

Transcript—Edna Graham Anness '50

Narrator: Edna Graham Anness

Interviewer: [Amy Sayfol?]

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Track 1

Amy Sayfol: [00:00] This is [Amy Sayfol?], Brown, Class of 1991, interviewing Mrs. Edna Graham Anness, class of 1950, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1988, in my dorm room, here at Brown, 108 Diamond, Providence, Rhode Island.

(break in audio)

Edna Graham Anness: It's on.

AS: (inaudible) (laughter) But any—I moved from Pennsylvania. I was there for four years. And then I lived here. I lived in Barrington. And [so, I'm glad I moved east?].

EGA: What year are you in?

AS: I'm 91.5. Which means I'm a mid-year freshman. This is my first semester.

EGA: Very good.

AS: And...

EGA: Mid-year. I didn't know they did that anymore.

AS: Yup. And that's why—I was telling you, this is a sorority, but my roommate and I are not part of the sorority.

EGA: Yeah, I understand.

AS: They kind of just stick mid-years wherever there's housing. So. Anyway. Why don't you [01:00] tell me about yourself and your background?

EGA: Where do you start? (laughs)

AS: Let's see. "Mother's and father's education." Did your parents go to college?

EGA: My mother did.

AS: [And where was that?]?

EGA: My father didn't. Mother went to what was then Rhode Island Normal School. And then she went back after my father died and got a bachelor's degree, and then she was three credits shy of a master's when she died. It was very... My father graduated from high school, and his father died that summer. And so he had to go into the business, which his father had. So he never went to school.

AS: Oh, I see. That's a shame. That is...

EGA: Well, financially it didn't seem to make any difference, because he was able to take off on it. But anyway. And then, I forgot to mention also that after Mother got out of Normal School, she enrolled at Pembroke. [02:00] But she never finished. She got married.

AS: How many years was she here?

EGA: Two, I believe.

AS: Two? Where are you—well, where did you grow up, go to high school?

EGA: I grew up in East Providence. And it was in the works that I would come to Pembroke, because several members of my family had. And so Mother didn't believe that East Providence High School was good enough to prepare one for Brown. So I went to Classical, in Providence. Which then was a much better school than it is now. And everybody automatically, almost, was accepted at Brown from Classical. It was like a training program for the school. So, I finished in mid-year. That's why [03:00] I was interested when you said you were a mid-year student. And I could have started in January of '46, but I had just turned 17 and my mother thought I was too young.

AS: Oh, I see. That's interesting. Did you just go through the curriculum fast, or take more credits or something?

EGA: No. No, it's just the way it happened. And when I came to Pembroke—I keep using that term because that's the way we were trained back then—I came with the returning service men. It was quite an experience entering Brown with older men. And I never realized how old they were until a year after I graduated, I came back for some reason, and the freshmen were enrolled, and they had these little beanies. And they looked like little boys. (laughter)

AS: Little kids.

EGA: And then suddenly I realized, you know, what a difference it was. [04:00] They were men, and they were mature. And it was quite an adjustment for us girls to get to know these guys who were so much older, and all worldly-wise. And we had problems with some of our mothers not wanting us to go out with them because we were just kids. It was quite a difference between 17 and 22.

AS: That was the age difference?

EGA: And after you had come back from a war, it was—

AS: Yeah, I can imagine.

EGA: —it was quite different.

AS: So did you go out with any of them? Was it, like, a challenge to get to know them, or...

EGA: No, no, no. They had Freshman Week. They had an open house. And they all came. They all wanted to get into the college mainstream. However, I've been thinking these things over last night, you know, prepared to come in and talk to you. And I remember when we were freshmen the first week, two weeks, getting adjusted to college life—because Brown used to have [05:00] the Brown beanies, and the freshmen were—what's the term?

AS: Singled out?

EGA: Hazed.

AS: Oh, OK. (laughs)

EGA: The veterans would have none of this. And there was no freshman hazing, and no beanies. And it was all very serious. I mean, they weren't coming back to behave like 17-year-olds. So they decided that they would have freshman hazing week at Pembroke. Sort of to make up for this. And we all had to wear the same outfits. Grey skirts and white blouses and sneakers and bows in our hair. And we were hazed. But very nicely. Very ladylike. (laughter) Sort of made up for some of the lack of not having the Brown freshmen. We didn't have sororities, because some girl, 20 years before, had committed suicide when [06:00] she wasn't accepted in a sorority. And so they had outlawed sororities at Pembroke. Because they had the fraternities at Brown.

AS: Oh my goodness. She committed suicide when she didn't get in?

EGA: Accepted, right.

AS: Oh my gosh.

EGA: So that was the end of sorority life, as far as Pembroke was concerned.

AS: So I guess when you did have sororities it was a really big deal?

EGA: We never did get them. Never. They had a student government association and a Brown key—Pembroke key—society (break in audio) sort of took the place. But there was no entertainment source such as—like a camaraderie group—that existed. Yeah.

AS: That's interesting. I didn't know that. She talked to our class, and she told us, you know, basic background and traditions and things. But she never mentioned that.

EGA: We had a lot [07:00] of traditions, which I understand you don't have now. We had the Sophomore Masque, Prom, a dance. We had—which I don't believe they have now—for the girls.

AS: No, What exactly is that?

EGA: Oh, it's just a dance, and they called it the Sophomore Masque. And they had a Christmas dance, and—that's where I'd say I think it probably took the place of a social life for sororities. And they had a committee that would plan it, and it was all very formal. And they would have a giant tree at Andrews Hall. And it was very elegant. And then they would have the Junior Prom, which was the high point of the year. And you could go as a junior, and you could go as a guest if you were a senior. And they had Ivy Night. Which became the night of [08:00] May Day, crowning of the May Day Queen. We didn't have a chain, you know, like they had done years before. They had an ivy chain. You'd walk around carrying it. But they did have girls selected from the student body who were very beautiful, and then one would be elected by the student body to be May Queen, and her court. And all the parents were invited. It was like a parents'

weekend. And then we would have a very elegant formal dance on Ivy Night. And then we had the—I don't know what they called it. It was like a graduation the night before, another formal dance the night before the Brown Campus Dance, which was very elegant.

