

Transcript – Charlotte [Roads] Ferguson, '24

Narrator: Charlotte Ferguson

Interviewer:

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Track 1

Q: Why don't you tell me about when you decided to go to college. Why college?

Charlotte Ferguson: When? When I decided to go to college. I can't even remember when I ever didn't want to go to college. I mean, I was brought up with the idea I was going to college. I was always going to Wellesley.

Q: Because? Was that your parents?

CF: My family sent me in to girls' Latin School in Boston because they thought that, it was at the time of the flu epidemic, and they closed the high school and used it for a hospital back in 1918. My family got very upset that I wasn't getting preparation to get into college, so they sent me into girls' Latin School, and that was all right. I commuted from Marblehead for a year and I got [00:01:00] in. Then the next year my father thought that was too much. He went in and we took out an apartment in Boston, so that was better.

I fortunately was not very good at physics. The man who had been the teacher was marvelous, but he died. Then we got this young squirt and he was scared of us. He was scared of girls and the result was that I never learned very much physics and I didn't do well in the SAT. Wellesley thought they'd give me another chance, but they didn't think that they would take me. I decided to find out where else I could go, so I came down to Pembroke.

I had just arrived at Pembroke and I got word from Wellesley [00:02:00] that they would be glad to have me, but I liked Pembroke. I liked the people, and I liked the girls, and I loved

Mrs. Allinson and I just didn't want to move. I stayed at Pembroke and became a very loyal alumna.

Q: Did you talk to the dean before you went? Was that the procedure?

CF: It was all very sudden. Because I came down on a Saturday, I think it was, with my family and we saw Mrs. Allinson at home, and she was darling, and charming, and very understanding. [00:03:00] My other marks were all good. I was accredited in some things. If I'd gone to Radcliffe I wouldn't have had to take some exams, because they didn't make those Latins go take exams in the things that they were accredited in. It wasn't a hopeless case. She was very nice and understanding about it and suggested it probably would be just as well if I didn't do too much with mathematics. I said, that's just fine by me. Then I came to Pembroke. Then I lived in Metcalf Hall and I was very happy and made some marvelous friends.

Q: Your parents were very supportive when you were going to college?

CF: Oh, yeah. They would do anything under the sun. I was an only child and they were very, very nice. They always expected I would go to college and had always planned on it. [00:04:00] I think they were more disappointed than I was that I didn't go to Wellesley, but they loved Pembroke afterwards.

Q: When you thought about going to Wellesley and about going to Pembroke, did it make a difference that Wellesley was a separate women's college? At Pembroke you had the university.

CF: No. That wasn't the thing that impressed me. It was just the fact I think that I'd always grown up thinking that I would like Wellesley. This is a beautiful campus and that. I never had any qualms, I guess.

Q: When you first went to college did you have any idea what you were going to do with your education? Or was that not a question?

CF: No. I think I always wanted to go into business, [00:05:00] but I majored in English and minored in history. I stayed away from math. I did take chemistry. I hated it. No, I kind of had an idea that I might go into business with my father was a general agent for an insurance company in Boston, and I had the idea that maybe I would go in to do that. I very much admired this woman in Boston who was selling insurance and I thought – and she was making a lot of money and I thought that would be kind of good, and I liked meeting people, and I liked going out. I didn't mind selling things and I thought that might be good. But then, that's what I did. without any particular business training or anything.

Q: That must have been rare for [00:06:00] women to be doing that, right?

CF: There weren't too many, but there were some. People get the idea that women in those days we're so circumscribed and they really weren't. There were leaders. When my mother was applying here she took me into marching at the suffragette parade before I was 10 years old. She was very forward-looking woman. She was the first Scout leader in Marblehead, she was president of the Women's Club. She was a very outgoing sort of a person. I mean this whole hubbalo that they had about women's rights and all the rest of it, I never could figure out. I always had a woman doctor. My mother had a woman doctor when she was a child. I've always believed that if a woman had the ability she'd get to the top. [00:07:00] This, strikes me perfect and I sympathize with my men friends who were, of course of an older generation, my men friends, who had absolutely no sympathy with this having to take women in because they were women. They didn't have the ability or the drive. Just because they were women they shouldn't be getting the job. I think it's is all ridiculousness. I can't see any need of it. I think if a woman can prove herself she can get where she wants to go.

Q: Women did have the opportunities then to do?

CF: There was plenty of opportunities for people to do it. My Dr. [Devereauxthat?] for example, graduated from medical school in the late 80s. She was a pioneer, yes, but she had the ability and she was a darn good doctor. [00:08:00] Her sister started out to be a kindergarten teacher then she got a vision and went over and studied under Montessori and came back and introduced, so

that she was the person who was responsible for having kindergartens in Mount Holyoke, and they had kindergartens here when I was just – well, I went to kindergarten. It was one of those things.

I've always believed, and I think that probably Miss Morriss – Mrs. Allinson, too, emphasized that a woman could do anything that she wanted to do. I remember Mrs. Allinson in chapel one day saying that, when she had graduated, I guess she was getting – I don't know if it was her doctorate, or just her [00:09:00] undergraduate degree – the professor said to her, "What do you want to do now?" She said, "I hope that I can find a job that will inspire me." He looked at her in horror and said, "Mrs. Allinson, Miss Emery, I mean, I thought you were the kind who didn't need a brass band to lead you." That stuck in my mind always that if you had the drive within yourself you didn't need a brass band, or a woman's rights, or anything else. You get there. I think I'm not really very sympathetic. I've never been very sympathetic to the ERA.

Q: You were raised in the suffrage.

CF: I was. When we were in college we [00:10:00] all had – I've forgotten, votes for somebody, but I was trying, I guess, that we were electing first. There were a whole group of us who were very much interested in politics. My friends among the city girls were more interested in the local affairs. I was interested. We had a club that worked very hard, and you dressed in wools and whatnot. No, I never felt that I needed to be liberated. I guess I was a liberated woman to begin with.

