (laughs) – I will say in my experience.

BM: Yeah. And I don't believe in cliques, you know?

MM: Yeah—

BM: And I don't believe in excluding people.

MM: How do you feel about equality on campus between men and women when you were at Pembroke?

BM: Well we didn't have that many men.

MM: That's right.

BM: So uh – well you know some of the people did Sock & Buskin, I didn't. So I didn't

really belong to any of the coeducational – coed – kind of groups. Uh, we probably had some in the, uh, the Jewish Christian organizations but I don't remember them. Uh, I don't think there was much – except there were always some (laughs) women who were, uh, I don't know what to call them – they were always with men. They were always with—

MM: (overlapping dialogue) Social.

BM: —They were always with – couple. And, I was not part of that group. There's only one or two of them. We were mostly women with women.

MM: Okay. So then – tell me about meeting your husband.

BM: My husband. Uh – I met him at a, uh, somebody's house. It was after the war. He had come in – he, you had to have points to get out of the army. He was a flight surgeon. And uh, he was overseas and, uh, he came in for, he did have enough points to get out so he came in for a week I think or something like that. And I met him at somebody's house. And he had – (laughs) – a robin's egg blue convertible which he rented. And, uh, a car was important to him, he rented it. He got some money when he left the army – well, no he didn't have the money then. Maybe somebody gave it to him or maybe he had some money left over. Uh, cause he did have money. And, uh, he drove me home, and – I guess it was love at first sight.

MM: This is here? Were you, did you meet him here? In New York?

BM: Yeah. I was living here.

MM: You were c – you graduated – sorry I skipped ahead. So you graduate from Pembroke—
—

BM: Yeah I was already – I had graduated Pembroke.

MM: In '45. And then you come home.

BM: Yeah, so it was the end of '46.

MM: Okay. And then you're here, in the city, and you meet him.

BM: I was there. And he called me then and we must've gone out for a few times, or – and, uh, I guess it was love at first sight from the beginning to end. So we were very fortunate.

MM: Yes. And how many years did you, were you married, again?

BM: I was married – before he died, we were married 61 years.

MM: Wow. Wow.

BM: So – and I miss him terribly.

MM: I bet. I bet.

BM: But – that's the way it goes, I guess.

MM: And what did he die of?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: What did he die of? Did he—

BM: Heart failure. Which is what you die of when you get old.

MM: Yeah.

BM: He wasn't sick at all, but then he got heart failure one year and, uh, had trouble breathing. He wanted, uh, he said you know, “give me morphine I'm a doctor, I can't give it to myself,” you know it was hard.

MM: Yes, I'm sure.

BM: But he was good until the very end. He watched ball games and things, he was fine. And read books and things. English poetry. He was good till the end. I was very lucky.

MM: Sounds – absolutely. 61 years. That’s a good run.

BM: And he wasn’t disabled, you know, really disabled or anything like that.

MM: So you have children.

BM: Yes.

MM: And tell me about your – so – now we’re into the 1950s, right, so were ...

BM: I had children before that.

MM: Okay.

BM: Uh, I’m Jewish but I was good Catholic as a child really.

MM: Okay. (laughs).

BM: The bishop used to say: “You’re a good Catholic.”

MM: (laughs)

BM: (laughs) I had a child in about 9, 10 months.

MM: Okay! So your first child. And then, so, you’re having children in the post-war boom, right. And you are then a house – homemaker, at that time? You’re, you’re just mothering your children ... tell me about that early motherhood. What was that like for you?

BM: Well, my husband was a resident so he only came home, uh, a couple times a week.

MM: Oh, yes.

BM: And I think that was hard on my daughter. But my parents were very good parents. And they also loved him. And he loved them. He didn't have any family, his father had died in the epidemic of twenty-sevente – uh, you know . . .

MM: (overlapping dialogue) in 1917.

BM: In 1917. So he didn't have a father then and he wasn't close with his mother. So he really married into my family. They loved him, and he loved them. Which made it very easy. And I would – my father was also a president of the hospital board and things like that. And his uncle, who, you know, we didn't know each other's families but it just so happened that his uncle was also head of the board. I think my father was vice head of the board. And, uh, I – whenever they had meetings, my father would take me there and I would go off to his room and then go back home.

MM: So you had – so, you were doing a lot of parenting on your own.

BM: (overlapping dialogue) Yes. My mother and father were good—

MM: Help.

BM: Were very good in terms of the children. They – you know, they were there for them. So, uh ...

MM: So – I'm sure – were you, uh, scared to be a new mother?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: Were you scared? When you became a mother for the first time?

BM: Did I what?

MM: Were you scared by being a new mother, or were you excited about it?

BM: Well, I didn't know how to, you know, bath and that – are you married?

MM: No.

BM: I didn't know how to wash her, and hold her. (laughs)

MM: Yeah. Yes.

BM: And Sam came home one time and told me how to do it.

MM: Oh!

BM: (laughs)

MM: There you go. So—

BM: So I was confused because on one hand we had Ilga and Giselle, who told you: “Let the baby cry.” And then we had, uh, who's the other one, the aggressive one?

MM: Um, don't ask me.

BM: My generation.

MM: Yes, uh—

BM: So we had two of them, one said “let them cry,” the other said “don't!” So that was difficult. I think I was wrong to let her cry.

MM: Different methods of parenting.

BM: Yeah, Ilga and Giselle that was their thing. Let the child cry. The other one, what was his name I forget.

MM: I can't remember, um (laughs). Children are not my specialty.

BM: (overlapping dialogue) You can remember. Oi ... Anyway, you know, he was progressive. And I, now I really agree with him. And with my other kids I was very lenient.

MM: OK. So we move into the 1950s and 60s. And here, you begin to turn your attention to the city and preservation.

BM: No, before that I was very active in the League of Women Voters.

MM: League of Women Voters. OK.

BM: They really [are] my background.

MM: OK. And –

BM: And –

MM: And is that the first time with your work with the League of Women Voters— ?

BM: Well I actually worked before I got married. Before – and, um, I worked for a while up at Abraham and Strauss so I did their photography.

MM: Okay.

BM: And then, I, uh, I went (laughs) – I worked at a label corporation and I did engraving.

MM: Oh!

BM: The men weren't very happy, it was in the basement of a big label corporation and

everybody labeled, we saw the back of a red book and, uh, they wrote “Just Men” and there I was with engraving machines and things like that. But then, when I was working there I met Sam and, uh, we got married.

MM: Okay. Okay.

BM: And I left.

MM: So then you begin your volunteer work with the League of Women Voters.

BM: Uh – they, uh, I saw an ad in the paper, they wanted to start a Brooklyn Heights group and I answered it. And there were about four or five of us that must’ve answered it. And they would meet at my house cause I had a big apartment, it was really my folks’ apartment. So, and the League people – the president, and the directors – they all came down and trained us. They don’t do that anymore.

MM: What—

BM: They trained us in speech, speaking, and, uh, discussion workshops. We were really trained.

MM: What made you decide to answer that ad?

BM: To go to the League of Women Voters?

MM: Yes.

BM: I guess it’s my thing. I don’t know.

MM: Did you—

BM: I don’t think it was – I saw an ad in the paper they wanted to start a branch and I guess it was an unconscious decision.

MM: You didn't equate it with feminism at the time?

BM: No.

MM: Did you – did you identify as a believing ...

BM: No but I think I was a feminist. But during the feminist times—

MM: This predates the women's movement.

BM: I, they wanted me to join the feminist groups but I didn't. I am a feminist but they were at that time – this is before your time – they were very hostile to the men. I like men. I always like men. And, uh, once I spoke – you saw my resume – I was teaching The New School – and Betty Friedan asked me to lecture to her class. And all they wanted me to do was talk against men. You know how we women, all the, think ... I didn't want to do that. That wasn't my thing, I uh—

MM: So you knew Betty Friedan?

BM: I didn't – I – I am a feminist. But I'm not, uh, at that time it was very, uh, it was very anti-men. They're our cause. They're our problems, the men.

MM: So, um, so you – so you're not identifying – with the whole ... before the women's movement, you joined the League of Women Voters, basically.

BM: Yes.

MM: OK.

BM: I joined it in, probably very early '50s.

MM: And what did they want you to start working on?

BM: The men or the League?

MM: The League. What was their—

BM: Run against men.

MM: No, right.

BM: No, we had issues. Housing, planning, uh—

MM: And when you say housing – safe housing for families, women and children ...

BM: Yeah.

MM: Okay.