AS: Campus Dance, we still have that.

EGA: Oh yes, I know. It's great. (laughs) We come over, still.

AS: That would be ni—I wish I could go. Everyone around here says it's a really [09:00] fun time.

EGA: It is a fun time.

AS: —But (inaudible) to get home. It also means you have to stay...

EGA: Well, when you're a senior, you —

AS: Yeah. When I [was?]...

EGA: —you can come. (laughs)

AS: Yeah. So I guess I'll just have to wait.

EGA: Yeah. But I guess all the formal, formal, formal dances are gone. By the way. Which is too bad, because we did have fun.

AS: Yeah. The only real ones that they have are the ones that the Greek system puts on. There's, like, a Greek dance, and then (break in audio) all the sisters, sorority girls, they're all—seems like they're always dressing up for something.

EGA: See, we had that in addition. Because the fraternities were having their formal dances and their Spring Weekend and their Christmas formal and their senior formal. So it seemed like it was double the social life. We had fun.

AS: Really? (laughter) That sounds—I (inaudible) bet.

EGA: Believe it or not, we (break in audio) (inaudible). (laughter)

AS: Why? What are some of the things that you did? That you did? Just, like, going to dances and...

EGA: Well, all getting ready to, you know, socialize. I did belong to the Glee Club, and— [10:00] it was the Brown-Pembroke Glee Club—and we had a lot of social functions with that. And we traveled to all the men's colleges and stayed overnight. Just the women's Glee Club. And they would always entertain us with (break in audio) dinners and dancing. It was great. We went to Williams and Bowdoin, and Trinity and... And then we would get together with all the women's colleges, Wellesley and Smith and Radcliffe and Mount Holyoke. And (break in audio) have concerts with them, which I believe they don't do anymore. And then the men's colleges would come here, to us. And West Point and... We'd have to entertain them. And that was a great time, you know? (laughter) And that would be another dance. (laughs)

AS: See, we do that, [11:00] the singing groups and things like that, go to different colleges and sometimes they come here. But it's just like, we don't—

EGA: Have a ....

AS: —pick them up or anything, and have a big deal about—

EGA: Reception (break in audio) party...

AS: It's kind of too bad, because that's nice, when you're [welcoming?] another school or something.

EGA: Yeah. You get to know other schools. It's interesting.

AS: Did you, besides the Glee Club, participate in any other activities, like sports-wise? Or what was the...

EGA: No. I wasn't into athletics at all.

(break in audio)

AS: Was the athletic—did...

EGA: Oh, we had a regular gym—what we called a gym program. And we'd always have to take sports—tennis, badminton, (break in audio) swimming. I almost didn't graduate, I couldn't pass the swimming test.

AS: Oh, that's what—

EGA: I told you I was not an athlete. (laughter)

AS: —that's what the lady said. She said...

EGA: You got to pass the swimming pro— (break in audio) I remember Betsy Rudd saying, “Edna, if you weren't graduating next year, I would never pass you on that [12:00] swimming test!” (laughter) You had to—we didn't have the facilities they have now at Brown. We had the (break in audio) women's field games, lacrosse, and we had our own gym. (break in audio) But we had to go to the Plantations Club to swim, which was downtown in the city. Which was a pain.



AS: That must have been a drag. That's funny, because the lady who was lecturing us on it, she said that it (break in audio) (inaudible), and then—or, like, right before graduation they'd spend, like, three days straight swimming or something (laughs) like that.

EGA: Well, it was for our benefit, but [it was a thing?].

AS: I'm glad they don't have (break in audio)—they had that in my high school. I got that over with my freshman year.

EGA: Well, you see, the war was over. And during—when I was in high school, we discovered that American youth was grossly undertrained athletically. And so this became a big requirement in college. (break in audio) You were whipped into shape. [13:00]

AS: It worked, I guess. Here's a good one. Your best and worst memory, of Brown—or Pembroke.

EGA: Actually, I'll have to say, aside from the social—to clarify something—(break in audio) I don't know about the older women, because I know they sort of associate with their college years, mostly. (break in audio) But as far as we were concerned, I don't know whether it was because all of these—it was the first class that was, I think, over a thousand. It was the first big onslaught of students into Brown. That we never really thought of ourselves as being Pembroke. We were part of Brown. (break in audio) And so, I would have to say, it's Brown that we would remember, not ju— (break in audio) by itself.

The worst and the best was I guess when my father died [14:00] when I was a junior. That was the worst time. Because they didn't excuse you from class or exams. And it was right at the time of quarterlies. And (break in audio) I had one, I remember, in astronomy, the Monday after my father's funeral. And there were no excuses not to be there taking exams. That was the worst time. That was the worst semester. (break in audio)

The best time—well, that was—when I (break in audio) plead with the astronomy professor, Smiley, you know, a little leniency in taking the exam, I was told that I was at Brown

to learn maturity, and, you know, shape up, and this is the way life is (break in audio). The exam is Monday, and that's it.

AS: Oh my God.

EGA: So. There was no student—today I'd (break in audio) vociferously argue (break in audio) government association or with [15:00] an ombudsman [URI?]. But back then, there was no recourse. (laughs)

(break in audio)

AS: Just about any...

EGA: Now there's a lot of recourse.

AS: Now I would say just [about?] (break in audio) (inaudible)

EGA: The best? I just had a great (break in audio) Go. So I can't say any one thing was the best. (break in audio) Because I had such a good time. I was not a [star student?] (break in audio) (laughter) However I graduated. (laughter)

AS: I know. That's what counts, too. (break in audio) My mom said, "I don't care what kind of grades you get, as long as you graduate." (laughter)

EGA: We weren't all geared for careers so much back then, although I knew I was [getting?]

(break in audio)

AS: What were you thinking—(break in audio) did you know what you were going to do after...