Q: It sounds like your mother was a good influence in that. [00:11:00]

CF: Oh, she was. She was very interested in all the things, and my father was very much interested in everything. He had been very active in all kinds of organizations, even chairman of the school committee. Very active in his church. They were an outgoing family, I guess.

Q: That's how you turned out.

CF: I guess I was, I don't know. Pembroke was a wonderful place for a woman, or a girl, who wanted to feel at home in a man's world. That's the way I felt about it. I thought I was very fortunate to be in a man's world. I was very fortunate to have all men professors, except biology. I was very fortunate that [00:12:00] I felt, when I heard about other people, that we lived at a very free atmosphere, really. We had a lot of privileges that they didn't have in women's colleges. When I heard about my girlfriends at Wellesley that had to go in at 7:30, it was kind of a shock.

Q: Then you were glad that you hadn't gone to Wellesley.

CF: I was very glad to have the men around. I like having a chance to meet young men. I'll never forget, one alumni council I came down and we were supposed to breakup and have lunch with some of the freshmen. I had lunch with two interesting kind of freshmen. It was the days when they had just started cooperative dorms. [00:13:00] Then (inaudible). I said to one of the girls, why do you want (inaudible). She didn't live in them. She was saying that, that was one of the things, she wanted to get into a cooperative dorm. I said, why? Oh, she says, "I want to meet boys." I'm thinking that the poor child had no sense of humor I said, did you ever try dropping your handkerchief? (laughter) She looked at me and she had no idea what I meant. Didn't understand Victorianism at all.

I never found any difficulty meeting men. Managed to have all of the dates I wanted to have, but I didn't have them under feet all the time. The first time I went into one of those dorms, the ones that are all mixed up there. I had to climb over a man's legs [00:14:00] to get where I was going. I thought, Lordy Lord, this is a long way from Miss [Patter?]. We had the leftover from the Victorian days, and Miss Patter, she was a lady. Her father had been a bishop in Boston.

Q: I'm sorry, who was this?

CF: Miss Patter. She was the housemother at Metcalf Hall. She believed in gracious living. She believed in being a lady. It was a very good influence. She, I think, people thought she was....(inaudible). They didn't have the ability [00:15:00] to appreciate what she could give

them. My friends always used to sit at her table whenever we got a chance, because she was interesting and she knew interesting people in Providence.

[Telephone rings – CF: If that telephone in there rings, I don't know...that's somebody else's frequency. I don't know what it is. Not physics. (laughter)]

Q: So she was an interesting...?

CF: She was an interesting person and very gracious. She expected the most. She expected you to behave like ladies and gentlemen. She had no use for wool stockings which were very fashionable in those days. [00:16:00] I remember, she happened jump off on the... be on the trolley car with some of my friends. A friend got called in very much disgusted because she had no stockings she was so amazed that she got a turn. It was a hangover from Victorianism, but darn it all, I think they might be better off with a few hangovers. I really do, but that's an old lady.

Pembroke had that fact that it was predominantly a man's college, no matter what you said. I think it did a lot to – there weren't so many pressures and all that sort of thing that you get in a woman's college. I'll never forget [00:17:00] visiting a friend of mine at Mount Holyoke. Such a fuss they had when the mail came in, and they have all these letters. It was much better to get a telephone call. It was a much more natural kind of a life. I liked it especially because I knew that if I went out into business, if I really went into business, I was going to be in a man's world. I liked the fact that you got a man's ideas (inaudible) and of course there were an awful lot of Brown men that didn't like having Pembroke there. They didn't like having women there. I noticed that whenever they got an invitation to a dance they always came along.

Q: I've heard that story before. [00:18:00]

CF: I never found it very difficult to meet a man if you wanted him.

Q: Socially there were a lot of friendships and interaction between men and women?

CF: Oh, yeah. You had dates and you fell in love. That was another very good experience when you got your first, really. I had a high school one but that didn't count. You got your first a little more mature over with and done with before you got out, to make up your mind what kind of a life you wanted to live.

Q: What about academically? Did you take courses on the men's campus?

CF: I had chemistry over there and biology.

Q: All of your courses in English and history were (crosstalk 00:18:58). [00:19:00]

CF: I had very few courses with men, except – no, chemistry wasn't with men. We had our own chemistry course, and biology of course with men, but you were on the men's campus. You wore your hats and gloves. I've heard that ridiculed so much by your younger generation. I don't know, if it would be bad or better if a few things had to be done now.

Q: That started going out pretty early, though, didn't it? The hats and gloves?

CF: I guess it lasted through my day. Hat and gloves downtown. Hat at John Hay Library.

Q: You read the John Hay Library (inaudible)?

CF: You could (inaudibleHistory and English), but you didn't go to the John Hay Library a fair amount.

Q: That's what I've heard.

CF: Well it was kind of nice, but there were a lot of nice things about it. You could go Monday evening before fraternity meeting nights when they had step singing in the spring, and that was lots of fun. I think it's gone, isn't it? Long gone.

Q: Those were on the men's?

CF: You'd go to the library and then the men would have fraternity meetings, and they'd come to the library and meet you and take you out after (inaudible). It was very comfortable. You weren't supposed to go downtown when you were a freshman without an upper classman with you, or a man. That's why people met me and (inaudible).

Q: Did that have to be approved by anyone?

CF: No. [00:21:00] What the men? No. It was (inaudible). You were supposed to be an adult.

Q: What was the housemother's role then? You said she....

