

Transcript – Jean (Tanner) Edwards, '45

Narrator: Jean (Tanner) Edwards
Interviewer: Jane Lancaster
Interview Date: October 24, 2005
Interview Time:
Location:
Length: 1 audio files; 61:55

Track 1

JL: [00:00:00] This is Jean Edwards. And class of?

Jean (Tanner) Edwards: Forty-five.

JL: Class of '45, but it's more complicated than that.

JTE: Oh, yes, a lot more complicated. See, it was during the war, and my fiancé was in the ROTC. And so, he was required to go summers, so – to speed up the whole process of producing officers. And so, I said, “Well, I’ll go summers, too.” So, I managed to get past a whole year of my college education. It was in the air, you know? It was the time when people really wanted to do something about the war if they were in a position to do it. And so, I was happy about it. And, of course, looking back, I think I missed a lot of the true college experience. But that was all right, I –

JL: And when you graduated, you went to do something for the war.

JTE: I did. I became a WAVE, Women’s [00:01:00] Auxiliary Volunteer Emergency Service.
(laughs)

JL: And what did you do?

JTE: Well, I went to Midshipman's School and Communication School at Smith College, with our – I'm not going to remember the names of any of the things, but we walked around in a troop to different places on the Smith campus, where we had our classes and our drill and everything. And I'll never forget the day – it was a warm day in August, I think. And the word came out that we were allowed to remove our jackets for drill. And some of the girls were quite embarrassed, because they had only ironed the parts that show. (laughter) So – (laughs) so they had to, anyway. And then, from there – four months there, and I went to Washington to be in the – to work in the communications annex, which was supposedly what my [00:02:00] communications school had taught me how to do. But all – it was a typing job, really. I was sending out a lot – I was in a whole room full of some enlisted WAVES and officers, and we – our duty was to send out the information when they had broken the Jap codes. Japanese codes. And so, really, almost by the time I got there, they were breaking it every day at a certain time of day. And so, there really wasn't much to do except when they broke – and then it just went right out to the – all ships and stations. (laughs)

JL: How long did you do that for?

JTE: I did that for – let's see. Well, about – only about a year, because it was late in the war. And also, both Knight and I got points for being [00:03:00] married, which allowed us to get out earlier. So, I was able to get out in January, and he got out of – '46. No, '47 it must have been. And he got out in February, so we were able to go on with our lives at that point.

JL: When did you get married?

JTE: Well, we got married in the middle of that time. He came home – the ship came home for overhaul and was at Bremerton, Washington. And so, he called me from Honolulu, and I can't figure out the timeframe, because – and I also don't understand whether he reached me at the office or at home. But that doesn't matter, because what he said was, "I'm coming home. Let's get married!" (laughs) So, that was very – I was ready to do that, too. And so, my poor mother, she had to do everything. But the interesting – one of the interesting things to me was that with no knowledge that he was going to come home at any particular [00:04:00] time, my mother and

I had gone to the old department store in Boston, R.H. Stearns. I think we met – we probably – mother coming from Providence and me coming from Northampton – we picked out my wedding gown, because I had no idea that Knight was coming. But there it was, and so when we got the word, we ordered it –

JL: Great.

JTE: – and it was – that was very lucky.

JL: Now, you'd said you were engaged a lot of the time you were at Brown?

JTE: Well, yes, I was. The first informal engagement took place when we were both freshmen, and we were driving down Prospect Street in my husband's – in Knight's father's car, because that's what we always used. He didn't have a car. And I don't know where we were going, but as we reached – as I remember it – is we reached Meeting Street – because I was living on Cushing Street, you see? So, we reached Meeting [00:05:00] Street, Knight said to me, "I think we should get married." (laughs) Course, we knew that we couldn't get married when we were freshmen anyway.

JL: Why not?

JTE: Well, it was not permitted to – it was not permitted for the men in the Navy. They couldn't do that. Well, it might have been a little bit too much of a distraction for them to get married. And, well, I didn't really want to get married when I was a freshman either. But I thought it was a good idea anyway, so we managed to make it, finally.

JL: Were there students who were married?

JTE: Not that I know of. I don't think it happened that much in those days.

JL: Well, let's get back to when you started at Brown. Why did you come to Brown in the first place?

JTE: Because it was there. (laughter) Well, my whole family had gone to Brown, my – at least I know my mother and father had gone there, and [00:06:00] my – I guess my aunt. Yeah, I know my aunt went there, too. And probably my uncles. So, it was sort of a family thing. And I think that's why – largely why Knight went, because it was a family thing. So, we've been – Brown men read for a long, long time in our families.

JL: Did they interview you? Did you have to do an interview before you came here?

JTE: I don't think so.

JL: No?

JTE: And I didn't have to take any exams, because the grades that I got at Hope High School were good enough to get me in. I did take something like a – something that stood for an English composition exam, though, which – because I was lucky to have been able to skip that particular English composition course, so I could go right into English literature.

JL: So, [00:07:00] what memories do you have of this building?

JTE: Well, I certainly don't remember that the stairs were so long. (laughs) But I remember coming up to a second-floor classroom, which would be across the hall from where we are now. And one of the greats of Brown faculty was Robert George, Bob George. And he – it was European History, and I think it lasted all year, too. It was not one semester, but – that's one memory of this building. And another one is that Dean Morriss had a – office at the foot of the stairs. And Miss Mooar, too, had – I think had her office in that same –

JL: Who was Mr. Wood?

JTE: Miss Mooar.

JL: Mooar.