EGA: Oh yeah. I knew I was going to have to be a teacher, because that's what my mother wanted. (break in audio) And it ran (break in audio), so I knew that's what I was going to be. But I didn't (break in audio) and I didn't stay one very long.

AS: Oh really? So [16:00] your mom had a great influence on you?

(break in audio)

AS: What did you teach?

EGA: When I got out of Brown (break in audio) a misfit in the education system of Rhode Island. That (break in audio) (inaudible) if you wanted to be a teacher, it was understood you go to Rhode Island (break in audio). And you didn't mess with Brown, because you were (break in audio) (inaudible). But I figured if I had gotten my degree from Brown, I could do just about anything. And I remember going down to the—I had gotten a job teaching third grade in Riverside, Rhode Island. And it was the only job (break in audio) because teachers —there was a glut of them at the time. And all these guys were coming out wanting to teach too, in the interim, to get going. And I remember going down—I had the job, and I remember going down to the Department of Education, and they (break in audio) telling me, roaring laughing, he thought it— (break in audio) here I was with my Brown degree, and I wasn't suited for anything.

AS: And so they said...

EGA: “And wouldn't it be a riot,” [17:00] he said, “I don't (break in audio) hire you.” He said, “Wouldn't it be a riot if you had to (break in audio) your job because you're not suitable to be a teacher?” So I got the job, and he gave me a temporary (break in audio). And then I had to go to Rhode Island College, and take 36 semester hours (break in audio). I had five years to do it, in order to get certified. And I (break in audio) quit. (laughs) What I should have done, 20-20 hindsight, was get a (break in audio) and—but it wasn't the big thing in education at that time. My girlfriend went to (break in audio) and got a master's in English. But that would (break in audio). For education, you just didn't come right out and get your master's and get (break in

audio). So it was a monstrous waste of time. Because I had nothing to show for it (break in audio) and then I didn't teach anymore.

AS: Twenty-twenty hindsight. I hate that. You look back, and you, "Oh, well..." You can tell exactly where you went wrong, but when you're right in the middle of doing it...

EGA: When you're in the middle of doing it, there is no alternative. [18:00]

AS: Yeah. And it's (break in audio) confusing, too. You don't really...

EGA: (break in audio) Yeah. I got a master's last year, and I got it in—(break in audio) I wouldn't have gotten it in—if I—when I got out of college. (break in audio) changed most people, not everybody, drastically. (break in audio)

AS: What did you get your master's in?

EGA: I got it in textiles (break in audio) and museum curating. So that was—yeah, I didn't? (break in audio) when I got out of college, this was going to be something I wanted to do down the road.

AS: That makes me feel better, because I—so many people the pressure's on you to do what you're majoring (inaudible). (break in audio)

EGA: Oh, I know. It's tremendous. [inaudible] kids.

AS: "What's your concen—" (break in audio) you know. This is my first semester here, and I have no idea. I think I want to be a history major, but I can go for another year, and it could be something entirely different. (break in audio) But Brown, since they offer so many courses that, you know, you can expose yourself to different (break in audio).

EGA: I don't know whether it was because we were women or not, but we really weren't given too much [19:00] (break in audio). Those that came in and knew they wanted to be doctors naturally went into a pre-med (break in audio). Those that came in, and they didn't know exactly what they were (break in audio)—there was a tendency to major in whatever you did best—(break in audio) your comprehensive professional exams. I should've been an English major. But I was a French major because—(break in audio) I did well on the French exam and was placed in a high class (break in audio) of French. (break in audio) Had to take beginners' English. Composition. (break in audio) (inaudible) Where my friend, who went on to get her master's in English, was put in an advanced English (break in audio). How you did in the placement exams during freshman (break in audio) more or less guided us who didn't know what we were going to do, into what we were (break in audio). And I enjoyed being a language major. But I (break in audio) stand me in good stead.

AS: That's too bad.

EGA: Yes it is.

(break in audio)

EGA: I enjoyed it more when I grew up and started to travel. [20:00] (break in audio) We also, back then, didn't have your junior year in France, for example. (break in audio) the language like they do now. Trinity College in Washington was the only one that had that. This is relatively new in its group to be able to go (break in audio) the area of your major to do your junior year.

AS: I think I want to take German next year. Perhaps go to Germany. (break in audio) For no apparent reason. I just... (laughs)

EGA: The problem with French and German here was (break in audio) conversation. [Did?] plenty of reading, in terms of (break in audio). I think when you say the worst of college, may I also (break in audio) comprehensives. I don't know if they still do them here. But if you didn't

pass, you didn't graduate. And that was a tremendously harrowing experience for everybody.  
(break in audio) have them now?

AS: You mean comprehensive...

EGA: Before you graduate in your major. [21:00]

AS: No.

EGA: No. It was bad.

AS: I can imagine you'd be (break in audio) (inaudible) for basically all of what you've learned in college and whatever else.

EGA: Yeah. (break in audio) Didn't graduate. And there was no second chance before graduation. You were finished. And you could come back and take a couple of courses the next semester, and try again. (break in audio) And other than that it was all over. And I know quite a few that never got their (break in audio). So there was a lot of tension. And I can remember (break in audio) comprehensives, and there were about 16 of us in the French department. And the final (break in audio) on too long?

AS: Oh no. Not at all. I'm just (break in audio) [we have left?]. Which is a lot.

EGA: I remember going hysterical on the comprehensives, because they had read a whole passage in (break in audio) in French, and we were to answer in French, on the paper. And I looked at everybody around the table, and they were all writing. And I [22:00] had gotten so nervous. (break in audio) It was about five exams in this kind of (inaudible). I (break in audio) get out of the room. I thought, "This is it. I'm not going to graduate." (break in audio) With that, the door opened, and everybody came running out laughing. (break in audio) They said, "What's the matter? What's the matter?" I said, "You guys all knew the answer, I couldn't write a thing." They said, "We were all writing, [We (break in audio)!]" (laughter) (break in audio) They had a

meeting of the faculty and they decided to throw that part of the exam out. So I guess that could be one of my worst moments.

AS: Oh my good—

(break in audio)

EGA: It was finished. I still have nightmares about that now.