BM: Uh, for homeless and things like that. We had different portfolios. I had, we had a speaker's portfolio ... I happened to be the portfolio's city planning. So I went up from being a member, to the director all the way up.

MM: And so your work with the League of Women Voters, that's really your first work around issues of planning and preservation?

BM: No.

MM: OK.

BM: I'll tell you about that. Uh, even in the League of Women Voters I was very independent. The chairman of the League – the chairman – she really loved city planning. And she really tried to take over the portfolio. And I wouldn't let her. And that caused a problem. I was in the League for a long time, and it was either she had to leave or I had to leave. Cause I was very active in the League. And most of the board members came over to

me and said “you know, Beverly, this is a difficulty. We know you’re right” – cause I, you know, she would make decisions without the people participating. And I felt that was very wrong. Anyways, so I finally left.

MM: You left, okay.

BM: I left for the good but I was with them for a long time.

MM: And how many years were you with the League?

BM: With the League? Oh, years.

MM: Years, okay.

BM: And I did a lot of speaking, I did workshops, I did – um – speaker’s training, discussion training, like people don’t know how to do discussions. There really are techniques to do discussions and techniques to do speaker’s training, just like techniques for interviewing.

MM: Active listening, right?

BM: Anyway, uh, and, uh, then I heard that the, uh, mayor had set up a commission on city finance – or maybe it was the governor – and I, uh, applied to Joseph McGoldrick, who’s head of Queens College. And, uh, I didn’t really want much money, I wanted to be his assistant, he appointed me his assistant. I think I got 15,000, maybe less. And he was a great person. He was a professor at Queens College and he had been, uh, with La Guardia, he was the treasurer or something with La Guardia. And he really, when we would go to these big meetings, the board meetings, uh, which uh sat the presidents of the banks, uh, Hoffman who was in Roosevelt’s administration. Believe it or not, I talked. (Laughs)

MM: Wow.

BM: I wasn’t supposed to I don’t think. But – I – Joe, let me speak! Um, sure, and that way I got very friendly – not friendly, but they knew me.

MM: They knew who you were.

BM: And, uh, the board members – I mean they all big people, presidents of all the banks, and from the administration and things were on the board – and they never said anything and McGoldrick never said anything. But I also told him that I had – if my kids had anything at school – they went to, my first child didn't go to a progressive school. She went to Friends. And then the headmaster left and the new one made it like, a prep school. So I didn't put my boys there. I put them in a progressive school, Woodward. Which was also biracial. And um, you never heard of Glomison but his children were there, he was an activist. Black. I said to McGoldrick, you know, that I would have to leave if there was something important going on. And he agreed. And we used to go to lunch, and he told me how to drink gin!

MM: Ah!

BM: So I worked there for a couple years, or a year. And I was at the Women's City Club. I was active in all the groups. Citizens Union, Women's City Club, I knew them all. At that time we used to work together. I don't think they do it that way anymore.

MM: So can I ask you a question, it seems like at the time, you're becoming civically engaged.

BM: Yes.

MM: Was it for you, a drive to do the right thing? Was it a political ideology that prompted you to become involved, what was your, if you could think about your mindset?

BM: I think part of it was from my family, and part of it was from Pembroke. And I have something here ...

MM: And why do you say that?

BM: Uh, why do I say that?

MM: Mhm.

BM: Because, uh, (rustling papers) you can have this for the archives. What is this? Oh this was that thing I lent to, um, Sam. You can have it.

MM: Great. Okay.

BM: You can have this, too, well it gives you ...

MM: Great.

BM: Pembroke. (Rustling papers) You don't have a copy of this?

MM: I don't think so.

BM: Here, read it quickly and I'll go on to tell you.

MM: Ah, okay. (Pause for reading). Okay, so it sounds like Pembroke put you on a path.

BM: Yeah – uh – we were all women. And – uh – I've been telling everyone they should go to a women's college. And we were only about 200 people, and uh, so the deans were not distant, you know? They were there. And I think that they – uh – they were our models.

MM: They, you also attended Pembroke under the parietal rules, right?

BM: Under the what?

MM: The, uh – known as the parietal rules? The parent, the school as parent, so they took an active role in guiding their women, guiding their students. I know it was part of the structure of the school.

BM: Well, I don't know how to answer that. I have aural discrimination. I hear but

sometimes the words don't come around correctly—

MM: OK—

BM: The only way to correct it is to have an operation and I refuse to have an operation.

MM: OK!

BM: Uh – anyway – uh – I can't pinpoint it, it was just the atmosphere, and the closeness of the deans, and Howard, who was our house mother. It was just—and the freedom they uh, though it wasn't like it is now, we had courses that we had to take. It was just, it was just great, I don't know what to say.

MM: Mhm, so let's go back to when you begin your civic life.

BM: Yeah, I was, so I got the job, cause they didn't want very much money, and you never thought of having an assistant. And I made contact, not purposefully, with all these big people.

MM: Yes—

BM: Which served me well when I became chairman of Landmarks. And uh, there was a person there—oh I went to the Women's City Club one luncheon. The League of Women Voters brought us sandwiches. Women's City Club, we had a woman who served us.

MM: Oh, OK.

BM: And, you know, I was known among them, in the Citizen Union, cause we all overlapped in those days. George [inaudible] was head of the Citizen Union, you know, er [inaudible]. Anyhow, uh, before your time. And – uh – I was sitting there, and I heard that there was a vacancy on the city planning commission. And I said to myself, why not me? And, uh, so I didn't tell anybody, but I spoke to someone who was very close to Wagner, who was the mayor. And Wagner at that time, he liked women. He wasn't a womanizer, but

he liked women. He liked the League of Women Voters. He didn't feel – like a lot of people did – they felt that we belonged in a telephone booth. Uh, and uh, my father was dead, otherwise I never would've have gone to it cause that would've been wrong. And, uh, I, there was, his – someone who worked for him, became – I guess he got a leftover job, but he was great, and we got friendly, and I think he – he did the, uh, xeroxing and the press, he was an older man, and he liked me, and I have a feeling that he recommended me to Wagner. I didn't tell anybody, and uh, one night I got a call at twelve o'clock at night. What happened is, they didn't have a quorum – you know what a quorum is?

MM: Yep, mhm.

BM: Uh, Ellie was away and the other person was sick, they needed a quorum to have a hearing the next day. And, uh, I got a call at twelve o'clock, and Wagner called me and said: "I'm appointing you tomorrow." I had never spoken to him or anything.

MM: He called you?

BM: He called me. And said: "I'm appointing you tomorrow," and uh, so it's seven o'clock, my husband and I, we went down to the Carlisle. Uh, he [Wagner] was there on his second honeymoon, and they had to open up the, uh, what do you call it, cause I always had to have coffee? They had to open up the—what do you call it? The, uh, the ca—

MM: Uh—

BM: The restaurant—

MM: Yeah, mhm.

BM: To get me my coffee.

MM: Oh, that's nice!

BM: And his wife came down in her lingerie, and beautiful clothes, down this big staircase –

anyway he appointed me, and the present chairman, Bill Ballard was there at the time. Sam went home, and I went with Bill Ballard in his chauffeured car to the city planning meeting. They were discussing the Third Tunnel, and I knew all about the Third Tunnel, because the League of Women Voters, we were involved in the Third Tunnel. So, uh, I had no problem. At the beginning.

MM: At the beginning. Can I ask a question?

BM: Sure.

MM: You said, uh, he was good to women, he wasn't a womanizer—

BM: No, but he wasn't against women—

MM: Right. Your experience – you clearly have interacted with a lot of powerful men in New York. What, did you ever experience workplace harassment while you were doing your civic work at all? Uh, men who were not good to women? Did you feel you had to, had to fight to be treated well?

BM: You talking about before or after?

MM: During your civic life, when you were meeting a lot of people in the city, did you experience any harassment, ill-treatment because you were a woman?

BM: No, but they didn't like the League of Women Voters.

MM: Mhm.

BM: The men didn't like the, they, they didn't like the League of Women Voters, cause we were always – I shouldn't say this now, it sounds too proud, we were always, for people participating in decision-making. We felt that decisions shouldn't be made without people participating in them.

MM: Mhm, and they didn't like that?