CF: A housemother was a housemother. You had to ask permission if you wanted to be out; after sundown, if you wanted to be out after 10 o'clock. She just took care of you, kind of. She really was a housemother. She was very interested in her girls. She always had her own little (inaudible) at Metcalf Hall so was always in the Sitting Room – they have a what? They don't have a housemother now. It's a loss. [00:22:00] Her door was always open into the [bull?] parlor. They had a room on the left-hand side of the front door. That you entertained your gentleman friends. Her door was always ajar, so that was all she had to do.

Q: She wanted to make sure it was OK.

CF: She was not obtrusive about it. She was... her door was ajar (inaudible). Things were strict about getting in 10 o'clock. If you made friends with the night watchman it wasn't so bad. You could always find a way to get by that. He'd let you in. Through the cellar. He'd give you an apple.

Q: Wow. I guess you did make friends with the night watchman? [00:23:00]

CF: Oh, yeah.



Q: People found ways to get around?

CF: Oh, yeah. We were still molded somewhat by the Victorian ideas. My friends had all been brought up with the same kind of almost a Puritan... semi-Puritan background. We had standards.

Q: You didn't need much supervision? People were responsible?

CF: Yeah. We were. They didn't trust us very far. I don't know why. The worst experience I ever had [00:24:00], with not obeying the rules about going downtown when I was a freshman. The [Emperor Jones?] came. I think it was the Emperor Jones. It was one of those black plays came to Providence. This friend of mine and I wanted to see it. I guess we didn't know any men that had money enough to take us to the theater anyway. We got seats in the second balcony, and we were the only whites in the balcony. I knew we were out bad. It was bad and we were downtown alone. That's the only time I only felt uncomfortable about breaking the rules. I never felt so bad about staying out after 10:00 or something like that.

Q: What can you tell me about Dean Allinson?

CF: She was a marvelous person. She just was a marvelous person. I'm so sorry for girls [00:25:00] today that they don't have chapel talks like hers. She was just great. She had a nice sense of humor, and she had very high standards of conduct, and very high standards of scholarship. A very keen understanding of human nature, and she was a great inspiration. I don't know anybody that came under her and had the opportunity to really get to know her a little. It was a rare opportunity and a rare privilege (inaudible) There was nobody that I have met down there at Brown now that anywhere near reaches that kind of a relationship with the students. [00:26:00] There just isn't any. You don't have any chapel, do you?

Q: No.

CF: Five days a week we had chapel. One day was student government day, but the rest of the four days we got Mrs. Allinson. That was our freshman year. Poor Mrs. [Keene?] came back and that was a sad experience. Then we got Miss Morriss, and she was wonderful. She was entirely different from Mrs. Allinson, but she understood the student. She was that much younger. She was terrific. She didn't have the same – maybe, I don't know. [00:27:00] You can't say the same depth, because she did have it in some respects, but they were very different. That was a great privilege to have had them and felt that they were your friends. Miss Morriss and our whole crowd were really very close. We'd come for dinner with us and have us at her house. It was a nice relationship. She gave us a lot.

Q: The students were as close to her as they had been to Mrs. Allinson? How was it different?

CF: Yes. You always knew that Mrs. Allinson was only temporary, and Miss Morriss came and she was there, and she was it. Her father and mother were charming and they used to entertain [00:28:00] the seniors at Sunday night supper, and things. Nice. That's the thing that I feel bad about, that so much that was charming, and gracious, and sort of soul-satisfying has gone out the window with college education today. There doesn't seem to be anything that takes its place.

I never shall forgive Brown for doing away with Pembroke because it seemed to me that at Pembroke you had the best of two worlds. You had a woman's college that really amounted to something. It was Miss Morriss, of course, was the one who really and truly put Pembroke on the map nationally. [00:29:00] Pembroke was becoming a leading figure in the inter-scholastic world. You had that small group, and even kind of a dum dum had a chance to have some kind of an office, or something or other. It was a chance for a woman to really find herself and not be overshadowed by a man. You had all your organizations. You had all of them, and you could make of them as you would.

Q: It sounds like you were in a lot of organizations and people really did like it.

CF: What was that?

Q: There were a lot of organizations, weren't there? [00:30:00]

CF: Oh, yeah. We had everything. All your books, and all your magazines for the people who were onto that kind of thing. There was just everything. Thespians, dramatists, people who wanted to be in plays. All the athletic business, music clubs, glee club.

Q: Were you involved?

CF: It was still Pembroke when my daughter was there. She graduated in '53. I don't think she got as much out of college as I did. The thing that I objected to in her day was that her friends were not as [00:31:00] – I think the men played a larger role in her life than they did in mine. I liked them, and I dated them, and I got engaged. I like my women friends as much. We had a very small... Very small. I was very fortunate, too, because I got to know a lot of city girls. That was very nice, because then you could get invited home after a dance so you didn't have to get in so early. There were lots of ways of getting around things.

Q: Right. [00:32:00] Did you meet your husband?

CF: (inaudible) at Brown then. That's the one thing I never regretted. (laughs) I always felt, I kind of envied these people that came back to the reunions with their husbands afterward. Especially in later years. No, he was Tufts. We had a good life.

Q: When you were in college do you think there was pressure about marriage? About women needing to get married right after college.

CF: Some did. There were those of us who felt that they didn't want to be married for at least five years. We wanted time to earn some money and they would spend it themselves. I think that's one of the things today, now the girls do things like earn money and put some man through medical school and then he... We just had a very sad case here in town. Anne became very famous and made a lot of money. He's decided he wants a different lifestyle, and he's left the one girl who put him through college, through medical school (inaudible). Let that be a lesson to you.

Q: Definitely.

CF: I think most of us planned on getting married eventually, but we were in no hurry.