AS: That's scary.

(break in audio)

EGA: Still today.

AS: That's bad. (laughter) Just think, you're (break in audio) the rest of your life for a stupid test.

(break in audio)

EGA: Well, it's nice to wake up in the morning and know that it's just a dream.

AS: Yeah, just a dream. (laughter) That's—well, it's funny, but it's not funny.

EGA: No, it's not.

AS: (break in audio) You know, kids, or we take for granted how much freedom and how much—[23:00]

EGA: I just read... (break in audio) your course of study is going to be changed. (break in audio) You had it a lot easier than we did. (laughter)

AS: It's still going to be easy.

EGA: Although you are dealing with much more (break in audio) courses now. You know. The world has progressed. So it's not equal (break in audio) what I mean is the—we call them distribution—(break in audio) you know what to take. And we took four courses a semester. (break in audio) And all the other universities (break in audio) five at the time. But Brown felt that they were giving us a workload (break in audio) fifth course. And so we ended up with 32. I was just reading this (break in audio) that they're going to go back to the 32. Or trying.

AS: Is it 30?

EGA: At least 30.

AS: Yeah, 30. I think [it's 30?].

EGA: At least 30, if not 32.

AS: Yet so much (inaudible) (break in audio) they cut Brown up because they say, you know, 28 credits—

EGA: I (inaudible) (break in audio)—

AS: —to graduate.

EGA:—they were not [24:00] happy when it went to the pass/fail system.

AS: But another point of view (break in audio) there hasn't been many problems with it, you know? It's from, I think, 1969, when they changed over. (break in audio) It's been successful. (laughs) It doesn't affect me, though.

(break in audio)



EGA: [On the?] new...

AS: Yeah. So the next year, coming in—which is also kind of a (break in audio) because a lot of people apply here because of that. I mean, that was a big (break in audio) I liked it so much. And it's not—it hasn't gotten all that harder, but, you know, the freshmen coming in, who apply thinking—and then it's changed over...

EGA: Oh yeah, that's a (break in audio).

AS: ...a big disappointment.

EGA: Sure. I don't think it will cause (break in audio) in the application, because people still want to come to Brown (break in audio) reputation. They mentioned that would it affect, you know, (break in audio) (inaudible).

AS: Now there's so much more to Brown. I wouldn't think (break in audio) (inaudible) [that on here?]. (laughter) I would not be any other place.

EGA: Why did you come?

(break in audio)

AS: Well, I...

EGA: Although I [25:00] shouldn't be interviewing you, should I? But it is (break in audio)...

AS: I wanted to be on the East Coast. And we had just moved to California. And (break in audio) where I wanted to be. And I knew my senior year in high school that we were moving. And so I applied to schools (break in audio). And I was waitlisted here. And so I accepted (break in audio) UC Santa Barbara. Because I thought I wanted to go there. My brother's at Stanford. And while

we lived in Pennsylvania, he went to Stanford, cross-country. (break in audio) Now we live in California, and I came back here. (laughter) So (break in audio) the logical thing for me to do would be to go to California. I got into Berkeley and (inaudible) Santa Barbara. And I liked Santa Barbara the best. And so (break in audio) orientation I enrolled in all my classes. And it was about (break in audio) a really good dance program, which I wanted to do. I thought I wanted to do. Which I don't want to do. And so...

EGA: See, you've already [changed?]

AS: I know.

EGA: —direction.

AS: Well, also because you can't major in dance here. (break in audio) But that's—[26:00] I don't want to do that anyway. (break in audio) about Brown. And I immediately—there was not a doubt in my mind. Because (break in audio) I found out really late too, about, like, maybe a week or so before I was supposed to attend San—(break in audio). Because, for some reason it was late, I don't know why. And another reason's because we had moved and they put (break in audio) on it, so I'm, like, waiting...

EGA: (inaudible) around for a while, right.

AS: So—(break in audio) and I'm very happy that I came halfway through. Because of moving (break in audio) I could (break in audio) home to California. Which is a lot different. (break in audio) You go—it is ve—

EGA: Oh yeah. Much nicer.

AS: Well, I don't know if it's (break in audio)...

EGA: Warm.

AS: It's warm and sunny and it...

EGA: Laid back.

AS: Yes. Very, very, very different than (break in audio). And it takes a long time to get used to. So I'm very happy that I came to (break in audio). But that's (break in audio) why I want to be on the East Coast. I wouldn't be anywhere else. My brother's at Stan—(break in audio) visit him a lot. And I love Stanford. It's a beautiful place. It has so many (break in audio)—I can't say one bad [27:00] thing about it. But I would rather be here, you know?

EGA: Well, that's good. (laughs)

AS: So, I'm happy. I'm very happy. But (break in audio) let's see. "How did years at Brown develop sense of appropriate role, education, jobs for women?" (inaudible) (break in audio) Some of these questions... (laughter) I'm just, like, thinking of one (break in audio) Let's see. (break in audio) Oh. Where did you meet your husband? Did he go to...

EGA: Through a college friend, as a blind date. (break in audio) He couldn't get here. He was in med school, and he couldn't—he was having exams and he couldn't get up here.

AS: So he was in...

(break in audio)

EGA: He was at URI, and he was a senior at URI. (break in audio) We met, and I went out with him—(break in audio) while I was still going [28:00] out with another fellow. And eventually I (break in audio). I went out five and a half years. But I ended up ma—(break in audio) (laughs)

AS: Great. That's weird, a blind date while you're going out. My parents, when they met, my mom was (break in audio) somebody else. And she met my dad, broke off the engage—(break in audio) Wow. Poor other guy. But...

EGA: In my case, (break in audio) from New York broke it off because he couldn't handle it.

AS: Oh really, the other... (laughter) I could imagine!