JTE: M-O-O-A-R, which is kind of unusual.

JL: Who was she?

JTE: Well, she was – some of the – she was [00:08:00] probably an associate dean. I taught – you know, some of these things I just don't remember. But I do remember having some contact with her. She was a lovely woman. And Dean Morriss was a very dignified lady that stood up very straight, and had her hair in a bun, I think. There's a beautiful picture of her somewhere on campus, I think.

JL: And their – did you go into their offices?

JTE: Yes, I did. I know I – I don't know, I have more memory of going into Miss Mooar's office. And I can't think what I would have been talking to her about, because I was already in. And so, I didn't – wasn't a question of admissions. That's terrible, isn't it? (laughter)

JL: Did they look like offices do now? Or were they different from –

JTE: Well, they were much more – well, I suppose they were sort of Victorian, in a way. You know, they were not bare. They had decorations, [00:09:00] and it looked comfortable, and comfortable chairs. And it wasn't as sterile as I think many offices look now. I don't remember details of that, though. I didn't go in there very often. I guess I behaved myself in college. (laughs) Didn't get into trouble with the dean.

JL: Do you remember the library up on the top floor?

JTE: Well, I can't – I'm not sure whether I went up there while I was in college or some later date, because I lived here all my life and might have had some reason to go up there for something else. But I did not frequent that library. I preferred the library where the men were. (laughter) So, in those days –

JL: Which library was that?

JTE: It was the John Hay.

JL: OK.

JTE: Because, of course, the Rockefeller wasn't built yet, 'til after the war, I think. And there was a smoking room, where there's a little display room on the right as you go in. And so – and we were both smoking at that [00:10:00] point. (laughs) And so, we would go in there and visit with each other. But also, we did some studying at home, because I just lived about two blocks away from the campus, and he lived down that – well, he lived on campus, on Thayer Street. Caswell, I guess it was called. So, we spent a lot of the time at my house. In fact, he even helped me wash the dishes sometimes. (laughter)

JL: So, you were living at home.

JTE: Yes.

JL: But you had access to the City Girls' house?

JTE: Yes, and I think it was a house that was right next door here at – an old frame house, just a residence kind of a house. And I remember going in there and there was – people that liked to gather around lunchtime to play bridge. And so, I would get – I'd be invited to sit down and play bridge. A few times, not too – not all the time. And I don't think we could smoke in there. I don't believe so. That would have been going too far. [00:11:00]

JL: So, was there a big difference between the City Girls' experience and the girls who were living in the dorms?

JTE: I think so, yes. I don't think I ever wanted to live in the dorm, because there were so many restrictions that – I understood there were. But, of course, at home, I could stay up as late as I wanted, unless my mother rapped on the floor or something. (laughs) And I could come and go, and I was – convenient. I was right at the heart of things, sort of. So, I've – but I think what we missed – we City Girls missed was hanging around in the dorms, which – that's – I got the impression that some very close friendships were formed among the dorm girls. You know, I think there may have been – actually, I think there may have been some girls that did make friendships with those girls, and then go visit the dorm. But I had something better to do with my time. (laughs)

JL: Right. (laughs)

JTE: I'm not really typical, I don't think.

JL: [00:12:00] Well, I don't know who is typical, really.

JTE: Well, that's true. Everybody's different.

JL: So, you said you liked to go to the Hay because that was where there were there were boys – men studying. And this was partly because you were having this romance.

JTE: Uh-huh.

JL: But did other people go – well, tell me about the general feeling about going to the Hay amongst girls of your acquaintance.

JTE: Well, I don't know. I think that they went to – went over there if they needed the books, you know? Maybe they went for the same reason that I did. But I didn't go because the boys were there. I went because the boy was there. (laughs)

JL: That boy. (laughter) And was this a no smoking place, then, up here?

JTE: Oh, I don't think you'd smoke in this building. I'm wondering – I don't remember – was in the – in West – no, that's not West House. West House was up there and the – on Brown Street. I think this might have been East House, next door here. [00:13:00] You know, when it was still there. I think there may have been smoking in there, because it was like a lounge for the City Girls.

JL: Yeah.

JTE: – City Girls.

JL: [Right?].

JTE: And also, I think West House was available to any City Girls that needed to stay overnight for some reason, like if they had a late rehearsal. Brownbrokers or something like that.

JL: Were you involved in some of these extracurricular activities?

JTE: Well, I was involved in the glee club right away. All four years. And I certainly remember some high points of that experience. It was – when Harvard Glee Club came down to sing with us – now with the men, but to sing with us – and we did the Bach Mass where it has – is that very, very exciting moment when it comes along and it – the thing – the [00:14:00] piece, choral piece, starts “Et resurrexit,” you know? And he rose from the dead. And that was very difficult, but you had to come in – was on – sort of on an off beat. And we had to practice that quite a lot before we could get it right. But that was fun. And, see, what else? Well, one thing I did, which

was not extracurricular: it was a job. I worked over at the news bureau over at Brown, and that was fun. And, of course –

JL: What did that involve?

JTE: – Knight was there, too. It was another typing job. (laughs) So, we – I used to – whoever was doing this would send out the local stories. There's a name for them, but I can't think of it. If the – if somebody among the students had won an honor or done something special, we would send – we'd write up an article or we wouldn't – actually, yeah, I guess we did write the articles. Short ones. And it was a local – it was a [00:15:00] hometown story, that's what it was. So, that was fun. I enjoyed that.

JL: You were paid for that?