Q: That was OK? There wasn't the pressure that there seems to be, like in the 50s, the pressure to get married younger? [00:34:00]

CF: No. One of my best friends was married, but she taught for a couple of years before she was married. Earn some money themselves. I think that if every woman needs to go out and earn some money all herself and have it, and spend it the way she darn pleases; not responsible to anybody else, then get it all out of her system, and then settle down to marriage. She's much better off.

Q: That's what most of the women seem to have done from your classes. Waited.

CF: I think that's really kind of sensible. [00:35:00]

Q: You said you went right into insurance right after college?

CF: I went into my father's office. I did it until I got married.

Q: Then you assumed that when you got married?

CF: No, I got married, and I stayed home, and I kept house, and eventually had a baby. We moved to New York. My husband was with a subsidiary store in Webster. He had always been in the store at Webster. They have a subsidiary (inaudible) was assistant to the president. We lived in New York for four years. Unfortunately, we were married in 1929 and we were on our honeymoon when the first [00:36:00] crack came in the stock market. We were very lucky. All through the worst of it, the first of the Depression we had a job, and had a good salary. We lived

in New York and I had a lot of fun, because I got a chance to get to know New York and see all the things. I loved that.

Then we went to Washington. Nobody wanted any more skyscrapers built, for goodness sake. He went and got a job with the government and we went to Washington for while. That was kind of interesting. Deborah was a baby then, so she went on everywhere with me. She would say hurrah for all the flags on Connecticut Avenue when we went by the embassies.

Then we came back to Marblehead. [00:37:00] I got engrossed in all kind of volunteer activities.

Q: What sorts of things?

CF: I was chairman of the nursing school advisory committee in Salem Hospital. I was chairman of the school committee. I was president of the woman's club. I was active in the church. What else? League of Women Voters. I was interested in garden club and the arrangers. I was busy, beside that we had a child. I can't understand why young women can't – I realize now that the cost of education for kids is so much that [00:38:00] women have to go to work because there's no other way to do it. It's just too bad, because they get so much out of volunteerism, if they only had a chance at it. I think there's all kinds of broadening experiences because you have to learn how to get along with people, and how to run things.

Then, when Deborah went to college in 1949, I'd been very active. That's another thing. I was active in the Girl Scouts, president of the Girl Scout Council. Our executive director left. It was just Marblehead and it was in the days of the small councils. They couldn't pay very much money, so I said I'd take the job. I'd had enough sociology to be able [00:39:00] to be.. group work and all that sort of stuff. I took the job. Then I stayed on, and on, and on, and I worked for the Girl Scouts. I worked for the national organization for a couple of years, training. In fact, I'm still a board member of the camp committee. I've not been idle.

Q: Doesn't sound like it at all. No. You said you did training work with the national Scouts? Did you do that from here, from Marblehead?

CF: I did it all over this section of the North Shore. [00:40:00] Then I went to work in [Andeville?]. I did a (inaudible). Merrimack Valley. Gee, I think my life.

Q: Sounds great. Do you think your college education played an important role?

CF: Oh, yes. I think it was tremendous training. That's why I feel that I was very fortunate to have been in a college that, while it was a predominantly women-oriented, it had men. I never could have gotten along with a school committee – I was the only woman on it – if I hadn't – I've known men in their best and their worst. [00:41:00] I understood them, in other words. Sure. No, the things that I learned have stood by me. I was no great brain, but I managed to get along all right. I wasn't like my friend, Betty Jeffers, she was a Phi Bet... (inaudible). I never Phi Beta because I never studied it. There was too many interesting things to do.

Q: What were some of the other things that you were involved in at school?

CF: That I did what?

Q: What were some of the other things that you did at school that you remember?

CF: In high school?

Q: No, no. At college.

CF: At college, things that I did?

Q: Any activities you were involved in?

CF: I was class president. I was house president. [00:42:00] I always seemed to be working. Every time they had a play I had dirty work to do. New furniture for the glee club.

Q: Everyone had you doing everything?

CF: I was interested in everything, I guess. I had no talents. I couldn't sing. I can write just plain – I just finished a history of the church. I couldn't write poetry and that sort of stuff. I had to do a lot of some dirty work, too, but I had a good time. [00:43:00] House president, I was on the – what do they call it? What did they call that thing that we had? All the heads of women's organizations. It was like the [genarian?] club on the hill.

Q: The question club?

CF: You got to know people that way. Getting to know people I guess was the thing I liked best.

Q: It sounds like you must have gotten to know a lot of people really well.

CF: We've been having a lot of excitement in our church. We're having a 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the church. We're having a big....It started in June. It started more than that. We wrote a book. Thirteen of us each wrote a chapter for the book. [00:44:00] Then we've done odds and ends (inaudible) to do a quarterly on the history of the church. Given a couple of talks on the ministers, the old ministers of the church who did the most for the town. I've been busy for the last year.

Q: Yeah. Marblehead, like you were saying before, you're a native of Marblehead.

CF: Go way back to 1634, I think, that the first ancestor came over.

Q: Really? Wow.

CF: I'm really am a native.

Q: Yeah. Makes you the perfect one to write the history of the church, right?

CF: I always said I was brought up with the spoon in the church, [00:45:00] and my mouth had a silver spoon. My father and mother were both very active, which was fun. I like to do things.

Q: It sounds like you've done a lot of interesting things.

CF: I've had a lot of different kind of experiences. I don't know what they've done for me, except to make me interested in a lot of things. I guess that's it.

Q: You're satisfied with the way things have turned out?

CF: I've had a good life. I hate getting old, but it's one of the things you have to face in this world. [00:46:00] It doesn't seem possible. Sometimes I can't realize that we have lived – I've seen so many, many things. Some of them are for good and some of them were for bad. I suppose Brown is more prestigious than it was ever before.