BM: So, uh, they wanted to do what they wanted to do, the politicians they already liked. The politicians didn't like me. But uh, it wasn't a – well, uh, paid me fifteen thousand a year I guess – but uh, and most of the people there were part-time. And James felt, as I took his seat, he retired, he was chairman, he was great. He was a real estate person, but he was good, and uh, he said: "Beverley, don't go in everyday." I went in everyday, I stayed all day, and I made the reports, and I voted, and uh, cause that was my background, on the League, you know? I thought I was going in for the good of the people, I didn't know, I didn't know that real estate was in control. The commissioners really didn't like me. Except Horman and Goldstone. And Ellie [inaudible] was really good, but Ellie was a – I'm not saying I'm not a lady, but Ellie was a lady. And she didn't dissent. In other words, she might be against something, but she didn't come out publicly against it.

MM: And you did not do that.

BM: I, like this, there's the master plan. Uh, I dissented. I also have a report. The report was very interesting. Anyway, uh, where were we?

MM: So we're back to where you're just really getting started. And you said you were, you spoke for the first time in a meeting and you weren't sure you were supposed to do that. Um—

BM: I thought I was there for a reason. You know, I came from the League of Women Voters.

MM: And how old were you at that time?

BM: I still contributed to the League of Voters. Not a lot now, now I get the 50 only.

MM: Mhm. But how old were you at the time? When you were appointed to the—

BM: Everybody thought I was too young because evidently I look young.

MM: You do look young.

BM: I know I look young. What are we gonna do about it?

MM: (laughing) Yeah!

BM: It's always caused me a problem, you know, cause I was, I think I was 41. I didn't think I was young.

MM: 41, mhm.

BM: Or 42. I didn't think I was young. I mean, I never thought about it.

MM: So, suddenly you're involved. With New York City planning, right?

BM: They're the most important agency in the city. And I was one of the members, the commissioner.

MM: Mhm, um, I wanted to ask you, um, this is an aside, but maybe now I can ask it, I wanted to ask you, um, about, Robert Moses.

BM: (laughing) Robert Moses. Yeah.

MM: Do you, do you have, uh, can you speak—?

BM: I was there with Robert Moses. Uh, actually Robert Moses liked me. Uh, did I like him? Well, I think he did some negative things and some good things. We wouldn't have had our parks, if it weren't for Moses. We wouldn't have had the park lands in Staten Island, we wouldn't have had our beaches. On the other hand, he, uh, so he accomplished a lot, on the other hand, he probably did some negative things. Like he did the Cabot plaza, those big buildings, and tore down tenements, and tore down tenement houses where there were homeless living in. Uh, he was good and bad, but, he liked me because I voted against a

highrise that was right next to his Lincoln Tunnel. I didn't think it belonged there, for density reasons, for congestion, for a whole variety, and also for density. I'm very much against the towers and high density. You know what high density is?

MM: Yes, tell me why.

BM: What?

MM: Tell me why you are against high density.

BM: Uh – first of all – uh, especially for low-income people who like to look out the window and see their children... But I'm against it because it has congestion, uh, the people don't know each other, it's very impersonal, and puts shadows, on uh, well, now we're getting into preservation, shadows on the park, uh for a whole variety of reasons like that.

MM: Can I ask you a modern question, just for a moment. What do you think about the super towers, in Manhattan.

BM: Uh, we're, I'm against them. The only people who live in them are the people from Asia, or those other people, you know, they're, actually they're not even renting at this point. I don't know if you know that. But rent's going down in Manhattan. Uh, environmentally I'm against it. Uh, Midtown, in Midtown, where they're increasing it, they're like shadows, the people walking under tunnels. The uh, subways are already overcrowded, and uh, there's nobody really to fix the subways. The congestion is terrible. I go to school, and uh, it takes me hours to get home. Uh, Manhattan is, become – everybody says it, I don't know if you say it, but Manhattan is terrible. It is so crowded, so dense, the environment is awful. It's dirty, uh, the Midtown zoning is ... Well there's a couple of reasons, the Midtown zoning – is towers they're walking under – they're gonna be, gonna be, they're gonna be walking under tunnels.

MM: They're gonna be covering the street?

BM: Tall, tall things there, and density is – good density is very important for people in planning. Uh, the environment is very important. I'm also against it because they're selling

air rights. I was the first one who was against the selling of air rights. Well here's something about that—

MM: So tell me, so tell me, so this—

BM: I think I have that...

MM: So let's walk back, so you were on the planning commission. Tell me about your proudest moments or the projects you feel you remember as a, as a highlight for you.

BM: Uh, my proudest moments?

MM: Yeah, on the planning commission.

BM: I'm not sure this is the proudest moment, because it scared me. I was the only commissioner dissenting on the master plan, and you could read it, rather than ask me a question – tells you why I dissented. Uh, you know, I was all alone, but it ended, first of all, they gave us, they wouldn't give us copies before they published it. We didn't write it, some of the staff wrote it. And uh, they gave us copies, but you couldn't xerox the copies. Cause they didn't want us to distribute it. It was a very paranoid operation. We never saw it till the end. And, uh, I was against it. The others finally when they uh, had given away all the stuff, but when they finally published it, the publishers called me up which was very good. Even though, the real estate didn't like me, I had, the public people liked me. And the printers called me up, they said – I don't know what they called me, Mrs. Spatt, Commissioner, or what, Beverly, everyone called me Beverly. Even the elevator man. And, uh, they said, we printed up the master plan to send to the real book, which I've since given away, all, and your dissent at the back is all mixed up.

MM: Oh, they didn't—

BM: And they let me fix it, which was really very interesting, yes?

MM: Yes. It is.

BM: So, you know, I, even though people hated me, there were also others that, you know, were watching what I was doing. It was the public. But it wasn't the powerful people, but in this case it was. Anyhow, so they put my dissent in the back of the book. They had to. But nobody would sign it after that. In other words, they just said it was a proof on the City Planning Commission. None of the commissioners put their names to it.

MM: Once your dissent was included.

BM: Once I dissented. And also, the Regional Plan Association – I don't know if you've ever heard of the Regional Plan Association, it's a big association, and important, of the region. New Jersey, Connecticut, New York. They had a big meeting on a master plan. And, uh, they said Beverly, we can't invite you to speak, because you know they were in with the, they didn't want to be out. But if you get these printed up we will put them on a table outside, right where the people come out of the meeting. And they put it on the table, and it was like after a wedding how everyone rushes to get the food?

MM: (laughing) Breaking down the doors.

BM: I printed up a thousand of them. My children and I and my husband sat on the living room floor and collated it. A, uh, priest in Carroll Gardens, the uh, I was active with the communities, I, I, believed in the communities, and the people. And uh, the priest had it all printed for me. I – didn't even charge me, we collated it on the floor, and carried it to Sam's truck, it almost broke the car down. And uh, after that, I won't say hell broke through, *heaven* broke through. After that, it became a big thing. And the New York Times had it on the front page. And Richard Reeds wrote the article. I won't tell you how he got it.

MM: Can I, (laughing) can I ask, why, and this is it, for the people who are listening, who are gonna listen to this interview, tell me, explain, if you can, why you opposed the master plan. Wh-what was your dissent, what was your argument?

BM: It wasn't a plan. It wasn't a plan. It had nothing to do with planning. You can read it when you go home, rather than take time. It had nothing to do with planning. Uh, it left it

vacant. This was supposed to be the master plan for the future of New York. It had nothing to do with planning. And, uh, it should've been, I discussed it in the, uh, dissent. Then, as I said, all hell broke loose. Uh, all the magazines, everything started writing about it and me. And they came from Denmark to interview me, from, uh, Germany, they had in all the newspapers from England. It was hard, I mean.

MM: A lot of it—too much attention?

BM: I'm really not this great extrovert, you know they say “if you can't stand the heat in the kitchen, get out of it” or whatever the expression is. You know, I'm not a political person. I'm very private. I was just doing my job. And Dorothy Graham, head of the Washington Post, had that big article—

MM: Katharine Graham, mhm.

BM: —then she invited me to her soirée. I'm not a soirée person.

MM: Did you go?

BM: Yeah, I went but I left.

MM: Did you meet Katharine Graham?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: Did you meet Katharine Graham?

BM: Yeah, Katherine Graham, was that her name? Yes I may have.

MM: And what did you think of her?

BM: Well I didn't have that much time at all. I thought is, they pass around these little pieces of steak on pieces of toast. I couldn't even – I could eat it, I mean it was... how do you

separate it, there wasn't a knife or anything like that! I left very shortly. My husband and I—

MM: Where was that? Was it at her—

BM: It was in somebody's big apartment—

MM: Here in New York?

BM: New York, over the park. Central Park South. I left very soon. You know, they took the articles from the *Times* and it became a big thing all over the world. And...