JTE: Yeah, yeah. So, that was good. It helped to finance the number of sweaters I thought I had to have. Supposed to wear a different one every day. (laughs) And, you know, I don't – I think we wore skirts. I don't think we wore pants.

JL: No.

JTE: No, not wearing pants. But that was a good way – so I wouldn't have to go into my family's finances. Course, I was also – I got a scholarship all through college. I [edited?] for the – the scholarship that was – it was a pretty good – pretty darn good scholarship for – I guess it was for local people. And I should remember that. But [00:16:00] I didn't get it. A much more deserving person got it, because she wouldn't have been able to go, whereas they thought, well, her uncle is chancellor of the university. I guess he can afford to send her here. (laughs) So –

JL: So, who was your uncle?

JTE: Harold Tanner.

JL: Okay.

JTE: And – but at any rate, I got a scholarship from a client of my father's. He was a trust officer. And one day, she spoke to – talked with him and said, "I'd really like to put a girl through Pembroke." And so, my father was a very diffident person. Spoke up when – he saw – opportunity of a lifetime, I guess. And he put my name in for it. At least he said, "My – well, my daughter could use it." So – and I guess she thought enough of him that she thought his daughter would be – worthy recipient.

JL: And I think you were. You became Phi Beta Kappa.

JTE: Yeah.

JL: Right?

JTE: I was a [00:17:00] junior Phi Beta Kappa.

JL: Even better.

JTE: And so, when it came time for the seniors to be elected – this is a terribly derogatory story, because it doesn't – you don't believe it. But the story was told that Mr. Couch, the Classics teacher was a friend of Knight's family – said, "Well, I don't think we want to let Knight go through life when his wife has Phi Beta Kappa and he doesn't." (laughs) Obviously wasn't the real reason, but anyway, it was kind of a good story. And that was a story that I don't think Knight told. I told that story once in a while.

JL: So, you were not reelected as a senior? Or he was elected?

JTE: No, you don't do that.

JL: Oh, I see.

JTE: Yeah, that – once you're in as a junior, that's it.

JL: Right.

JTE: And then they – you get another chance, maybe – they do it by your grades really, yeah. And they have the whole class [00:18:00] ranked according to their grades. And I was also – I graduated Magna Cum Laude with high honors in English.

JL: My goodness. (laughter)

JTE: That's something you didn't know. Well, that wasn't that big a deal. We had to take honors – we had to take exams, and those – I don't even know if Brown or – requires a thesis for graduation or for anything. But it didn't in those days. And so, we had to take these four – I don't know, three or four hour exams in the fields that we had actually taken honors courses in. They – if you took an honors course, it was a double course. It is the equivalent of two courses. And so, I don't even remember which courses that I was examined on. But anyway, I passed. (laughs) Well, I guess I passed with high honors. I don't know which was the one for the grades or which was the one – yeah, it must have been the English courses – I got high honors in that. And the other one was probably in my average. Guess that worked out pretty well.

JL: So, you were an English major.

JTE: Yes, I was.

JL: Were there a series of compulsory courses, requirements that you had to do? What kinds of things were they?

JTE: Well, the one that comes to mind is – well, we had to take them in science, and there was one – you had to take either math or philosophy. And I don't remember what the other – I suppose English or history or something. But the one that I remember particularly was the

biology course, because you could either take biology for the whole year or you could take biology and [00:20:00] psychology. And my mother said – well, she didn't think I should take that Psychology course. I might get ideas! (laughs) So, I took Biology for the whole year and, you know, cut up fetal pigs and other disgusting things like that. And that was in the Arnold Laboratory over on Waterman Street. And I'm sure it must have been all girls, because it was a – I took it as a freshman, yeah.

JL: Did they hold freshman courses in this building? Do you –

JTE: Well, this [wasn't?] – the history course with Mr. George –

JL: Okay.

JTE: – was in this building. And the English course, which was a survey of English Lit. was in the basement here, I think. And I'm trying to think what else I took. That was history and English. I don't know – I don't remember what else I took. Must have been something.

JL: That's good. You said a few minutes ago about [00:21:00] – you lived at home because there were a lot of restrictions on the dorm residents?

JTE: I only heard about them, you know? I heard about saying goodbye to your date outside, where no – in the dark, where nobody could see you kissing him, and getting in by a certain hour. I think it was probably maybe 11 or 10 in – weekdays, and maybe 12 weekends. But since I was never required to submit to that, I didn't really –

JL: With the –

JTE: – take that much interest.

JL: Were there dress restrictions or requirements? Could you not wear certain things?

JTE: Well, I think there must have been, because we always wore skirts. I think – particularly, I think they thought it would be undignified for girls to go over to the men’s campus in slacks. Wouldn’t be ladylike. That was still a criterion [00:22:00] that we – that was observed. (laughs)

JL: So, being ladylike and not being too clever, these are some of the requirements of women in that –

JTE: What’s this about not being too clever?

JL: Well, not being too much Phi Beta Kappa and –

JTE: Oh, well, that didn’t matter.

JL: No?

JTE: Not – no, because I already had my man. (laughs) And he was going to be Phi Beta Kappa.

JL: All right.

JTE: I know what you’re saying. I suppose that [didn’t – did?] make a difference to people, about how much they were going to recite in class or, you know, answer questions and stuff. But I don’t think anybody ever shunned me because I was doing well. It was, you know, whether I was a friendly person or not.

JL: So, most of your classes were mixed?