My daughter teaches English at Marblehead High School. She was saying today that not one of our students had been accepted for early admission. She was furious, because she thought that she had, had two students who were worthy of early admission. They'd been accepted at Harvard, [00:47:00] they'd been accepted at Yale, they'd been accepted at Dartmouth, they'd been accepted here or there and everywhere, but no at Brown. I don't like that. I think you can get too choosy. I don't know that they're turning out that much a better student, but I suppose they are. I think they've missed an awful lot. I think the women have missed a lot. I don't know about what they have now. For women, what do they have?

Q: There's the Pembroke Center.

CF: Does it amount to anything?

Q: Yes. It really does. That's what I'm doing here today. This is through the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research for Women.

CF: What does it do? Tell me about it. [00:48:00]



Q: You must have heard from the associates. Have you heard about the associates of the Pembroke Center, which is a group of alumni? There's the alumni work that's going on.

Track 2

CF: We got invited to a meeting once in a while some of us did. Miss Paddock was great friends with all of them so they used to come at lunch or dinner at the dorm. They were really something, those women. They were really and truly dedicated to the idea that women should have a place in the academic world, and that they should have a chance of a good education. They certainly worked hard to get it for them. When people laugh at them, but of course, they demanded. That's where this hat and glove business that people fuss and stew about now came from. Those women were brought up in the Victorian tradition. They were ladies, and they behaved like ladies.

If you ever have time to read that book, [00:01:00] "And the Ladies of the Club," it's been on the bestseller list. It was written by an 82-year-old woman. It's 1,500 pages or something. It's a tremendous book. It shows so much that, there was a lot of it. Because it begins at the Civil War days and goes on. But it shows that ladies were supposed to be ladies, and they were. They wouldn't have been anything but a lady. That is what the Rhode Island society expected of Pembroke girls, after they'd worked hard enough to get Pembroke started, they expected them to be ladies. That's why those things that sound today so silly, the [00:02:00] hats and gloves and things, were a protection, really, for what those women had stood for, I think. They wanted, they didn't want to see.... Well they would have died if they had seen women today in short-shorts, and whatnot. That was not the thing and it's not the way they were brought up. These rules were set down because of the fact that Pembroke was dependent upon these women for so long. They had done so much.

I'll never forget when Miss Morriss came the question of smoking. Nobody was worrying about it ruining your health in those days, but it just wasn't particularly [00:03:00] ladylike. I remember Miss Morriss saying in chapel, "Girls, I ask of you, not to smoke in public. The section of Providence that we are interested in keeping interested in Pembroke, is not ready for

women to smoke.” This is the thing, when people laugh at it. They think how silly Victorianism was, there was a reason. It wasn’t all bad.

Q: It’s interesting that Miss Morriss stated the connection about following the rules and the support of the community of Pembroke.

CF: She was [00:04:00] a wise, wise woman and she was very far-sighted. I hope that nobody will ever not realize how much she did for Pembroke to gain a national reputation. She was an amazing woman.

Q: That’s what I’ve heard.

CF: So fun, so much fun.

Q: I’ve heard she traveled around the country and spoke.

CF: She was president of the AAUW. She appreciated the freedom of Brown. She taught at Mt. Holyoke, you know.. She realized that it was a much, wide-open, [00:05:00] fresh air going through than there was at some other women’s colleges.

Q: At Pembroke?

CF: It was a broader view. There may be a little Victorian, but there was a reason for that. How shall I say. The freedom, and the opportunity, and the vision of what women could be and do was there, and it was coming in (inaudible).

Q: More so at Pembroke.

CF: It was, do a lot. Mrs. Allinson, too. Mrs. Allinson was, she was an impressive woman. She taught at.....what was the name of that club there in Providence? (inaudible). [00:06:00] That woman’s club. They had a clubhouse, and everything and a swimming pool. What was their

name? Anyway, she founded it and was the first president, where she was a woman (inaudible) for president. That was after she was – you know the story. I’m sure Betty told you the story of Mrs. Allinson and Johnny Green. Johnny Green was a Latin professor. This was in the days before Mrs. Allinson was there. It was Miss Emory, and he fell in love with her. The day that her engagement announcement was made to. . . What was her last name? Anne Crosby Emery Allinson. [00:07:00] To professor Allinson. He wrote her a note that says, “Just my luck, Johnny.” I don’t know. He was a wonderful professor. When you taught Latin, you had to (inaudible) some days, you’ll have to take Latin two years to get an AB degree. He used to cut quite frequently. We had Latin at 2:00 in the afternoons. It was a terrible time.

Q: Do you have any particular memories that stick out about certain professors, or certain classes?

CF: Oh, Professor Collier was one of my favorites. Professor Collier taught history. I think I took about four of his courses, I liked him so much. [00:08:00] And [Benny Cowell?], and Professor Hastings. English courses with him. What was the name? This is the failing of old age. You can’t say names when you want to fast enough. He was a great actor. Anyway. He was marvelous. He taught drama.

Q: You had some of the best men professors?

CF: That was another thing about Pembroke that was wonderful, because the men all liked to teach the women better than they did the men, because the women worked harder. [00:09:00] He taught the heads of the department.

Q: You really got a sense that they really liked teaching the women’s classes?

CF: They all said so.

Q: Did they?

CF: Mm-hmm. They loved to come in.

CF: How did the men feel about that?

CF: They didn't care. The thing that made us mad, though, something about the women had to get a higher. . . It was something about Phi Beta Kappa, the women had to do a little better than the men to get the be (inaudible).

Q: That's interesting.

CF: I've forgotten exactly how much it was. It was a long time ago.

Q: Do you remember a discussion about changing the name? [00:10:00] Because when you were there it was the Women's College.

CF: Oh, yeah. We went in as the Women's College. Then we were all thrilled to death, Miss Morriss did that, changed it to Pembroke. It was wonderful. She said that we had to have an identity of our own. Everybody was thrilled.