EGA: Having the other fellow in town... You know, we were just friends, but we would go out to dinner, that sort of thing. (break in audio) So he said, "You got to make a choice, and..." (break in audio)

AS: Well, I don't blame him. Getting jealous. That's interesting—(break in audio)

EGA: My friend from Pembroke is still my best friend. She lives in Maryland. (break in audio) Eleven of us came over. We were city girls. We didn't live in the dorms. Some of us did. I didn't. (break in audio) (inaudible) a year (break in audio) to get a [place?]. [29:00] (break in audio) But living at home had its advantages, because the guys you met here liked girls who had homes close to (break in audio) (laughs). Because there were weekends (break in audio) when they could stay overnight and—well, your parents were there, but, you know, (break in audio) you could get in any time that you wanted. Not that we were staying out all night, but (break in audio) rules for the women at Brown were very tight. And (break in audio) if you went out with somebody from local (break in audio) you—these time restrictions (inaudible). So we never— even though we didn't live in the dorm (break in audio) we were not at a loss for contact with the Brown students. (break in audio) Anyway, 11 of us came over from East Providence, 11 women. Every day on the bus. (break in audio) Last large number of locals they ever took. (break in audio) They were more anxious to spread their students—

Track 2

AS: Let's see.

EGA: But these 11 women, we're all still very close friends. Most of them married Brown (break in audio). So we have fun. We come back to the Campus [Dance?]. We come back to alumnae—Pembroke alumnae meetings. Even though there's no more Pembroke.

AS: Do your friends still live around?

EGA: Oh yeah. A few have moved (break in audio) and come back. [Alumnae Week?].

AS: So you used...

EGA: When their kids get out of Brown. Twenty-fifth reunion, three of my friends had girls graduating from Brown. So that was a great weekend. We had the (break in audio) and the graduation. And the Campus Dance. It was nice.

AS: My dad (break in audio). And it's such a...

EGA: When did he get out?

AS: Sixty-five. (break in audio) such a weird brood feeling. Because now I have, like, some kind of—(break in audio) there's, like, a special bond between my father and I, since...(laughter) And it's just strange. Because [01:00] (break in audio) now we both have in common, both experiencing. I was talking to him the other day. Sometimes I'm walking around (break in audio) how it was, you know, 20-some years ago when he was here. And it's (break in audio) interesting concept. But that's great that you stay in touch with your friends. I hope that—my roommate and I are, like, best friends. Which is great. We found out we were roommates the day (break in audio) we were mid-years, everything was last-minute. You know, people go abroad or whatever, see where the spaces were. And (break in audio) because I know a lot of people who just never see their roommates. And things like (break in audio). And don't like each other.

EGA: Well, we don't see each other a lot, but we call on the phone, and when we (break in audio) get together it's just like we're back in college. "Ho ho ho" and "ha ha ha" and "tee hee hee" and (laughter). (break in audio) Never changes.

AS: I can just imagine. My room—

EGA: Which is fortunate, because it isn't the rule. You know, it doesn't happen (break in audio).

AS: I hope she comes [02:00] back so you can meet her]. Her name's Wendy?. We're going to room together next year also. And...(break in audio) I love it. A lot of people say, "Well, being a mid-year, wasn't it a hard adjustment, coming in halfway?" And I (break in audio).

EGA: Not anymore. (inaudible)

AS: Also because I've moved around a lot.

(break in audio)

EGA: Because you were glad to come. You know. The whole scenario was pleasant.

AS: Yeah. A lot of people—I (inaudible) (break in audio) Brown was not their first choice. You know. It's hard for me to deal with. They got, I don't know, Yale or Princeton.

EGA: It was my only choice. If I hadn't come here I didn't want to go anywhere. I was not going to go to Rhode Island College and go away, because my parents weren't well. My father, as I said, died when I was a junior. My mother died three years after I got out. So I was more or less (inaudible) (break in audio) stay local. And if I didn't go to Brown, I didn't want to go anywhere.

AS: That's (break in audio) came down to [03:00] with me. Because I was enrolled at Santa Barbara. But when it came down to it, I don't know if I actually would have gone. Because I wasn't excited about going. I felt like I didn't fit in at all. (break in audio) tan. And (laughter) I

just felt like I—and also, because 95% of the people go to Santa Barb—(break in audio) (inaudible). And I was just...

EGA: You're not going to meet people from around the country.

AS: Yeah. Which is great here. People everywhere. And that's a good thing, I think. I really hope—I'm sure that I'm going to keep in touch with my college friends here. I mean...

EGA: It takes effort, but it (break in audio).

AS: I mean, I'm certain I will stay in touch with my high school friends.

EGA: It's easy when you have children, and then you begin to float apart because you're so busy, but then after that you float back.

AS: Did you go to high school with any [of your best friends?]

EGA: No, none of them. They all went to East Providence. (inaudible) Classical.

(break in audio)

AS: So [04:00] did you know them before Brown, or were they, like —

EGA: Some of them.

AS: —in the neighborhood.

EGA: They were in the neighborhood. [They were required?]-I think there were about eight (inaudible) (break in audio). My husband was accepted at Brown. But he went to URI (break in audio). He wanted to live in the dorm. It was less expensive. He was a veteran. He was going to (break in audio) tuition for nothing anyway. But he wanted the campus life, and he figured if he

went to Brown he was not going to live here. Because the GI Bill (break in audio) tuition. The room and board. So he went down to URI. He wasn't sorry about. And our three children went there.

(break in audio file)

AS: How old are your kids?

EGA: Twenty-seven, 29, and 31.

AS: (break in audio) [I have a?] brother who's at Stanford, just turned 20. And I just can't handle it. (laughter) I'm still getting over the fact...

EGA: I can't handle my son turning thirty. (break in audio) I wanted to go out [05:00] and buy a gun! (laughter) God, I told him, I sit here and watch you grow old. This is terrible. [I feel like I can see?] he's getting (break in audio) this is awful. (laughter)

AS: I'm only 18. I still can't get over the fact that I had turned 16 and I have my driver's license. That I'm allowed (break in audio). Now I'm allowed to vote. And that's just a scary concept.

EGA: Oh, I can remember, I was telling my (break in audio) kids, I can remember when I thought a fellow who was 19 was the—he was marvelous. He was (break in audio) (inaudible) and—

AS: At 19.