MM: Cool, but hard.

BM: It was, it was hard. People didn't know it was hard, but I am, you know... I'm not this.... You know everybody – when I was on the city planning committee – everybody was inviting me. Who was the publisher... the Annenbergs? They invited me to dinner. He used to – off the record. (tape pauses) It was, you know... To the dinner parties, I asked my husband. Otherwise we didn't do things together. He had his medicine, I didn't interfere with that. I felt that doctors deserved what they got. I wasn't a good doctor's wife, because I felt they made too much money. I believed in free medical care. I'm for—

MM: Good for you.

BM: And I would say so. We once went to a – they had a ball. Annual ball. I went to one. And I said what I believed and I never went to another one.

MM: Oops.

BM: I wasn't a good doctor's wife. I didn't invite doctors to dinner parties. You know, you're supposed to network. I had a lot of dinner parties, but I didn't network in the ways you're supposed to. But my husband wasn't the type either.

MM: So he was OK with that.

BM: He was a doctor! If one of his patients couldn't get food and she was old, he would go to the grocery store and buy her food, and bring it to her house. He was not – he didn't make a lot of money, but he was not that kind of a doctor. So it's OK for me to be the kind of person I was. We never discussed it, he never was opposed to it. He, you know, he was a pure physician, he wasn't interested in politics or anything like that.

MM: So, but he was supportive of you?

BM: Yes, and so was his family. He didn't have a father, a family. But his uncle was the head of the Republican Party in Brooklyn, and a big real estate person. But they never objected to me, what I did. Which was very nice.

MM: Ok so I want to ask about – so you're on the Planning Commission, and then your attention is also starting to turn to Historic Preservation.

BM: What happened is, in 1964 I was appointed city planning commissioner and I had tenure, so Lizzie couldn't throw me out. He wanted to. And, though he did ask me to come to Gracie Mansion.

MM: And that was because of the master plan?

BM: Because...

MM: ... Debacle?

BM: I voted against everything.

MM: OK.

BM: Not because – I don't believe in voting against everything just to vote against everything. But I did believe in the public sphere. And I have a paper on it, or something. I do believe in public participation. You know, it started in Greece, and I, for Pembroke, I was a

student of philosophy and classics. Pembroke gave me that. And I—

MM: That was – I wanted to ask, that was your major, your concentration?

BM: No, my major was English.

MM: English.

BM: But if I took a course of classics, I also the same time took a course in philosophy, and I wrote the same paper for both. It...

MM: Efficient.

BM: It was good. Anyway, where are we?

MM: So you said you believe in civic engagement, and you were voting ‘no’ on a lot of things.

BM: And not because I wanted to vote ‘no’. Actually it was very hard. I used to cry, sometimes go into the bathroom – ladies room and cry. It wasn’t easy.

MM: Did you have any backup from your colleagues, who are also voting ‘no’?

BM: No. But I did – so the top staff I did have backup from, but I had backup from the hundreds of people who work for City Planning. And when the mayor – well first, the mayor called me – Lindsay called to get support for the next election even though I was a dissenter. I didn’t. If I had supported it, they would have reappointed me. But I couldn’t make that decision, I wasn’t going to do that just to get reappointed. And... they weren’t reappointing me and loads of people came out, wrote letters, hundreds of letters to the mayor to reappoint me. Mostly community people, but a couple of our presidents: Bobby Abrams for the Bronx, the Borough president of Manhattan. They all supported me. And – he wasn’t going to appoint me, because I was – you know. And... pretty bad times, it was very hard. He – my term was up. And he let me go. However the next mayor appointed me. The staff of different

mayors used to come to me for help. I didn't give away any secrets, but I explained things to them. I did that when I was chairman of Landmarks too, so I knew this—

MM: What kind of question would they come to you with?

BM: Well if it was a zoning decision, the staff didn't understand it, and I would explain what zoning was. So I knew the staff, it's more important to know the staff than the head, do you know that? A lot of people don't know that. They think—

MM: Especially in city government.

BM: Well, anything. It's important to know who the staff is, even in finance or anything. It's more important to know the assistant to the C.E.O. or what, than the C.E.O. Anyway the staff has always been for me, and the City Planning Commission staff – hundreds – came about with a petition to reappoint me. They put themselves on the line.

MM: That gives me goosebumps.

BM: They also wrote a letter to the *Times*. So they really put themselves on the line. But because the mayor wanted to get rid of me, and John Elliot the chairman wanted to get rid of me, I was a pain in the neck! – to him. Anyway, but the next mayor – I think it was Beame, the next mayor – but I was with Lindsay for most of the time because Wagner at that time, his term was over in a few months. They called me Wagner's revenge.

MM: (laughs) Mhm.

BM: Anyhow, uh I knew the staff, and also, being born to appoint a park commission—a certain person to be the park commissioner. And they knew that the Park Conservancy, the civic group, did more. So I got a phone call, would I arrange a meeting with the Park Conservancy? I said, I'll arrange a meeting, you know, I knew them. But, uh, but I didn't support the person, I just arranged the meeting.

MM: You're a fixer, mhm.

BM: So I guess they were grateful, and also they knew of me, the staff. And they appointed me—

MM: (overlapping) They trusted you.

BM: I don't think he was afraid of women, either. So he appoin- – and he never bothered me. I did whatever I pleased, which is very unusual, cause now, the thing they object, there's protesting city planning like crazy, and they're protesting landmark preservation, but, no, the Mayor never told me what to do. I did whatever I wanted to do. I did that with Beame and he made me head of the Landmark Preservation Commission. How he did that...I was friendly with Mayor Cuomo, and I went to Mario's office. And we sat there. He was on the floor doing his exercises, 'cause he had a bad back, and we were trying to decide where I fit in. So we decided I had to take a job that had tenure, because if I didn't, I'd be out. So we went through the green book, and we decided that Landmark Preservation, they had to have a planner on the board, and they didn't have a planner. Also someone from Brooklyn, they didn't have someone from Brooklyn. So, when I got a call, you know, "am I interested in working for City Government?" I said yes, for the Landmark Commission, and they appointed me.

MM: So, just to circle back. So Mario Cuomo calls you up and says—

BM: No he didn't call me up. He had already – Mario wanted to run for Governor. And of all the people he invited the first time to a public meeting – not a public meeting, to a breakfast, he invited me 'cause he knew that I was a community person. And that I had a lot of – a reputation in the *New York Times* and elsewhere. So he invited me and I listened and actually I thought he was good. Not his son, Mario. So I knew him. After that we sort of, I don't know, we got friendly. But it – oh he used to come to the City Planning Commission with a, uh, zoning change. They wanted to eliminate a school to put highrises. And I was the only one who voted for him... 'cause I was against this. And the community was against it, they never confirmed with the community.

MM: But you and he got to be—

BM: —not—

MM: —professionally friendly (overlapping)

BM: You know, know each other. So I discussed it with him, and that's how I got to be chairman of the City Planning Commission, and I met one of the commissioners, lives around the corner. Not a commissioner, he's a preservationist, important preservation. I met him going to the subway.

MM: And who is that?

BM: I won't tell you.

MM: Lives in this area?

BM: He was a, he was a preservationist.

MM: In this neighborhood?

BM: Yeah.

MM: Yeah.

BM: And very important.

MM: Yeah.

BM: And he helped get this first landmark district. And I met him on – going to the subway. He said, “how did you get to be chairman of the Landmark Commission?” I mean I said it accordingly, I said I was sleeping with the mayor.

MM: (laughs). Hope he got the joke.

BM: But the preservationists weren't happy with me either because they were a small group, small, elite group of Manhattanites who controlled the Commission, and wanted these Manhattan districts to be decimated. None of the outer boroughs were involved, none of the community people. These elite group, completely out of proportion to their numbers. They controlled the commission. I opened up the commission. And I did surveys of the local areas, and the community people were involved, we went out to the communities to discuss with them my involvement. My commissioners went with me. I also did not appoint anybody who was – just because they were elitists, or just because they were black or white. I had to be – they had to be dedicated to landmark preservation. And they were professional. I appointed... a head of – one of the professors head of the Spanish, I think the Spanish, Institute of Columbia and I appointed the head of preservation at Columbia. The head. They resign after awhile, they felt it wasted their time.

MM: Can I ask you a question about—

BM: And, excuse me, I did not appoint anybody the mayor sent me. And luckily Beame was agreeable. But I also appointed a black man.

MM: I wanted to ask you about race and historic preservation.

BM: Yeah.