Q: You think that the students (inaudible).

CF: When it was the Women's College in Brown University sounded so... (inaudible).

Q: Long, for one.

CF: Well, yeah. We liked being Pembroke College. I was awful glad that I got a Brown degree after they changed it to Pembroke. It would have been terrible to get a Pembroke degree. You wouldn't have had any degree.

Q: That was one [00:11:00] issue earlier on when there was discussion about the name change. The alumni, many of the early alumni, wanted to keep it the Women's College in Brown University, because Pembroke would not have the name.

CF: Well they didn't know Miss Morriss then. She had a dynamic personality and she was so pretty. That awful portrait of her doesn't do her justice. If anybody ever goes at the end of a – it didn't look as if anybody ever went in there when I was there for a reunion this year in the Crystal Room. Yes. [00:12:00] Mrs. Allinson's doesn't do her justice. None of them, really. Maybe I say it in say it (inaudible) way, I don't think they appealed to me (inaudible). Miss King's (inaudible) I think. She was an unusual woman, but poor soul, she couldn't help.... I don't think she was that old, either. I never knew how old she was when she died, but she always seemed like she was. She got senile. She couldn't get through the Lord's Prayer in chapel. It was terrible.

Q: She was there for six months or something during your time?

CF: I forget. I've forgotten (inaudible) [00:13:00] Some committee for some dance we were going to have. That was my freshman year. My boyfriend and I had to take her to the dance. We had to go down to the [Middleton?) to collect her. We got there and she wasn't quite ready. That was my sophomore year, because she wasn't there freshman year.

Q: You did know her a little bit?

CF: Oh, yeah.

Q: You had some contact with her.

CF: She was a great friend of Miss Pattens. She used to come to lunch. That was when we dined in state. We all went in to dinner together and the seniors had to [00:14:00] take a table every week and be the hostess at a table.

Q: Was this in Metcalf?

CF: Metcalf. It was good training. We used to have coffee in the living room sometimes. It was a gracious kind of a time. Miss Morriss was always (inaudible). She was thrilled when Andrews Hall was built., with gracious living.

Q: What do you mean?

CF: I was glad I was on the advisory committee. I had a chance to see. I guess I really didn't so much because, that was when Miss Nancy Duke was there. [00:15:00] Nancy Duke could charm Dr. Wristen, so most anything could happen at Pembroke then.

Q: Do you remember Miss Davidson? Does that name sound familiar? She was a woman who worked in admissions and vocational guidance.

CF: Miss, who? Davidson?

Q: First it was Miss Davidson and then it was Eva Moore.

CF: Can't think of their name. The woman who was the registrar. What was her name? She was nice. I remember she had invited me and a couple of other girls who were down there. [00:16:00] She had a place in that old town. We went down, and she had us down for Saturday tea. It was very nice. I can't think of her name, but she was awfully nice. I don't remember Miss – I remember Miss Moore. I was chairman of the Regional Scholarship Committee at the time that Miss Moore was there. Miss Moore was here when they declared World War II. I remember the day Pearl Harbor was bombed. We were around seeing; I took her around to all the high schools on the North Shore. I used to do that every year. So I got very well acquainted with Miss Moore.

Q: What was she like, because she came to Brown in the 20s. [00:17:00]

CF: She was very nice. I don't think was there when we were there.

Q: No. She was there a couple years later.

CF: This was after I came back from New York to live in Marblehead. She was a very nice person. I know that when I was interviewing girls for scholarships and things, they all, everybody said, oh, it was such a contrast to go down to Pembroke after they'd been to Radcliffe, because the Radcliffe admission office was so cold. Miss Moore was so warm and friendly. She was a dear. I thoroughly enjoyed having her. [00:18:00] She came up and she'd stay for three or four days and we'd run around to all the schools.

The day after Pearl Harbor we were down at school down in Braintree, a private school. She had the seniors, the girls, and talking to them and telling them about Pembroke. The principal of the school came in, "Young ladies, I don't want anyone to be frightened," he said. "We've had word that the bombing in Boston, (inaudible) a bomb in Boston, and I don't know how you girls are going to get home, but it's all right. We'll take care of you." I thought, a bomb in Boston. I've got to get through Boston and over to Marblehead. [00:19:00] He was the most tactful man I've ever seen.

We had a lot of adventurousness. I remember back in the days when you had chains on your car. We were going to Newburyport High School. Tromping down the main street of Newburyport and the chains broke, one chain broke. I never heard such a clang and clatter in my life. She went in and talked to the seniors at Newburyport High School. I went to find a garage to get my chain fixed.

Q: She was very involved in vocational guidance when she first came.

CF: That's true, yeah. She was interested in [00:20:00] things that were opening up for women.. I don't think I know anything I haven't posed.

Q: Nothing else.

CF: If you've got any more questions.

Q: Do you remember any women lecturers coming to the college talking about what they did for a living, or coming to talk specifically about women's opportunities, or was that not . . .

Q: There was nothing that just stands out in my mind, I'm sure. I think they came to chapel once in awhile.

Q: How about [00:21:00] alumni? When you were a student, were you at all in touch with alumni?

CF: The alumni were very active in running our political clubs, and things like that, that we did for the community. We got to know a lot of them that way. They were around. They were interested, and I think they got invited, a lot of them, to (inaudible) days and we had Ivy Day, and Spring Day, and things like that. They'd be around. The ones who were most active.

Q: You say you also had contact with the Rhode Island Society (inaudible)?

CF: [00:22:00] Of course, then when I got to be alumni president then I got to know a lot of the older alumni.

Q: When were you alumni president?

CF: Let's see Deborah graduated from high school in '49. It probably was about '46, because I think I just got through. When was the Alumnae Hall dedicated? I was president then. That was one of the things about our class. We were the first class to raise money for Alumnae Hall.