EGA: —just the right age! (laughter) But we didn't get that here at Brown, because nobody was 19. Everybody was in their twenties.

AS: Twenty-two, 23.



EGA: I remember when I first went out with my hus— (break in audio) didn't want me to go out with him because he was a veteran.

AS: Oh really? How much older?

EGA: He's four years older. So I was 21 when I met him. We were still in college. He was 25. And he was too old for me. So my mother said (break in audio?) You can see my mother was a strong influence in my life! (laughter)

AS: I guess so! [06:00]

(break in audio file)

EGA: I didn't make any difference though, did it?

AS: No, I guess not. Wow.

EGA: I would say that going to Brown made us very strong-willed. And master of our own fate, so to speak. All of my friends (break in audio) did things that were unheard of at that time. I know I went (break in audio)—after my mother died I went to Venezuela to work for an oil company. And that was before nice girls went away to work. (break in audio). And a lot of us did things like this, that supposedly, in quotes, "Nice girls didn't do" back then. And it gave us maturity and an assuredness that we could do anything we wanted. And it was fun. It didn't keep me from going. [07:00] Just because of general opinion. Now girls go all over the world. Doesn't hold them back at all.

AS: I have that feeling from Brown too, that, you know, that once you (break in audio).

EGA: You can do (break in audio).

AS: I'd say that's a great...

EGA: [But?] you got the degree, and nobody can look down upon you. (break in audio) can stand up and hold your own.

AS: It's a wonderful feeling.

(break in audio)

EGA: ...which I, you know, I don't know if people get it from other schools, but...

AS: Do you want something to drink? We have (break in audio) [Coke?] or—

EGA: No, no.

AS: —I could make tea or something.

EGA: No. Maybe you want a Coke.

AS: No, that's OK. (laughter) Oh. What'd you think about the food here? Just wondering. Or— did you eat here?

EGA: Yes, we ate. When my (break in audio) here, the students ate in Alumnae Hall in the lower floor there, and the city girls, as we called ourselves, ate in one [08:00] side of the dining room. It was all right. (break in audio) The standard story that continues today. (laughter) You know. It doesn't change. From 1950 to 1988.

AS: (laughs) That's funny. Did you have friends that were not city girls?

EGA: Not too many.

AS: Not too many? They just kind of...

EGA: There was not too much opportunity for intermingling. (break in audio) This is your [view?] of [Jeanne Andrews?], for coming here. She does interviews with prospective juniors, prospective freshmen.

AS: I don't think I was interviewed. (break in audio)...young woman who lived across the street from where I went to high school.

EGA: That would be a coincidence. (laughter)

AS: I never had an interview.

F1: Really? (inaudible)

EGA: I know Jeanne does this. (break in audio) (inaudible)

AS: You had to?

EGA: [Mimi?] did. (laughter)

AS: I don't know why they waitlisted me. Never had an interview. So, [09:00] let's see. I just wrote down how your education affected your life, and how you've been able to use it. Why you chose (break in audio), Ok, your options and opportunities. But basically your mom had the big—as far as teaching goes, did you just know then—did you think that you wanted to do it, or were you just like, “Well, if this is what my mom wants me to do then this is what I'm going to do?”

EGA: A lot was that. But after I was in it, it was low-paid. And—

AS: (to roommate) When will you be back?

EGA: —it really wasn't a challenge. And as soon as she died, I went off because I could earn more money away. And (break in audio) came home and got married and didn't teach for [10:00] 10 or 12 years. Then I substituted in (inaudible) (break in audio) in high school, French. And that I enjoyed. And then I got out of it in '75. Now I'm an antique dealer. And the whole different (break in audio)—I'm an...antique appraiser. And I do conservation work in the museums. I (break in audio). I went on a diametrically opposite thing. About 1970, I started this. And I had my own shop (break in audio) for 13 years. But I wasn't interested in this when I got out of college. You know, if you'd told me in 1950 this was what I was going to do, I'd say you were crazy. But I was teaching in a public school, and it was not very challenging. And the kids in public school are absolutely awful. Discipline was impossible. Cooperation with parents was impossible. And... [11:00]

(break in audio file)

AS: Antiques. (inaudible) big antiques. (inaudible) Where on the Cape?

EGA: On Route 28, in West Dennis. Why we went down there was because my husband's family was from the Cape, and we spent summers down (break in audio). As my interests began to change, I talked about opening a shop on the Cape. Because it's quite a tourist area in the summer. (inaudible) we opened. (break in audio) Well, my daughter's getting married, tomorrow I'm still up here from May to October. And then I do appraising and conservation work the rest of the year, and I can do that here or on (break in audio).

AS: That's really interesting. We vacationed in Falmouth.

EGA: Oh no, [I've never been?].

AS: I definitely (inaudible).

EGA: [Way?] back up here, and we're down around here, on the arm. It's a great place to be. It's a fun place. All my (break in audio)kids live with me in the summer. [12:00] We bought a house,

and I have it in the house. I have the business in the house, rather. And the kids could work summer jobs, and have a free place to live, and I had company while my husband was working (inaudible). (break in audio) He's an accountant. And now, well, he's retired, and we travel a lot. Because he retired from the service too, and (break in audio) Air Force, so I (inaudible).

AS: He's [in?] Air Force.

EGA: Yup. I just got back from Australia and New Zealand. Spent two months out there. So we travel a lot. We go out quite often. (break in audio) Except in the summer.

AS: So the summer's when you're on the Cape. That's great that you get to travel.

(break in audio)

EGA: It's a marvelous opportunity. So while we can do it, we do it. You know, when you're able.

AS: My parents travel a lot. [13:00] They [do?]  
—[13:00] I don't know—have you ever heard of an organization, World Vision?

EGA: Yeah.

AS: You have? (break in audio) Great! Why? How have you heard of it? (laughter)

EGA: [Because I've been?] going on trips through—don't they have sponsorships?

AS: Yeah. I'm just used to people saying, "No, I've never heard of it."

EGA: Oh yeah. I have friends that have traveled with them.