MM: About historic preservation in specific communities. I want to ask you about gentrification, and its relationship to preservation at that time when you were working on the Landmarks Commission.

BM: I, I always worried about it. Because you know there are two sides of me. One, I'm for people, the other side for actual preservation. I worry about it. And I worry about it there, but what I did is I opened it up to the other boroughs of the communities. So we did surveys of all the communities with the help of the participation of the community people. And before I designated, I made a mistake the first time. The sideway district. We designated, but I never talked with them. And the Board of Estimate, which is, at that time, the Board of Estimate,

not city council, they turned it down. And I think they were right because – and that was a lesson for me. From then end on, before we ever did anything, we went to the communities and talked to them about preservation and what it meant, and...

MM: Do you—

BM: We opened it up.

MM: Do you remember working with any notable civil rights leaders at the time?

BM: Well at City Planning I did. And not in preservation.

MM: In planning, do you remember any of those instances?

BM: Yeah the mayor president, jesus what's his name. Mayor (inaudible). The mayor president of Manhattan. Yeah, I worked with the head of New Amsterdam, Amsterdam News.

MM: Yes.

BM: I used to work with them, you know, we agreed. But I also worked with Citizens Budget Commission which is really a – presidents of banks and real estate, or things like that. But they agreed with me, we became best friends. In fact I dedicated my book to John Levitz who was head of it. Too with their staff, and the head of it and I used to go out to lunch together, because... I was not against... things. If it was inappropriate, so they were against certain things too. Lindsay used to use – I don't know if you know what the Capital Budget is? It gets an expense budget. He'd use the capital budget for expense budget items. So I dissented on that, I voted against it all the time. So that was – the assistant of the Budget Commission became my friends.

MM: So moving – so I'm going back to when the survey work is being done in these different communities, so you were actively involved in setting forth the neighborhood survey.

BM: Yeah, I opened it up to the neighborhoods, and to the neighborhood people. And we had meetings with them, as well as the real estate people, the communities. And I opened it up to the people. Discussed with them, we had pictures of their houses, and my commissioners and staff went with me to the meetings at night and someone would say, “Oh that’s my house!”

MM: Now did the Manhattan – I know Manhattan preservation at the time, you know, we have these landmark cases, preservation of Central Park, preservation of Grand Central Station, prominent with Jackie O. who was involved in—

BM: She got all the credit.

MM: So I wanted to ask you about that.

BM: Well...

MM: I'm sure you've been asked before, but I want to ask you about that.

BM: Actually it was... I knew, I knew them through my father, the head of the corporation council’s office. Bernie... what was his last name? Anyway, and I knew they would be defending-- Well first I went to the mayor. And I went to, I actually met with the deputy mayor. And my council Dorothy Meyer, who really was a preservationist, she was on the council, she was wonderful. We talked about going to the deputy mayor, what I would say and everything, and they didn’t want to appeal the case. Because if they lost, it would have cost them billions of dollars. So...

MM: We’re talking about the Grand Central case?

BM: Yeah, and I, you know, I was prepared. And Farley, he agreed. He said “boy, you and your council have loads of balls.”

MM: (laughs)

BM: Well I didn’t argue him about that. I mean I didn’t like what he said about me. I’m a

woman, but that's what he said: you and your council have loads of balls. And I've said this publicly at a big meeting of a thousand people, and everybody laughed, and they appealed the case. And – Oh Bernie Rachel was corporation counsel's head, and I called Bernie and I said, you know, “we're very concerned with it.” They were going to defend, and he put Lenny Koerner. Leonard Koerner and Dorothy Meyer, and maybe the commission, should get the credit. But Leonard did get the credit, only among professional groups. They knew that Lenny was involved. He's still alive. And Jackie Onassis and the Municipal Society also got the credit.

MM: And that's just because she was famous already. Jane Jacobs?

BM: No, Jane Jacobs was earlier.

MM: Earlier.

BM: She wasn't involved with that.

MM: OK. OK. But it's kind of a sore spot, for the people who did the work, didn't really get any... credit?

BM: Well they weren't involved at Grand Central. They were in the village.

MM: But in terms of Jackie O. and her team—

BM: Jackie O. was just involved with Grand Central. They and M.A.S. – M.A.S. was a more elitist group – and... I think they tried to meet – like they had a big real estate person who everybody hates because he's doing these towers and everything. They had him as their fundraiser. As a result, a lot of people left. It's not like the historic district council. We're a people's group.

MM: People's group.

BM: But they're trying to change, I think.

MM: Can I ask you a question as an aside as we're talking about sort of notable figures, I wanted to make sure I asked you about, um, Donald Trump's buildings in New York.

BM: Donald Trump's building?

MM: Did you ever meet Donald Trump?

BM: I didn't have anything to do with—no.

MM: And his buildings...

BM: We had nothing to do with it.

MM: Not great for preservation?

BM: We had nothing to do with any of his things, thank god.

MM: OK, I just wanted to ask because in the 80s, as we go into—

BM: But I designated the park, even dissented once against my own commissioners. Uh, there was a building opposite Grand [inaudible]. And it really wasn't appropriate to be designated, it didn't have the criteria. It was only because the people wanted to save it because of the neighborhood. Not, it wasn't a density problem because we're now concerned with density and landmarks, we're concerned with architectural historic facts. And I would've vote against it, my Commission voted for it, but later on they said it was it was a mistake. But, uh, you know I didn't get into trouble at Landmarks, I had a wonderful staff.

MM: Can I ask more—

BM: Thanks to the staff I did things, they were wonderful and they were open – not now – anybody who came in could see me, or see the staff, and talk to the staff, they didn't have to – now they can't do that.

MM: Yes. So I want, so OK—

BM: I could give it all to Pembroke and to the League of Women Voters.

MM: So I have a couple more questions. Um, I want to hear more about a little bit more about preservation work here in Brooklyn Heights. I also, and you can talk about them whatever order, I also want to ask you your thoughts on the World Trade Center buildings—

BM: Yeah I dissented on that—

MM: And your thoughts and memories seeing the towers come down on September eleventh.

BM: What was I—

MM: Can you tell me your memories of September eleventh and seeing uh, your feeling on the towers—

BM: 9/11?

MM: —Yeah, coming down, that event.

BM: Well I did a vote against I guess I should have voted against it, I abstained. I was getting my, I don't know, my doctorate or my masters at the time, and my professor was the planning director for the World Trade Center. He was – wonderful professor, a wonderful man. And it was a very hard decision what to do. I abstained with a dissenting report. Terrible, huh? I should have dissented. Anyway, actually the council to the City Planning Commission agreed with me, you know they pushed out a lot of businesses and it was an empty building. The state and federal government had to go into the building. And that's, even the present building.

MM: The Freedom Tower.

BM: You know they, we didn't need it and we certainly don't need the second one. But I'm not on the commission.

MM: Were you in New York on September 11th, 2001?

BM: Uh, I wasn't on the commission then—

MM: No, you were in New York though—

BM: Yeah, I was here and my husband went to work he didn't know, we didn't know, we're right across the river. And, uh, he says everything is closed up. We come home, and uh, I'm very close with the people have had the apartment over there. Across the hallway, it was one apartment at that time. And uh, I went over there and they didn't know anything about it so we put the television on, and we found out. And actually her husband was killed because he went up there to lecture. On the dining room – upstairs, top floor. And she never found him. And from then on we adopted that family, and they're part of the family. The seder I had all the first cousins of my, children of my sister's, and I had them. Uh, also her husband, it's a mixed family too, she has a Catholic child and a Jewish child. So, uh, we adopted them.

MM: Did you walk to the river that day?

BM: No, but I stayed with the baby, it was a little baby. And, uh, she went around looking for her husband's bones. So in that case I was involved but otherwise I wasn't involved, no.

MM: Um—

BM: And I don't think they should have built another one.

MM: Yeah I was going to ask you—

BM: Because we already had a first one, and when I worked for the bishop, our personnel director had been in the first one.

MM: Yes, the '93—

BM: And he was traumatized by it and he left and became a, our personal director at Catholic Charities. It was terrible. It was real estate.

MM: Yeah.

BM: Terrible.

MM: Yeah, I wanted to ask your memory about the, your thoughts on the building and the new building. Um, but I don't, the new, the new tower is not, not fully occupied? I don't know the occupancy rates of the new tower, um...