JTE: Yes, after that. But I must tell you about my sophomore course, one of my history courses, which was Renaissance and Reformation. [00:23:00] And I went quite happily to that for the fall semester. And when it came to the spring semester, I was told I was not allowed to take that, because I was going to be the only girl in the class. So, I submitted – of course, I didn’t even

protest. (laughs) I think I went and took a Classics course instead, with dear old Alex Robinson, yeah.

JL: Can you remember any other examples where – something that now would seem unfair just happened to do with gender or –

JTE: Not really, no. I think it was a good place to be, really. I mean, I'm sure that all women's colleges, I'm sure, had those. Well, this was a women's college, though. What am I saying? But the ones like Wellesley, I'm sure they all had restrictions, too. So, that's what you – you were in – the college was – I guess was because the college [00:24:00] was in loco parentis, and that – if you had a responsibility for seeing that you were –

JL: Right.

JTE: – behaved well.

JL: Were there many students who were not Anglo-Saxon and Protestant?

JTE: Oh, sure. One of my best friends was Protestant, but she was an Armenian girl. I went through high school with her and college, yeah. Still friends with her. And as far as Jewish girls, I'm sure there were. The president of our class after we graduated was Anita Horowitz, who was a wonderful woman and very bright. And so, you know, I'm sure there were plenty of them. But, oh, Judy Weiss, who was at Brown – Pembroke before me – and I don't know whether she was '39 or – [00:25:00] I didn't know her at college, but I – we knew her fairly well after college. And she said that there was a quota on Jewish girls. So, I don't know whether you've heard of it, but she's the only one that's ever mentioned that to me, so –

JL: And –

JTE: – that's unfortunate.

JL: – African-American girls?

JTE: Well, one of the brightest girls in our class was African-American, but I think she was perhaps even the only one. She went into science, some science research, I think.

JL: And these girls – the dorms, were they going to – well, you may not know this. But I'm just wondering whether it was a comfortable place to be for non-WASP-y girls, where Miss Horowitz and the African-American – were they City Girls and living outside or –

JTE: They – yeah, I think they – I think that Anita Horowitz was – probably was living at home. [00:26:00] And [Rose Boyagen?], I'm sure she was living at home. And I don't really know about – the name of that wonderful black girl, I can't bring it up right now. Probably remember it after we're all through.

JL: Okay. We started off talking a little bit about the war and the effect of the war on the campus. Can you tell me some more about that? You started – let me – in September '41, and then three months later it was Pearl Harbor. Do you remember what was happening that day?

JTE: Oh, I know where I was.

JL: Where were you?

JTE: I was in a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, and then we were practicing over at – I guess in the auditorium. You know, the theater. And after we'd started, pretty soon Knight showed up. And he told me that we were at war, which was pretty devastating. And I think – [00:27:00] I don't think the rehearsal went on after that, but I don't remember, really. And then he – his father had just gone to – on the train to New York. And somehow, Knight was able to call him and tell him what had happened, or somehow his father announced it to the whole railroad car, that we were at war. But – so, and, of course, Knight was in the ROTC anyway. But I don't even know if he had any drills at that point, because I think it was in the summer of that year that – I think that they – no, no, it was 1943 that they went into uniform, and they started doing little drilling

around the – you had to be very sure you weren't going to get in the way of any of those platoons going down Thayer Street if you didn't want to get run down, because I don't think the officers were very skilled in directing [00:28:00] their (laughs) platoons.

JL: So, the young men on campus, did they all go in the Navy?

JTE: No, no, they didn't. It was those that were enrolled in ROTC.

JL: Okay, but all those enrolled in ROTC went in the Navy?

JTE: Yes.

JL: It was a naval battalion.

JTE: Yes.

JL: All right.

JTE: It was. And I was talking with somebody the other day – there was a – what's the word for weather people? They're on –

JL: Meteorologists.

JTE: Meteorologists, right. And they were on campus. I think they – I think that, as I remember, they were in one of the – either Miller or Metcalf. Think – I sort of think it was Metcalf, and I think they must have kicked all the girls out of there. But didn't affect me any, so – a lot of these things, I really didn't – I saw them marching around, but I didn't – I just took it for granted. “Oh, isn't that great? There's some meteorologists joining us for six months.” They didn't stay there – here very long, though. They left. [00:29:00] And then, of course, Knight was – and his – I guess maybe all of them were taken out of college before they finished, because they needed them to go down and man the landing craft down in the – they went to Norfolk to get some more

training. So, I was left by myself to finish the last semester and – but Knight went to the fleet. He was a – on a battleship, because his – shall I tell this story about Deck and Engineering degree that he got?

JL: Sure.

JTE: Well, that's what – the commission he got not a degree. And so, he was really worried that they were going to think he was an engineer, because the yeoman had typed up all his English grades as Engineering grades. Didn't recognize the abbreviation, I think. So, here he was, on his way, and some wiser heads prevailed. I'm quoting him – that [00:30:00] his father was up at – in Boston in the First Naval District. And I guess he asked around and they all said, "Oh, that's good duty for an officer. Just leave it alone, because it'd be great if he could go out to the Pacific." So, when he got there, the – he asked to speak to the executive officer, and he grunted when they – Knight came into his office. And, "What's on your mind, Edwards?" And so, Knight explained about this degree, this – "I keep saying that – this rank or this designation" – and the officer said, "Oh, we – that's just like the Navy. We were going to put you in the gunnery department anyway." So, that took care of Knight's dilemmas. But – and I guess that during that last semester, I must have been putting in motion the application to the WAVES, because [00:31:00] it seemed to go smoothly. And I remember going up to Boston, and I think my mother came along. And my father-in-law-to-be was there, was present. And I was sworn into the Navy – probably in July, because then – I went up to Smith in August. Don't remember how I got there, but that's alright. (laughs) It was interesting, I think – I knew some girls at Smith, too, so that if we had some time off, I could go and call on them, go see them.