AS: Wow. Well, he's—they just had a change over, a new president, and that's why we moved to California. But they're traveling all the time. They just got back from Vietnam and China. (break in audio) And they do that. My mom goes...

EGA: That's for fun, or that's —

AS: Oh no.

EGA: — business?

AS: It's business. They (break in audio) Ethiopia, or just south. South Africa. And they basically live in a tribe in thatched huts, and they help (break in audio) food and things like that. It's a hunger-related, Christian organization.

EGA: That's an eye-opening job. It can be [14:00] depressing.

AS: It is. It's frustrating. My father started in July, I guess. And it's a frustrating thing. Of course, the fulfillment you get outweighs anything.

EGA: Oh I can imagine, Yeah. It ha—(break in audio). You'd see such tragedy.

AS: So your friends heard about it? That's great. That makes me feel (break in audio). Because...

EGA: I can't imagine people who haven't!

AS: Well, a lot of people haven't.

EGA: If they read! My God. Or know somebody's that's had contact with them.

AS: (inaudible) It's something that, like, I'm sure my dad never could (break in audio). I mean, he was an American lit major. He had no idea. He's never used American lit after college.

EGA: He didn't?

AS: No.

EGA: All right. So that's not so unusual. (laughs)

AS: He worked [15:00] here. He was the athletic director for a little while and did things around Brown. He (break in audio) absolutely loved it. He worked in admissions right afterwards, and he just wanted to sell it.

EGA: Sure. He must be thrilled to death that you came.

AS: Oh yes. Yes, he is. I also applied to Vermont and William & Mary. If I had to be on the East Coast—he wanted me on the West Coast with him. But if I had to be on the East Coast, it would definitely be at Brown.

EGA: Oh yeah, I agree. My youngest daughter applied to come to Brown, but then never followed up with all the business of the application and everything, (break in audio) the interview or anything. Because all her friends were going to URI, so she went to URI. So then she always said, "Well, when I get out of URI I'll go to Brown Graduate School." And she (break in audio) (inaudible) and then she needed money, and so we sent her to Gibbs [16:00] to get training in something, to earn some money in the interim. And then she got a real good job at Textron, so there went Brown. But she was the only one that went to (break in audio). I would've liked it if they came. But I didn't want to be my mother. And I guess I pulled back too far. You can see. I mean, it's become apparent (break in audio)...real (inaudible) aware of it, how often I've mentioned my mother's name, till we started talking.

(break in audio file)

AS: But then, now, look...

EGA: I was an only child though, too. And my mother and I were very close. So...she gave me good direction. She—

AS: I was just going to say...

EGA: —wanted me to come to Brown. Because some of her sisters had married Brown fellows. My cousins were coming here. [17:00] And so she wanted me to come here. So, I mean, that one thing she did I can't regret.

AS: Yeah, I was just going to say, that, you know, overall—I mean, look how you turned out. You know what I mean? And that's—I don't think...

EGA: Back then, if you couldn't get a job, you taught school. Basically I think that's what it all comes down to. If you had your degree, at least you could teach school. It was a job.

AS: And also, another thing is that—I mean, maybe you don't realize it now, but your experience in teaching, or that—

EGA. Oh, it helped.

AS: —whole experience, it would all fit in (break in audio). That's...

EGA: It had its up time. It had a lot of down time. But it had some up time too.

AS: You did it for a reason, for some... Like, I was talking to (break in audio) the other day. You know, I love being this young. [18:00] I love being 18. I loved being 17 and 16. But it would be interesting that when I am older, to have been (break in audio). You know, it all fits together. To see how, because I did this, that happened. And just to see. Just because...



EGA: Now my kids are saying, “And if you hadn’t taken that blind date...” (laughter) “What if...” They begin to talk. We were just talking about it last night, apropos of I don’t know what. That life could, with very small adjustments, have gone off on a totally different tangent.

AS: Just like one tiny thing.

EGA: Very easy. But I will have to say, at your age—and I don’t believe many of my friends thought of this—we just went (break in audio). One thing that’s different now—and I notice it with my children, and my children’s friends, some of whom came to Brown. When we [19:00] went to college we had to enter and leave in four years. It was peer pressure. Your honor. You didn’t take a semester off. You got in, and you got out. Now this could have been probably because (break in audio) during the Depression. And the dollar was very important. You didn’t fritter away your time or waste your time. Now everybody takes a semester off here, or they take—my son took two years to find himself, and my daughter (laughter), you know, took three years to find herself. My other daughter was the only one that went through, four years and finished. And I noticed that some of my son’s friends that came to Brown, “Oh, you’re going to Europe next year? I’ll take that semester off and I’ll go with you.” This laid-back attitude that four years was not the answer. In my day, you went in and you got out. And it was a social [20:00] embarrassment if you did not graduate exactly four years from the day you went in.

AS: Yeah. I still feel that, kind of. I don’t know. Because I will be graduating a semester late, in ’91-point five (break in audio). Unless...

EGA: (laughs) I like that terminology.

AS: I’m the class of ’91.5. Ninety-one and a half.

EGA: You sort of stopped me when you said it. (laughter) You did stop me when you said it.

AS: But (break in audio) classes during the summertime, and make up. They want you to take eight semesters.

EGA: You could double-time it back when I was in college too, because the veterans wanted to get out. They ran three semesters a year.

AS: I could, Even if I took five courses a semester—I mean, I could still get 28 credits easily, in seven semesters. What they want is they want the money for you to be here. So, I think what I'm going to do because (break in audio) [graduate?] with the '91 class, I really don't feel like [21:00] —

EGA: Hanging around another...

AS: —hanging around and being '92. Just because—I don't know. But another thing is I'm not in a great hurry to get out of here. I think maybe if I knew exac— (break in audio) to do...

EGA: Because from my vantage point I'd say don't rush. This is the best time of your life. It is.

AS: Do you think college was better than high school?

EGA: Oh, definitely.

AS: Definitely. Then who cares. Because everyone says your teenage years...

EGA: You're gaining some maturity, and there weren't all those foolish things that you worried about in high school to worry about in college.