BM: No I don't know it but, uh, I don't know it. But I know that the old tower was all government workers in it and a few others, there was some, uh—

MM: Investment bakers—

BM: —Brokers, some things like that it but it was a failure financially. Other than government money. But, uh, and they had a lot of problems with the you know the architects there were a lot of fights. Uh, also the first one, I was, the second one is better. I haven't gone into it, I don't like it, uh, when I first went up, the elevator it would shift all the time. Well you know it was so high, that when you were in the elevator it would shift all the time. I don't know about the new one. But, uh, they eliminated a lot of things down there.

MM: Just to get the towers—

BM: A lot of businesses. I don't know if they have an article for the *Wall Street Journal*, Joe Orlando or something wrote in the Wall – on uh, in cranes, if you look it up. Joel Lett I think his name is he wrote about what happened to all the businesses down there. We didn't need it. But, uh...

MM: So be it.

BM: Anyway it's very difficult for us to fight real estate. They control the mayor.

MM: So here, uh just turning to Brooklyn, I want to bring it back around to your work about preservation here in Brooklyn Heights.

BM: Yeah what about it?

MM: So did you, um, tell me about work you did specifically in this neighborhood to preserve this neighborhood.

BM: Oh, that was when I was all the city planning commission.

MM: OK.

BM: I was for them. And, uh, I helped them, in voting. And I was always for it, but I wasn't intimately involved. I was involved as a commissioner, and for them, and when we had limited heights districts, I voted for them. Uh, because I thought it was important, and not because I live here. Uh, it was, uh, actually this is not a great building. It's a nice apartment, but I take care of it myself. I buy everything myself. Do everything myself. Uh, it's, we were the first historic district, and I was very involved in that, in support. Uh, verbal support and if I had a vote I was involved in the vote. But nobody was against it.

MM: So Brooklyn Heights was the first—

BM: Yes—

MM: Historic district neighborhood—

BM: I think in the country—

MM: --in the country.

BM: Uh, Otis Pearsall and Nancy. Otis was the person said to me, what are you doing as commissioner? You know, how did I get to be commissioner? Then they were very happy to have me. Anyhow, Otis and Nancy really, and Martin Schneider, there were others involved, but Otis and Nancy and Martin Schneider, they really were lead people. Martin doesn't get invited to speak, I don't know why, Otis and Nancy do actually, we gave Otis and Nancy, uh, the grassroots, uh, we gave them some kind of award too. And they were lions, both of the lions. And, uh, they're very good. Uh, the only problem in Brooklyn Heights in my time, it was a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, a WASP neighborhood. It was controlled by the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, other than that it was homeless, a few Jews, uh homeless people. Uh, you know, drunkards in the tenements. And they wanted to get rid of it, but, uh on the other hand, it was a good thing. Not to get rid of them. That's where you get into gentrification.

MM: Yes.

BM: Uh, they worked very hard. They put it on the national register, and then they made it a historic district – and the state register, got the state involved. Uh, but they were also, uh, influential people. In that, Otis – I'm friendly with Otis now.

MM: Um, so OK, so I just want to – I don't want to take too much your time cause we're—

BM: You may belong to this group for all I know—

MM: Oh no, no I'm a long way from New York.

BM: (overlapping) I don't care!

MM: (laughing) I'm a Minnesota archivist, so. Uh, so I want to, um just wrap, I want to wrap up this interview talking about um, your time, your life currently. Um, and after your work of preservation and all of your civic engagements. Tell me about your life now.

BM: Well, after being, uh I was with Koch for a while, the next mayor.

MM: What'd you think about him?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: What'd you think about him?

BM: Well you know I hadn't mentioned, but, uh the vote. I had formed with Phil Jessup and a lot of people about ten people in the heights a first democratic reform group in the heights. And I think Wagner knew that, too, so that was good, because he became a reformer at that point. Against the Democratic party, and it's no longer the same reform group. And uh, what was the question again?

MM: Well I just wanted to know about—

BM: Oh what I think—

MM: Yeah.

BM: So after I left the, uh, Commission, the governor offered me a job in charge of all New York State Preservation. In other words I went from one mayor to the next. Or one governor ... and I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to leave my husband—

MM: Yes—

Bm: He wasn't going to go to Albany.

MM: Albany—

BM: And, uh, I didn't know what to do. I was surprised and shocked, and I didn't know what to do. Marital, this was marital. And, uh, I, first I said I would take it, after a lot of decisions. And, uh, I went to Albany and my husband agreed, we were, when I say independent, we were together. And, uh, he drove me with my stuff, my junk that's in the hallway, to Albany, put in Albany. And I met with the head of it, Lehman. And, he, he was crippled from of the

war, but he walked me about two miles because in Albany, I don't know if you've been there—

MM: Yeah—

BM: From one building to another I guess he had to prove himself. Uh, anyway, and, uh, I spoke with the staff, I was prepared, I asked them questions, they were delighted – the staff – that I was coming. And in fact, they took me around, to look at houses that I would buy, to, you know, I had to have some place to live. And, uh they really wanted me there but, I'm a staff person, a professional, you know what I'm saying? And, uh, then I spoke to the two previous heads, the SHPO they're called, State Historic Preservation Officers, who ran the state preservation group. And they said Beverly don't take it. It's not for you. They said it's just a pencil—

MM: Paper pushing—

BM: Paper pusher. And, uh, I tried to make up my mind, what to do. And finally, I mean I signed in, and the personnel director, they didn't want me, the top staff didn't want me, the professionals wanted me – they said they wanted me. Uh, but the top said to me, personnel director said, you're just a political appointee. I said I was chairman of Landmarks, I have a doctorate. I taught at Barnard College, preservation. Anyway, there I went to Lehman invited me to his house. Not to eat, incidentally. Do you want a drink?

MM: (laughing) Oh no, I'm OK, I'm OK. Do you wanna stop for a drink?

BM: No, but, I have wine. And coffee, and cookies all leftover from Easter and Passover.

MM: (laughing) Oh that's okay!

BM: Uh, he invited me to his house. Very luxurious, and it was an apartment, just one apartment on the floor. And he says I gotta sign in. He started telling me the rules, I said I have never signed in. He said, he says all, "when I was in the army everybody signed in." I said I have never signed in, I could work all night, I don't sign it. Anyway I decide he didn't

want me either. So I finally decided after I talked to everybody, uh, I was leaving my husband for a week to go back weekends. He, I turned them down. Merrill was furious with me. But he did the same thing when he was going to run for president. He said yes, he said no, he said yes, he said no. He was furious with me.

MM: Did he—

BM: He never talked to me again.

MM: Did you speak on the phone? Did he call you or...

BM: Yep, he was furious. Oh I called him and said I wasn't coming. And I went up and told my husband and took all my stuff back.

MM: And he, and he just—

BM: Well, Lehman was impossible, and everybody told me that he really wasn't interested in preservation. Uh, it was just a good job for sixty-five thousand, but I'm like my husband, I don't really care about the money. So after that, and besides, I guess it was time to get off the merry-go-round. I didn't know what to do. I was on the Board of Preservation, of our district council, I was on their board. And uh, well before I got on their board, I wasn't on their board. And I didn't know what to do, and I heard the bishop, I was in the country, it was a hard decision. I heard, we had a country home, that was my father's compound. We all had houses there, my sisters and I. And I heard this bishop, Joe Sullivan, debating with Romney. I don't know if you remember Romney, the father, who was head of Urban Development, Housing and Urban Development, the federal government. I heard him debating with him on housing and he ran circles around Romney. And, I decided I wanted to work for him. So I called him and I got an appointment with him. He says he has no money, he was Bishop in Brooklyn. He has no money and he hates having, he once had an assistant with more trouble than it was worth. He did his own work, he was brilliant. And uh, I said I would work for nothing. Anyway. he didn't hire me. And then, uh, my father was partner to a law firm, uh...

MM: Can I ask you question?

BM: Yes.

MM: So you're Jewish.

BM: Sorry?

MM: You're a Jewish person, but you mentioned a bishop and the Catholics a lot.

BM: Yes, he was a Catholic bishop.

MM: In your area?

BM: Yes, Brooklyn.

MM: And so is that how you just overlap, because you're in the same community together? Or how did that relationship, how did your relationship with Catholics in the community develop?

BM: Well, let's put it this way: I didn't know what to do after... I didn't take the job in Albany. I didn't know what to do. And I knew that no one would hire me in planning because, as Ed Logue, who probably never heard of—

MM: I do, m-hmm.

BM: Oh, he was wonderful!

MM: Really? tell me about this.

BM: After I left city planning, I met with Ed. And I told him I'd like a job with him. He was head of New York Urban Development at that time – moved from Boston. He was wonderful in Boston.