JL: How long was the course at Smith?

JTE: Well, there were – I was two months in midshipman's school and two months in communications school.

JL: So, you're there for the whole of the autumn, really.

JTE: Yes, yeah, until around Christmas. And then we – I had some leave over Christmas, and I think I must have reported into Washington about – beginning of January. So, my whole Navy career was 16 months, but my actual [00:32:00] service was just a year at – and it was very exciting, because we had these beautiful uniforms and wonderful hats. And we had to go past two cyclone fences to go into the installation there. It was an all-girls school, apparently. And so, we had our dog tags and – which we showed as we went in. And between the two fences was a Marine carrying his rifle at the ready. So, we would – I don't think they thought we were going to get out of hand, but they wanted to show the outside world that nobody was going to get in there unless they were – had the credentials. And we worked watches. We worked days – one week of days, a week of – I realize this is not about Pembroke. (laughs) But –

JL: It's very interesting – you know, also, I'm interested in what people do after Pembroke. And being in naval intelligence, essentially, is a good –

JTE: Yeah, yeah.

JL: – interesting thing to be.

JTE: Yeah. [00:33:00]

JL: So, after this naval intelligence esca–

JTE: Escapade. (laughs)

JL: – escapade, what did you do next?

JTE: Well, then I get out and Knight got out, and we found an apartment in Cambridge. And I went to – oh, I worked the – that spring, I worked at a proofreading job at MIT. And there were two kinds of proofreaders. There was – the English proofreaders and the math proofreaders. And I didn't have anything to do with math, so I – we only did part of it. You know, it was a job – felt really a lot like the Navy job, where you'd be busy for a while and then you'd just wait around

and chat. And so, it was not a very demanding job. And then, I decided I'd go to graduate school. And I got in all right, and started in the – in July of that year.

JL: At Radcliffe?

JTE: At Radcliffe, the Radcliffe [00:34:00] graduate school. So, that's why I really couldn't say I had a Harvard degree, although I really did. So, that's the –

JL: And what –

JTE: – that's a whole other story.

JL: What was that degree in?

JTE: English literature. (laughter) Now I'm sorry it wasn't in history. But in those days, I was interested in English. But now, I wish I'd had more history, because I read a lot of – some history and historical novels and things like that. I really find that I wish I knew more.

JL: And later, you did a library degree.

JTE: Yes, I did. I did. The – well, let's see. My last – my youngest child was born in '61, and so I was busy with him. And then, I guess, along about '65 or '66, Knight started talking about libraries. He was a – he was on the board of the public library. And he had heard that they needed [00:35:00] librarians. And he thought that might suit me, so I applied to URI. And at first, all our courses were – downtown Providence. And all – where the Henry Barnard School was. I guess Rhode Island College of Education was there. Course, they later went out to – almost to North Providence. But it was – I took it easy. I took either one or two courses at a time, because I was busy with children and – but that worked out fine. I got my degree in 1970. And before I got it, I actually went to work at Lincoln School as the librarian and – to assist Mrs. Day, Mrs. Elizabeth Day, who was an old-fashioned – wonderful Latin teacher, apparently, but she was a very strict librarian. And it was the time when you didn't expect to be – there to be

absolute quiet in the library, [00:36:00] so – because that was a wonderful job. I had that – my whole working life, 20 years. And I had a very supportive headmistress and – most of that time. I guess now they call them head of school. And I also was a great – because, you know, the children were still at home, and they were in independent schools. And so, when they had a vacation, I had a vacation, which was very convenient. And we only lived a block away from Lincoln School, so that was another thing that was convenient.

JL: You've had a very convenient life, some –

JTE: Yes, that's right.

JL: Being near to things.

JTE: Yes, that's right. For – yes, that's right. First Cushing Street and then Oriole Avenue and a few stops in between.

JL: And you got involved in your class, eventually, and you've been class secretary –

JTE: Well, I've been class president.

JL: President.

JTE: I can't remember now whether I'm [00:37:00] on my second five years or my third. But it must be the second five years. Because I guess the fact is that nobody else wanted to do it. (laughs) But I try to write a letter every year to my class and tell them who our class scholar is. We have a scholarship fund that gives a little bit to a girl that is on the – on scholarship, awarded by the university, not by us. But they've picked out some wonderful, splendid girls that we've had. And we've tried to get them around and have lunch with them and things like that. And one year, the scholar – well, it was the year of our reunion, and our scholarship girl was also graduating. So, she was around at the time of reunion, and we got her to come and talk about

what she'd been doing. So, that was good. Can't always manage things to [00:38:00] work out that way, because it – the girls usually go home right after exams, I think, unless they're a senior.

JL: Unless they're graduating.

JTE: Yes, yeah. Yeah. So, that was – I –

JL: So, what else does the – what do you do as class president?