(break in audio)

AS: (inaudible)

EGA: Or you can figure how I felt at 17, with all these guys. They were so mature. God. Some of them had been in college and been drafted and had served their time and came back. So they

were getting out in '48 or '49. But most of them were just starting in because they had the GI Bill, and suddenly they could go for nothing. So why not? If you got into [22:00] Brown, go Brown. Wasn't going to cost you anything.

AS: You were kind of lucky, though. I mean, as far as the men went, that they were older and mature. You didn't have to deal with, like...

EGA: Right. (break in audio)A good point there. Oh yes. Oh yeah.

AS: I can see very much how you can meet your husband. That's why it's so scary. Because, I feel like people I'm meeting, like every—someone I meet could be my potential husband. That's a scary thought. (laughter) So every guy you meet or go out on a date (break in audio)...

EGA: A lot of these students did marry Brown men. But they were a lot older. You know, they weren't necessarily the kids who were of their own age. And some of them don't work. (break in audio) ...to my thirtieth reunion, and it was scary, the number of marriages between Brown and Pembroke, or between Pembrokers and anybody, that didn't [23:00] work, when they were married right out of college. They made adjustments (break in audio) you do change, you will change. And both of you change. And so, if you don't change with something common between the two of you, there's a lot of breakups.

AS: That's too bad. You'd like to think when people change, you can still work it out.

EGA: Well, a lot of us do. (laughter)

AS: Yeah. Well, I mean, obviously.

EGA: But it's scary how many didn't. At our thirtieth reunion, I remember Jeanne and myself looking at each other. Oh my God. We were, like, in the minority, the ones that were still, you know, hanging in there.

AS: That's too bad. I feel like—you know, it's too bad they broke up. But I—for some reason I (break in audio) [don't have sympathy?] for them, because it's like, you didn't make the effort, kind of thing. [24:00]

EGA: I will say this, though. They had their degree. And they went out, and they were successful. And I would have to say that that was always—if you didn't use it, it was always there for you to fall back on. It's always been a feather in your cap. Socially, and in business, and when I went to graduate school. When you said, you know, when they asked you—and it does come up, all your life—”Where did you go to school?” Even at my age. Socially, when we travel, one of the first questions is, “Where did you go to college?” And it feels good to say “Brown.” Particularly (break in audio) [become] so well-known. When I first went to Venezuela, people didn't know Brown. They were mostly from the West Coast. And they weren't familiar with New England colleges.

AS: Tell me about it. People on the West Coast [25:00]—especially—I mean, the people—because I was working last semester. And the people who I was working with were the people who didn't go to (break in audio)—who went to community colleges like that, and they had never heard of Brown at all. And they couldn't understand why I wasn't going to school in California.

EGA: There's ill feeling between—I've read—between California and western (break in audio) the old idea of the Ivy League school in New England.

AS: But you can't really argue with the—especially the UC system. Like Berkeley, Santa Barbara. UCLA. They're good schools, and they are just very (break in audio) financially the way to go, if you live in California. It's hard not to...

EGA: Go that route.

AS: Yeah. Because I remember when my—I wanted to go to Brown from Santa Barbara, and my parents were like, “Are you sure? [26:00] Are you sure you want to go?” It’s about, I’d say, \$50,000 more.

EGA: Oh, I know. It’s a piece of cake, as they say, when we went. Tuition was \$600—(break in audio). But then. Everything is relative. And \$600 was a lot of money. It doesn’t seem that to you, but back then (break in audio) [\$600?] was exorbitant.

AS: It’s still—it seems ridiculous now.

EGA: It’d probably be \$1600 if you lived in the dorm.

AS: And just thinking—I mean, that change. And then, just think, when I have kids, and want them to go to school, (break in audio) I’m sure something’s going to happen that’s going to be different (inaudible). Because I don’t know. That just seems kind of ridiculous. [27:00]

EGA: It is. Education has gone (inaudible).

AS: But is there anything you want to share that... This has been good, because I’ve gotten such a great idea of—I mean, we were lectured on it for two days.

EGA: Oh, really? By somebody who had studied what college life was like, back in the Dark Ages?

AS: By Karen Lamoree. And she was telling us about Pembroke/Brown (break in audio) ...stressed on how hard it was for women to, you know, I guess, succeed. To...

EGA: I wouldn’t say that.

AS: See, she kind of...

EGA: Well, let me say this about that. (laughter) Was it Nixon? No. John Dean. “This about that.” Or was it Reagan, who always [28:00] says that? I was thinking about these things as I was sitting in bed, filling out that thing. There is some question in that questionnaire, I think I... This didn’t continue. Page five was missing. But that’s not important. Oh, the part about the difficulty with women, were they restricted from classes and by whom? No. We were never made to feel we were second-class citizens. I had all my classes with men. And we were on an equal standing. And I know there’s women’s lib now. But back then [29:00], in class, maybe we—I couldn’t get out of taking an exam because my father (break in audio) ... We could speak up in the class and would not be ridiculed, or put down. Remember being told by the dean—we used to have chapel twice a week. One was religious, and the other one on Tuesday was (break in audio) discussions, as they had reported to us that they had seen girls in slacks on Thayer Street, and “Ladies don’t wear slacks out on the street,” this sort of thing. And you never went to class in your gym outfit, or shorts (break in audio). You dressed up. You wore ankle socks, but a skirt. You know. The jeans were in, but you just didn’t wear them to class or out on Thayer Street where the public would see you. When you think of it... But anyway. Now where (break in audio) with this?

AS: It was [a new?] (inaudible).

EGA: Oh yeah. (laughter) One of the things that we were [30:00] told [at?] Tuesday was that they had done a survey. And I don’t know what year it was. Of the average grades (break in audio) women and the men at Brown, and we outranked them. Which we always took great pride in. You know how they would average everybody out. And the Pembroke women were giving the Brown men a run for their money. And they didn’t like it.

AS: She said there was a [time when it was a?]—

EGA: So it was good competition.

AS: —the men...

- END -