MM: Yeah, I used to work for the Boston Redevelopment Authority in their archive so—

BM: Wonderful. And he spent about an hour or more with me. He said, “Beverly, I’m a planner, too.” He showed me reports he had done. He said “I would love to hire you, but I can't.” He says I have to work with mayors. So I knew that I would never get hired as a planner for government of a government person. And because, you know, Ed said “you won’t get hired.” So I tried to decide what I should do with my life. And, as I said, I went – I got on the board. But first I had to do a – there was a period, I had to wait to see if I was a good enough. And they appointed me to the board. And I was walking along the path, and I had a – what is it I had? What is Saint Paul have?

MM: Like a vision, a moment?

BM: Yeah, like Saint Paul. I forget. And I thought – I had watched Bishop Sullivan on television, maybe if I work for him, I’ll – that’s where I should go. And I thought he was – he was into – the way he debated with Romney, I knew he was a liberal. That's why I decided to work for him. And people have a funny idea about the Catholic Church. Sure some of them are very bigoted, but some of them are very liberal. He was more liberal than I, and I thought he made me get spiritual. And he would also take the brunt. I would write – I would write his speeches, but he would take the brunt.

MM: And what year was this?

BM: I beg your pardon?

MM: What year was this that you started working for him?

BM: I worked for him twenty-five years.

MM: You’ve been working for him for twenty-five years?

BM: Till he died.

MM: Till he died.

BM: He had an accident. And...

MM: So you saw him, just to circle back, so you see him debate Romney Senior – that's Mitt Romney's father. And you liked his style, seeing him debate.

BM: Yeah, he ran rings around Romney. And I knew that he thought the way I thought.

MM: About people and the City?

BM: People, and inclusiveness and.... He believed in good things.

MM: And so this – you're sort of stewing on this, and then it comes to you in a moment, and you think, “I think maybe I want to work for him.”

BM: Well, I decided I would want to work for him.

MM: And so you just called him up?

BM: I called him up and got an appointment. And I brought my book, and a couple of my dissents, and things. He said, “you’ve got a good brain, but,” he says “I have no money and it's a pain in the neck having an assistant.” He used to write his own speeches and.... So after two years, he hired me. I kept pursuing him. I had this man call him.

MM: Did you begin to attend Catholic Church? Were you – did you become... did you start following faith in that way?

BM: No.

MM: No, OK.

BM: You know if there – people have a funny idea about the Catholic Church. If there's one

God, there's only one God. And to tell you the truth, in the speeches we always referred back to the Old Testament. To Exodus and things like that. The liberal priests do that, and as Luke said – he even wrote about the gospels – as Luke said, it's just a continuation of – the, the New Testament is just a continuation of the Old Testament. I liked Luke. He was a poet and a doctor. I didn't like Paul. I didn't like Paul because he was – he didn't like women. Though he had women following him. But he was...

MM: So you, so you, for two years you pursue—

BM: I pursued him for two years, and said I'd work for nothing, and I worked for nothing for two years.

MM: And would you just see him around—

BM: He had his own budget. He didn't have the – I didn't work for Catholic Charities, I worked for the bishop.

MM: Right.

BM: I got paid by – on his line. And he didn't have money. Finally after to two years I said “you know my husband has to pay for my car fare.” And he said “how much do you want?” I was getting twenty-five thousand at Barnard. I was, at that point, Barnard was very fair, they kept raising me. Actually I never talked about Barnard. They called me, and asked me if I would work there. Teach there. I didn't ask them.

MM: To teach preservation and city planning?

BM: Planning and preservation. And I had to decide, because I was teaching at New School. A five-course seminar. I had to decide which one to do, so I chose Barnard. They interviewed me. But I didn't ask them, I never thought I'd be working for Barnard. I never thought I'd be teaching. I loved it. And my students are still friendly with me and many of them are planners.

MM: And it is another women's college as well.

BM: Yes, but I had some of the men come over because Columbia didn't have a planning/preservation department. So I had some men come over. And I go out to lunch with them still.

MM: Wonderful.

BM: Yeah.

MM: I know that education is a sort of cornerstone of your advocacy, that you believe in—

BM: Yeah.

MM: In education.

BM: I am for women's college. Barnard was a women's college. Actually, I always said my husband was more intelligent than I. I was intellectual, coming from Brown. Not – I'm not saying I'm not intelligent, but it was intellectual at Brown.

MM: I agree. (Overlapping) I think the student body today at Brown—

BM: My husband was intelligent. They had two-year – which I missed out on – two years contemporary civilization we had to take. It went all the way back to pharaoh – went back to the civilizations. We never had that at Brown.

MM: I'm sorry where – and just to correct, I don't know if you said this yet – where did your husband attend undergrad?

BM: Columbia. And they have a two-year a contemporary civilization, which is wonderful.

MM: So, just coming back. So you begin to work with the bishop, and you do become his assistant. And that you end up doing for twenty – you said twenty twenty, almost twenty-five

years.

BM: Yeah, and then he had an accident on the Long Island Expressway.

MM: A car accident? (Overlapping) And that must've been very difficult.

BM: And actually, just before his accident, he got to be seventy-five and he had to leave. The bishop at that time, the pope at that time, was conservative before the present pope. And he wasn't going to reappoint him... because he was liberal.

MM: You're kidding.

BM: So, he wasn't reappointed, and we said goodbye. We hugged and kissed each other and.... But I was friendly with him afterwards.

MM: Can I ask you a question, then. So, you then probably had a bird's eye view of the church sex abuse scandal that went down with the Catholic Church in, what was it, the early millennium?

BM: I didn't have any view of the Catholic church. I didn't have any negative view. I know loads of people were shocked that I worked for the Catholic Church, but...

MM: Can you, can you clarify what years this was that you're working for him? This was...

BM: What years?

MM: Yes.

BM: I think it was 1982.

MM: To '92 – And then for twenty-five years?

BM: '82? At least until... you know, yeah, at least twenty-five years.

MM: OK. So the church does go through this incredibly rocky period then, while you're working for the bishop.

BM: Yeah, and he had to, believe it or not, they asked him to write a United States workshop for all the bishops on it's abuse. I wrote it. I researched it.

MM: That's fascinating.

BM: And his secretary put it in Powerpoint. I didn't do any typing, I never typed. Even at Pembroke I didn't type my reports, I sent them all to my father, and his secretary typed them and sent them back. I'm not a typist.

MM: (Laughs) So you basically produced the content, or help him produce—

BM: I wrote this, I wrote the things. Of course I did a lot of research. I read a lot of books and did a lot of research. But why – he and I couldn't figure out why they asked him... to lead the whole workshop for all the bishops.

MM: Why do you think?

BM: I don't know.

MM: Because he was liberal?

BM: Because he was very liberal. In fact he'd gone to Catholic high schools, and said you know we, you shouldn't abuse the students who are gay. Not that he believed that they should act out their.... You know, after all, he was Catholic. But he – I don't know if you know Vatican II. John, the pope. Pope John, you know was the one who started Vatican II. He's the one that said everybody should get health care. I knew – I wrote on all the popes. When the French Revolution – the first, the pope there, he wrote on the workers' rights. So you know the Catholic Church has been involved. So, Vatican II, the Church of the modern world, changed everything. Why they asked the Bishop to lead this, I don't know. But I wrote it.

MM: And this is under Pope Ratzinger.

BM: Yeah.

MM: At the time.

BM: No it was, no I don't – was it under the present pope? No I think...

MM: It was the one before—

BM: Maybe under the present, uh, when did the present pope come in?

MM: Uh, Francis was just, not that long ago. And then Ratzinger was before.

BM: Maybe under him, but you know the American—

MM: He was quite conservative.

BM: The American Catholic, the United States Catholic bishops, they were all into their own. There are some that are very conservative but they're also into their own, like an abortion, I think it was Roach who said that, he was a bishop, and he said it's not just abortion, it's life. They're against capital punishment, they're against that, you should consider it done it by itself. It should be part of this, the question of life. And that's the way I look at it too. I didn't say that I'm not for abortion, I didn't write an, he never asked me to write an abortion. But I think that some of the people did look at it that way, suddenly, and the Catholic Church is different. And then they're all a group. (coughing) When you get old—

MM: Do you wanna stop for a drink?