JTE: Well, I have to initiate reunion plans. And we have four officers plus one who ought to be an officer, but she isn't all that well. So, I call that our executive committee. But there's also the reunion committee. So, we get together with the men, and we have our reunion mostly with the men. But we have a class luncheon by ourselves, because then we have to elect officers. And that's another duty I have, is to get a nominating committee in the fall to get to work on class officers. Unfortunately, though, they all seem to want to keep people in place if [00:39:00] if they can. And so, we get reelected. Except the girl that's treasurer has been treasurer – the woman that's been a treasurer said she'd had enough of that, "So you're going to have to find somebody else." Well, do you know something? It ended up that she's a co-treasurer anyway, so she'll probably do all the work anyway. (laughs) So, see, what else – nothing. Well, I have to write this letter to the class, telling about the scholarship student and asking for their support. Dues and all that. So –

JL: So, you've recently had your sixtieth reunion?

JTE: Yes, and I even have a picture of the girls who were there. I was not there, because Knight was in the hospital. And, you know, I could have gone to it, but I just didn't have the heart to do it. I would – I just skipped it. But I saw a few of our classmates over the weekend anyway. Some of [the men?] talked to me, and I think – I don't know if anyone got to see Knight, but [00:40:00] I think one of them had a telephone conversation with him, anyway.

JL: The way I'm hearing you talk about your time at Pembroke, it's almost as if you went to a coed college.

JTE: Well, yes, it really was, because we were just so near to the campus that the men would meet us in class, and then they'd take us out. But there was a very nasty joke that went around with the Brown men, that they – well, I don't know if I'm saying this right, but you know, if the Pembroke girls were dogs then they'd have to go somewhere else to find a really nice girl that they'd like to have on their arm as they go into the dance or whatever. (laughs)

JL: That's not very nice, is it?

JTE: No, but it really wasn't true, because a lot of men married – were in college for marriages. (laughs)

JL: But from these [00:41:00] colleges – from my reading, there was a lot of chasing off to –

JTE: We –

JL: New Haven or –

JTE: Well, no, not New Haven.

JL: No?

JTE: Oh, yeah, well, I never heard of anybody who went – and I thought you were talking about the men. The men went up to Wheaton to get their girls, their dates. I don't even know if they went as far as Wellesley. But I wasn't aware, you see, of what these girls were doing on weekends, because I was doing my thing. That's what you read about in the novels that I've read, that the girls are always hopping off to another college. But I don't know whether they really were, that much.

JL: And so, you have this very different experience –

JTE: Yeah.

JL: – from this archetypical kind of coed, you know –

JTE: Yes.

JL: – women’s college, didn’t you?

JTE: I really did. I’m not a very good example, because I didn’t really – I didn’t ever talk to any of the girls about their social life. Either the dorm girls or the City Girls, I really didn’t talk to them about it. [00:42:00] I think you picked the wrong person. (laughs)

JL: No, and – no, not really, because it’s so interesting to hear somebody who didn’t have that experience. There must – there’s not just you out there.

JTE: Oh, no. No, plenty of them –

JL: There are a lot of people –

JTE: Yeah.

JL: – like you.

JTE: Yeah.

JL: And so, this is what we need, is a sort of a breadth of experience.

JTE: I try to remember about Dorothy Kay Fishbein – was the vice president of the class. Oh, she was the president for a while. Anyway, she – at some point, I think, established a children’s

clothing store down at Wayland Square. And I think she has told me that she spent all her time down there that she wasn't in class. So, that was – she had an unusual experience.

JL: Is she still alive?

JTE: Oh, yeah.

JL: Oh!

JTE: Yeah, she is. She's [00:43:00] quite deaf, but she goes to everything. And she's very strongly interested in the class, yeah.

JL: Now, I couldn't find the 1945 yearbook. But the – I did find '44.

JTE: Am I in there?

JL: I don't know.

JTE: I don't either.

JL: You – but you might remember some of these people. And this is '45-6.

JTE: Oh, yes, well, you see, everybody was mixed up then.

JL: Yep.

JTE: I want to see which one I ended up in, because it was a deliberate choice that we made.

JL: Well, I couldn't see you in either of them, actually.

JTE: Really? Not any – oh, they’ve got the list of the whole – by semester. Huh. Semester eight. I have to remember to look under Tanner instead of under Edwards. (laughs) Oh, here’s Judy Weiss. I spoke of her. She’s – unfortunately is no [00:44:00] longer with us. But she was a City Girl. She lived in Taft Avenue. Maybe I – you looked in here and you didn’t find me.

JL: I found you just listed. I didn’t see any photos of you.

JTE: Oh.

JL: You’re listed in semester something or other.

JTE: Yes, that’s right, I see that.

JL: But I wondered if you could look at some of the photos that are in the first half –

JTE: Yeah.

JL: – of that?

JTE: Because they’re not in here.

JL: As deans and things and – I’m interested in your dean memories, or your faculty memories.

JTE: Oh, Professor Collier was the person – yearbook was dedicated to. He was a wonderful man, and we had Russian History with him. I don’t think I’ve told you the story about how we were already – I already had an engagement ring by then, because I got that in ’43, I guess. Yeah, it must have been. And I spent [00:45:00] a good deal of time sort of flashing the – trying to catch the light on my engagement ring, which I can’t find now. Very unfortunate. But anyway, Professor Collier was quoted as saying that – he tried everything he could to bring a girl with the name Tanner and a boy with the name of Edwards side by side in the classroom, but it wouldn’t work because he seated everybody alphabetically. (laughs) He was a lovely man. Oh, that’s

interesting. I don't know that girl, least I don't think I do. Could be Florence [Denney?], but I don't know. She's gone, too. That's one of the sad things about doing something like this, is what you – I think we all looked alike, because we all had the same kind of hairdos, didn't we? Now, here's one that was [00:46:00] married. I don't really know her, don't remember her – she lived in Providence, too. Oh, I remember – Marya Barlowski hasn't changed much, but she doesn't live in – she lived in Providence, too.