[00:23:00] I think I was just through being the president of the Alumni Association when Deborah entered in 1949. It must have been about '46. Then I went on the Pembroke College Advisory Committee for three years.

Q: Then, you said when your daughter went to Pembroke things were very different?



CF: Oh, yeah. They were. I think they lost a lot of the – they did their best, but Miss Paddock was long gone. They had marvelous food. That was the one thing. Their food was better than when we were there. Her freshman year [00:24:00] she lived in a dormitory way out by the old reservoir up there. If you go out Brown Street as far as you can go. It was fairly tough. It was the about a mile for breakfast. Then she lived in West House for a year, I think. Then she lived in Metcalf for a year, and then she lived in Andrews..

Q: How do you think her experience was different as a woman at Pembroke in the 50s from yours? Do you see (inaudible).

CF: It wasn't the closeness among the girls, I think, although it was still Pembroke. She had a lot [00:25:00] of good friends. I always felt that her class let the men get in the way. If they were going to play bridge, they got two men to play with them, that kind of thing. They weren't as content as we were to be with women. I don't think they ever had the fun of using the kitchenettes, and things like that as much as we did. The parties and the suppers that we used to have. They were more sophisticated. The simple joys.

Q: Do you remember anything about President Faunce?

CF: Oh, indeed I do. He was [00:26:00] the silver-tongued orator. He was an interesting man. I had several meetings with him about various and sundry things, in some way or other. Among my souvenirs I have a letter he wrote me thanking me for something I had done. Two or three times; once I remember he came and got me and I was taking a shower. The maid came up and said, Dr. Faunce is here. Yes, I got to know him a little bit. Enough so that he knew me when he saw me on campus, or something like that.

Q: I'm sorry?

CF: I said, he got to know me enough so he knew me when he saw me on the campus. [00:27:00]

Q: You were class president, was that the connection?

CF: Yeah.

Q: How would you describe him and his attitudes about the women?

CF: I don't think he was the broadest person in the world. He was a Baptist minister. He was charming. His chapel talks were wonderful. I think he certainly wasn't as dynamic as Wristin. As I went into alumni circles in Boston Brown Club, and whatnot, [00:28:00] the men who were just a little older than I revered him very much.

Q: How about the women? How did the women feel about him, and how did he feel about the women, for that matter?

CF: Oh, he liked the women. He liked the women. He liked the women's records and the way they did things. I don't think he ever had the same feeling for them that Wristin had. I think they were kind of a separate little entity over here. But, he was very proud of them.

Q: He was interested in keeping them over there? [00:29:00]

CF: I never thought that was so bad.

Q: The men were also interested in keeping them over there.

CF: Yeah, but they really weren't very – why I don't think? I know that a lot of them were, a lot of them, but I don't think the average man was upset about it. There were too many marriages. I think they kind of liked having the girls over there. (inaudible) But I think some of the alumni men were opposed.

Q: From the classes back?

CF: When they didn't have any.

Q: Yeah. When I look at the old Brown *Daily Herald*s [00:30:00] they had such a to-do about the women. You think that in general it wasn't as?

CF: I don't think it was as serious as it would sound reading the Brown *Daily Herald*, but then I don't think that the things that you read in the Brown *Daily Herald* today that I see, you take too seriously. This is the same idea.

Q: True.

CF: You can get yourself into a terrible snit over the stuff the kids write in the papers, but you don't have to pay much attention to them. I think that was the way the Pembrokers thought about it. A little talk, we're here.

Q: People do say there was always this tension, though, between the women and the men.

CF: A tension? [00:31:00]

Q: You don't think so?

CF: Well, I think if you wanted, you could take some of the fraternities. (inaudible) Alpha Delta I think there were some Alpha Deltas (inaudible) Pembrokers in our dormitory. I don't know. I wouldn't have seen it. I guess I'm a person that doesn't really feel tension. They never bothered me. Those Brown men were awfully nice. I had a terrible time with chemistry. I didn't like it, and there was a couple of them that were awful nice, they'd come over with their slide rules and do my equations for me. And they would always...if your frog got away [00:32:00] in biology, and they'd always chase him for you. I didn't ever feel the tension. If I needed anything I would rather get attention than feel tension.

Q: You said biology was separate, right? You were with other women.

Q: We had our own laboratory and we had classes separately.

Q: Chemistry?

CF: Chemistry was separate. How did I ever get those men to help me? I don't know.

Q: They came out of the woodwork. (laughter)

CF: Brought their slide rules with them. In the days before computers. I heard the way biology was taught, [00:33:00] but I certainly learned a lot about biology. I felt that a student (inaudible) I needed to know something more about my own body. We learned all the essentials.

Q: You had a woman biology instructor, right? That was the only woman that you would have had.

CF: (inaudible)

Q: Did that make a difference to you at the time?

CF: Did what?

Q: Did that make a difference to you? Did you think about... did you want to have more women scholars teaching you?

CF: Oh, I like men. I thought that was the biggest thing about it, that we didn't have to have women.

Q: So it was the lessor institutions that had to have women?

CF: I like men, and I like getting a man's viewpoint on things. I think it's very different than....  
[00:34:00] It certainly is different than the women's viewpoint of my day. A lot of respect, and I was glad to find out how they ticked.

Q: How would you describe the women's viewpoint of your day when you say that?

CF: You mean the women that you would have had, if you would have had women professors?

Q: Yeah.

CF: I think it was narrower. I think their outlook was narrow. Perhaps they were better scholars, maybe, than some men. I don't know. [00:35:00] I think the thing that would have impressed me was that the small little things were more important than I think they were to a man. They were likely to be picky. They weren't as able to see things from all sides as well as a man.

Q: Because of their experience as women?

CF: Maybe. Maybe they had been to women's colleges. They were inbred, maybe, with the women's viewpoint.