BM: No, that's alright. When you get old, your voice changes. Uh, they're the only group that came out against, came out for immigration, they're the only religious group that came out for immigration, the only group that came out against that new welfare bill, Moynihan

came came out against it. You seem to know a lot, uh, they're the only group – Moynihan was the only group – and in fact the head of... Hillary Clinton when she first started out, uh, she belonged to that group, I forget the name of the group. Anyway it was in Washington. And the head of it, the man, the woman and the man, the man became head of, uh, Human Resources. He resigned when that bill came through, he was against it. Clinton, and I was surprised that Hillary, who found, started working in this group, her husband changed welfare. And, uh, the only group who was against it was the Catholic Church. So they have done some good things, and one of the key groups, is against, what they do with immigration. They come out and say it.

MM: And so—

BM: It's not monolithic you know? You can't judge by, uh, you know the Protestants have done some terrible things, the Jews have, the Old Testament god did some terrible things. I'd never knew my rabbi was unhappy with me, I went to confirmation, I say that's not right what they did. I don't think it was right, certain things, you know?

MM: I think it's fascinating that you, um, worked for the Bishop, and then you were this feminist, and at this point, by the time you were working for the Bishop, are you identifying with feminism at that time? Are you—

BM: Yes, uh, was I identify?

MM: Yeah. So he hires this feminist woman.

BM: I'm always a feminist. I'm always a woman, and uh, I think the fact that, I think my mother was a feminist, sometimes I think she was the power behind the throne. Not really, if my father hadn't been pride, and a southern gentleman, and intelligent, he probably wouldn't have gotten where he was. But uh, she, I think she helped him. I certainly didn't help my husband (laughing) but he didn't ask for it.

MM: So I want to, um, just ask you now—

BM: The feminists are not a, the feminists of your generation. A feminist is, we're women and we believe in this. Being women. I mean when, sometimes in City Planning, I'd go in the elevator, the elevator man in the stairs, said "why are you working, your husband's a doctor." So you know. But I'm a woman, you know?

MM: You're like, why are you asking. (laughing) So, um...

BM: (laughing) But I didn't belong to the groups because I wasn't against men.

MM: So I want to ask you if you have any last thoughts, I don't want to take up too much more of your time, but are there any last memories that you want to share for the record—

BM: Well, I already gave you some things, this, the AAUW, I don't know know why I joined it, I'm trying to eliminate some groups. I wrote that, they asked me, uh to speak. Uh, and then...

MM: Seventy—

BM: They asked me to speak on, uh, I wrote this... why did I write this for. Oh you know I guess I wrote it for them. Had includes, government decisions... that I wrote for them you know, I'll give you stuff. And this, my grandson. He, uh, applied to Cornell, they asked him about a person who influenced him, I can give you my copy.

MM: And he wrote about you.

BM: Yeah, he wrote about me. But he made a mistake, put NYU down, but that's okay. You can have that. Uh, this. I don't even want it, I saved it. I had a dinner party when I was at Pembroke. And I bought food, you know, from Thayer Street and things, and I invited, uh, six people I think. And they gave me this book—

MM: Ooh, this is lovely.

BM: So if you can find for me Irma Rosengard, I would appreciate that.

MM: Tell me, and this is again what happened to Irma, is basically, that's what you're asking?

BM: Excuse me?

MM: Ask me again that question?

BM: I want to know is she still alive and her address, Irma Rosengard.

MM: I'll find out for you.

BM: This is her picture here. I know that Anne died, Phyllis died. I don't know about her. But I know that, uh—

MM: Are you in this picture?

BM: Yeah, I'm here.

MM: OK. Thank you. That's right in, that's in Alumnae Hall. So this is the building that I, that the Archives are in now. That's my office.

BM: Yeah, and opposite was, I think, what's the name of it?

MM: I cannot remember the name of it.

BM: Oh you, you're young. You're supposed to know everything.

MM: (overlapping) I'm too new! (laughing) I'm too new. Um, this is a beautiful picture though.

BM: Yeah this was sitting on the thing. Now there was, this was sitting on the... or Metcalf or the other. The one opposite us. At that time there was open land.

MM: I think it's Alumnae.

BM: Now it's all crowded in.

MM: Maybe not.

BM: And this tells you, this uh, I had to speak at the Women's Planning Conference. This tells you about my life.

MM: (reading) Lecture, oh this is wonderful, wonderful.

BM: I think part of my influence is natural law. Uh, and natural law is, is a system of law determined by nature, it's inherent in nature. It's, and, human beings know it by reason. Reasoning. And it's the moral principle that should govern our lives and does – in fact the, uh, the commission, United Nations letter on human rights, I forget the title of it. It was really based on natural law, and I think that's really been my basis in terms of everything. You know – inclusiveness and equality and justice and righteousness and uh, you know we're cognizant by reason. You know reason is a very important factor in terms of us. You know that, you know natural law?

MM: Mhm.

BM: St. Aquinas, of course, and the other religious people said that it came from God. I don't interpret as it comes from God. I interpret, don't know what I interpret it. But I'm not Catholic, but Aquinas who, I love Aquinas, I like him because he's uh, intent. In other words, if something happens, let's say operating on a woman, and she dies, it's not intentional, it's not a criminal act, it's – it's an accident. The intent was to get the baby. Intent is a very important factor in decisions. Another thing that was important to me was hermeneutics. You know what hermeneutics is? Here's the thing on natural law. Saint Thomas Aquinas, natural law. I love Saint Thomas Aquinas. That doesn't mean I'm Catholic! I don't have to believe in the way that Catholics believe. Uh, where do I have it?

MM: What is this? This is...

BM: I don't know what that is. I don't know. When I was on Landmarks Commission I was the head, and I could do what I wanted. And the staff was behind me. I had a wonderful staff, I could not've accomplished it without the staff people. Uh, most people don't create their staff, but I do. They were all professionals, but uh. It was very very difficult. And uh, I was—

MM: Being on—

BM: I was on the Commission, uh Historic Preservation, but it was also very difficult being on the City Planning Commission. That really, I don't know how I did it. But I would do it again, don't get me wrong. But I, as my mother said, you're not going to be reappointed. I said, I know, but that's OK. I would do it again, but I did. It was very, very emotionally difficult for me. It was hard and, uh, I, bringing back the whole thing. Then, when I was on the Landmark Preservation Commission, that was 1970, I started work, they called me up at Barnard and asked me would I come and teach there. Evidently in the head of the geography department wanted me. Uh, I don't know, he must've read about me. I didn't know him, I didn't know anything about, I mean I didn't ask for the job. I went there, and they interviewed me and they took me. And, I taught there and at the same time I was on the, uh, Preservation Commission. And, at the same time, I was involved civic-wise. At Barnard, my students and I worked together. It was a hard time for the students. There were the drugs at the time, I don't know if you were part of it, some of the students were thrown out, some of the students had problems. And they, I guess they do it with certain professors. They talked with me, personally, do you know what I mean? And they were my students, and I talked with them personally. And, uh, it was very difficult. I was really having three jobs at one time, at the same time I was working for the Bishop. And at one point I decided I really was so overloaded and I went for analysis. I stayed in analysis seven years. And uh, when the governor asked me, this job, that probably helped me decide not to take another job. Though my analyst said he would come in on Saturdays, because I would come back on weekends, he would come in for me on Saturdays, but I didn't take the job anyhow. And uh, I stayed seven years, then one day I say I'm ready. And I went. And it had nothing to do with my family, my mother and father loved me. I know I was the favorite, that must've been hard on my two sisters. But, you know, and I was successful, I never had any problems. But it was very hard—

MM: Too much work.

BM: And all that. And I guess basically I'm sort of introverted. Though I did my jobs well, if I had to be among people I was among people. And, I, I, think it was the best thing I ever did. I think at that time, even though he said he would come in, I didn't take the governor's job.

MM: Maybe you learned to say no a little bit.

BM: It was good. Uh...

MM: I think I'm going to stop us here. Cause I think it's a great, great, place.

BM: Excuse me?

MM: I think that's a great place to stop.

BM: When did I stop?

MM: (laughing) Just for a moment.

BM: Oh!

MM: I just want to say that as we wind up this interview, I just want to say that I hoped to come here today and dig into areas of your life and history that you had not yet shared, um, in some of your other interviews.

BM: I'm still on the Board of Preservation.

MM: And that, uh, is, that is wonderful. And I, I am so grateful for you especially taking the time to share about your work, uh, with the Bishop, and all of it, and your life at Pembroke, your preservation work, and your civic work after that, and your life now. Um, so I just want to thank you for taking the time to do that.

BM: Thank you.

MM: And for sitting for this interview today.