See, I think you might find, if you added it up, that maybe as many as half of these girls lived in Providence. And (laughs) some of these pictures are really weird. Phyllis Baldwin was a very, very fine member of the class, and she still is. Joyce Chadbourne is still – lives in Westerly, and she comes up for the reunions. And she's a – she and Dick [Prata?] are a number. You know, at their age – they met at the last reunion, I guess, [00:47:00] five, six years ago. And I guess he fell for her. And his – her husband had died, and his wife had left him. And so, this has been a wonderful thing for him. She really – he had to have open heart surgery, I think, last year at this time. And she took care of him. And I don't know what their relationship is, specifically. But it's been wonderful for him, and I hope for her, too. And here is my – this – the treasurer that doesn't want to be treasurer anymore, Enzina DeRobbio San Martino, her name is now. And Susan Daly was a woman that I had gone to Wheeler with, I think. And she showed up at college, but I never saw her at college. Nancy Craig is the one that everybody said she'd fallen in love with the gardener that was around the buildings. (laughs)

JL: Really?

JTE: Yes. (laughs)

JL: And did – had she?

JTE: Well, I guess so. I don't know. (laughter) [00:48:00]

JL: Now, that's interesting. (laughs) What happened with that relationship?

JTE: Well, I don't think anything. I think it just never went anywhere. (laughter) But it was the gossip around the campus, anyway. And there was one girl that was very – supposed to be pretty free with her morals. But I don't remember her name now.

JL: Probably better – not remember her name. But (laughter) again, interesting, because this idea of ladylike behavior and respectability –

JTE: But word went around the campus pretty fast when she started misbehaving. That's a beautiful picture of Dottie Dunn Pillsbury. She married a classmate. And I think she's gone now, too. Her daughter Paula is it – no, it isn't Paula. Donna [00:49:00] Pillsbury is on the staff at Brown, in the alumni office. I should be in this book.

JL: Couldn't find you, I promise you, because I looked.

JTE: You see, a lot of these people were probably '46, or I – the ones that I recognize, I know, was – were in my class. But some others that I don't recognize.

JL: There were other war effort things going on on campus. You know, war bonds being sold and dig for victory. Was there a victory garden?

JTE: Don't remember one, but I do think I remember wrapping – making bandages. I think they did that over in – the auspices of Miss Rudd in the gym department.

JL: Tell me about –

JTE: Sayles Gymnasium.

JL: Tell me about the gym department. Did [00:50:00] you have to do compulsory P.E.?

JTE: Oh, yes.

JL: What did you do?

JTE: Well, first, you had to pass the swimming test. That was important. And then you had to do something every semester. The best – I had two wonderful semesters. They may have both been summer semesters, though I can't pin it down. One of them, we – there were bowling alleys in the basement of the Sayles Gym. And so, bowling was recognized as a – recognized sport. And then another time, we were able to square-dance. And these both involved the men. So, that was a lot of fun. I loved – I – glad I learned to square-dance, because that's a lot of fun. And, well, I don't know, I – shall I tell a story about Miss Rudd and her comments on having seen Knight and me walking up and down Brown Street hand-in-hand? So, she asked one of her colleagues what was going on. And this isn't – well, she didn't say – I don't know whether she said it was good behavior or not. [00:51:00] But at any rate – so, the colleague said, "Well, they are engaged." And so, Miss Rudd thought for a minute and then she said, "Well, I guess that makes it all right." (laughs)

JL: So, Miss Rudd was the P.E. instructor?

JTE: Yes. She was a big, bluff woman. And I don't remember actually having her as a teacher. I think she was more the head of the department type and there were younger women that would do the teaching. I remember running up and down the field over between Hope and Brook Street, this – I don't even know what it's for now, but they've – there is a Brown alumni field house there, on the property. And I remember trying to play hockey. I don't think I was very good at it. And I don't remember some of the other things. We had pictures in – well, I guess they were pictures in that 50-year yearbook of girls in the gym [00:52:00] doing exercises or dancing or something. Now, what's that? Oh.

JL: I think that's –

JTE: Oh, yeah.

JL: – before your time, I think, isn't it?

JTE: Yes, yes. We didn't have mini blouses. We were very modern. We had – there were four different colors for the four classes. And I don't – I think mine was either blue or rose, then I suppose it was yellow and green. So, that was supposed to tell the teachers what class we were – your class – we were in, and –

JL: And what was your outfit?

JTE: Well, I think it must have been shorts. I'm sure it wasn't long pants and – some kind of a – I think it was more of a jacket, you know, with buttons up the front. So, it was good. Comfortable. I don't ever remember washing it. (laughs) I suppose it must have gone home sometimes. Now, this is definitely a – we didn't have mini-blouses by then. You know, mini-blouses [00:53:00] with the tie that goes down. (laughs) I wonder if – there's a funny looking thing coming down from the wall, there. I can't figure out what that is. I'm not making much speed at this, am I?

JL: Some sort of climbing apparatus. Tell me about Dean Morriss, was it?