Q: [00:36:00] Yeah, this goes back to what we were talking about before about the advantage of being in the men's university. Is there anything else?

CF: I don't know. I don't know if I've done you any good or not.

Q: It's been fascinating. It really has.

CF: I'm eternally grateful that I had my years at Pembroke College. I think it did a lot for me, and I think it made me much more a sensible woman, and one that. . . I think I never was one to get uptight. [00:37:00] I think Mrs. Allinson was certainly responsible for that part, that she had such a broad outlook on life. I think it's too bad to deprive people of chapel. I really do. It may

sound silly, but I can't see what harm it ever did anybody to go and hear Mrs. Allinson give you ideas on how to live.

Q: You also had other speakers come into chapel, right?

CF: Yeah.

Q: President (inaudible).

CF: They liked her best. Miss Morriss was never as good in chapel as Mrs. Allinson. It wasn't her forte. She was good, but never – it got to the point you really wanted to make something of yourself as much, I guess.

Q: What do you mean by that?

CF: Mrs. Allinson was always aspiring [00:38:00] you to make the most of yourself. To try and bring out all the qualities in yourself that you thought were of any value and cultivate them.

Q: What were the qualities that Dean Allinson tried to. . .

CF: She was a very, very believer in a broad outlook on life, and a broad vision. A vision was one of her things that she wanted to – have you ever read her books?

Q: I've read one of her essays. Her little essays.

Q: Those were her chapel talks, a lot. [00:39:00] Fairness, and honesty, helpfulness. All good virtues. She made it sound as if they were the kind of things that you wanted to have for yourself.

Q: Dean Morriss' talks were different. Did she talk about different subjects?

CF: Hers were more down to earth I think than Mrs. Allinson's.. They were not as deeply inspiring as Mrs. Allinson's. She gave you good stuff, but it wasn't the kind of stuff you remembered. That's the way it was.

Q: Were they the same kinds of topics?

CF: She was interested in a woman's place in the world. [00:40:00] I guess she wasn't so much interested in developing us as she was having us realize the responsibilities for us in the world. I guess that was the thing that Miss Morriss was interested in, which was good. We were very fortunate to have two such really different kind of women.

Q: When you say she was very concerned with women's place in the world, how would you describe what she considered women's place in the world?

CF: She felt that the leadership qualities that women had would be very much strengthened in that if they were going forth [00:41:00] to really take a place in the world that they had to be sure that they could measure up. I think that was one of the things. You just didn't go out and say, here I am. What do you want me to do? You had to have something that you were going to offer.

CF: That's what she promoted at the college?

CF: I think. That's the things that I remember after 60 years.

Q: You remember a lot, I can tell you. I guess she encouraged a lot of women to do whatever they wanted to do.

CF: She encouraged women to go on to graduate work a lot. That was the thing that was, the thing I think came about more in our day, they'd never had before. There were not as many graduate students, or not as many women interested in doing undergraduate work. [00:42:00] I think that's what Miss Morriss was responsible for a lot of that feeling.

Q: Yeah. I've heard that. Did you ever talk to Dean Morriss about what you were going to do? About going into the business world?

CF: Oh, yeah. She quite understood it, because the woman who was in insurance in Boston was one of her former students at Mount Holyoke. She quite understood the fact that this could be done, and that it could be successful.

Q: You had talked to her about it.

CF: She knew what I wanted to do. She would come up and spend a weekend with us occasionally. She was a very good friend, [00:43:00] and her father and mother came. She and her mother came with us. It was the hottest weekend I think I ever saw in Marblehead. It was terrible. Saturday was unbearably hot. We went to church Sunday morning, and in the middle of the sermon, they had blinds on the windows. The door was open, but the wind began to blow, windy northeast. Oh boy.(inaudible). We went over to the yacht club for lunch that noon. We had to wear...put on sweaters, and that night we had a fire in the fireplace. It was wonderful. I'll never forget that weekend, because it was everything that Marblehead could ever do for anybody.

Q: A perfect sampling of life in Marblehead. [00:44:00] Okay, I think that's all the questions that I have.

CF: I don't know how much of value anything I've said is, but anyway. I loved Pembroke and I'm glad to have somebody doing something about it. I think it's too bad that we didn't do more. I mean, that they didn't do it right away. I think if they had done it right away everybody would have felt, a lot of the alumni would have felt a lot better, because that period when nobody seemed to care. Then that awful thing that we went through. I know Betty said to me about it, but we went to it must have been our fiftieth reunion, or fifty-fifth, fifty-fifth, yes, and she talked about...made fun of the girls and their hats and gloves. She made fun of the biology teacher, and she made fun of everything that was old, and spoke slightly of Miss Morriss. [00:45:00] Betty



and I were so mad. Betty wrote a wonderful letter to her telling her exactly what she thought when we got through.

Q: This was?

CF: It was at one of the symposiums, or whatnot, at the alumnae day.

Q: Who was it who spoke?

CF: It was that woman that's supposed to be doing a great thing for – she was getting all these records made, and she had talked with alumnae, and she'd talked with people that apparently hadn't really known or appreciated either Mrs. Allinson or Miss Morriss. We were very upset.

Q: This was Joan Scott, was it?

CF: I've forgotten her name. She didn't impress me, because I didn't like what she said.

[00:46:00]

Q: When the merger happened then, you were disappointed?

CF: Yeah, the whole thing. Their whole reaction to Pembroke. Betty got up and said, "You say that you had contacted alumni. Who did you contact? Oh, local alumni. They said, nobody talked to me. Pass your name on to you, or what. Betty was the first alumnae secretary, you know.

Q: Yeah. I know, she told me about that. Dean Morriss I guess called her up one day and told her about the new project and asked her to do it.

- END -