JTE: She was the head dean, yes. She was very – dignified lady. You know, I don't really know much about her background, but she must have had an academic background, because she would never have been dean if she hadn't had – then, of course somehow – I think maybe by the time I left, it was the – Nancy Lewis, Dean Lewis, who [00:54:00] was a very elegant lady. And she had a Southern accent, which really made her appeal to me. (laughs) I always love a Southern accent. But – and she lived where the [Reichleys?] live now, on – corner of Brown and Cushing. But I never went to her house. (laughs) Dean Morriss. Well, I – you know, I must not have had too many calls to her office, because I don't remember anything more except her appearance, you know? And she was sort of intimidating. It's funny how people could be like that. Miss [Shaffner?] at Lincoln had a presence, you know? She was dignified. And she didn't smile all the time, but she was a very warm person underneath. It was just something you couldn't show in front of your students.

JL: Yeah.

JTE: Which I think is a – is really [00:55:00] a good thing. I don't think this idea of having students call you by your first name is a very good idea, because you don't have the respect that you should have as a teacher. I remember a lot of these girls. I've got to get moving. You asked me about Jewish girls. There were plenty of Jewish girls [that were?] – well, maybe not plenty, but there certainly were – I see some that are of Irish extraction. And some of these – oh, here's the black girl, Elizabeth Jackson. Yeah, she was very bright.

JL: Is she a Providence girl?

JTE: Yes, she is. And I don't know where – I wonder where she lived, because I think that the town was fairly segregated, [00:56:00] you know, the – it's funny today, when you talk about Pratt Street, the – they've got some new apartments down there, and I have quite a few friends down there. That was definitely a black section in those days. And also, where University Heights is now was a black section, which is, of course, contiguous. Oh, this – now, that girl died. She had daughters at Lincoln. Don't know if they were there when you were –

JL: Who?

JTE: And last name was LaFond, Marylou LaFond. At least her maiden name was LaFond. It's funny, they don't – they're not all grinning, which is good. I think that they should be natural in the pictures. I'm almost to the end. [00:57:00] I don't know what happened to my yearbook. Maybe they didn't bring it out. Or maybe I had already gone by the time they took the pictures.

JL: I couldn't find one.

JTE: That's probably it, because I probably was gone. I don't know where they got these other pictures, though.

JL: So, you're up to the Ts?

JTE: Not quite. Getting there. Yeah, I've come to the Ts, and I'm not here. Oh, there's Kathy Towne. Well, I don't know. I don't have very good archives in my house, so I think – I don't know that I have this.

JL: I think, Jean, we should be bringing this to a close now.

JTE: Okay. I've wasted some of your time, but – (laughs)

JL: No, not at all.

JTE: I was just thinking of –

JL: It's been really interesting –

JTE: I was –

JL: – to hear some of these [00:58:00] snippets. And I'm sorry you're not in the yearbook.
(laughs)

JTE: Well, that was my luck.

JL: Did you want to say any last thing before we switch this machine off?

JTE: Well, the only thing I would – I guess at this moment I would be saying is that I'm glad I went to Pembroke-slash-Brown, because I caught a husband there. I went – who knows, if I'd gone to Radcliffe like my sister, I might have caught a Harvard man.

JL: Yeah.

JTE: And I haven't told you about the way I caught Knight, have I?

JL: No.

JTE: Well, that was kind of interesting.

JL: Go on.

JTE: Well, it starts at a tea – well, it starts when we were children. I just happened to meet him once. But right before college started in 1941, I was a – at a tea dance with my friend [Evvy?] out at Rhode Island Country Club, I think it was. And it was late afternoon, and there was – sun was coming in the windows, and it was – so, I think I must have been a silhouette, because [00:59:00] Knight cut in on me dancing, and he thought it was somebody else. And so, he made – he didn't ever let that – let on about that until later. And so, we talked, and he asked me if I – if he could give me a ride home, and I said, "Oh, yes." (laughs) And I told my friend that I was going to go home with Knight. Well, that was fine, and we – he dropped me off at the house. And then I saw him at the freshman mixer, which was in Alumnae Hall. And we talked quite a while, and he said that he was very interested in going to see this movie, *Citizen Kane*, that had just come out. And I said, "Oh, that sounds interesting." But that was the end of that, and I found out later that he had taken another girl. He probably forgot that he'd even discussed it with me, because he really hadn't asked me to go with – I guess he was just making conversation.

But it happened that his sort of second cousin-in-law [01:00:00] was also a freshman. I think I must have told you this. And so, I told her – told Debbie [Deeley?] that I – that Knight Edwards had stood me up, he was – and, of course, there's a lot of exaggeration in that. I didn't ever think it would go any further. But it did go further, because her aunt was Mabel Edwards' sister-in-law. And so, it got back to Knight's mother, Mabel. And she was – so, she says to Knight, "What's this about your standing Jean Tanner up on a date?" And he said, "Well, it" – and, of course, he was completely puzzled. He didn't know what – was talking – but then Mrs. Edwards decided she'd have a little supper party down at her house on Waterman Street. And they had a ping-pong table, and so we played ping-pong and we had supper, and then we all decided we wanted to go to the Avon. Well, it wasn't *Citizen Kane*, but – whatever it was, I've forgotten. So, that – but I sat with another guy at – not [01:01:00] with Knight. I think it was

Jimmy [Carol?]. And so, just one thing led to another after that. He was a pretty fast worker, because the date of our supposed informal engagement was in October, October 17th, we think. So – (laughs) and –

JL: That's very quick.

JTE: And, yeah, and college didn't start quite as early as it – now as it did then. But anyway, that's how it all began.

JL: That is terrific.

JTE: So, oh, I think I got an excellent education. I liked –

JL: Yeah?

JTE: – my professors, and I worked hard. But I did have time for other things, too. So, it was nice.

JL: Including a very splendid husband.

JTE: Yes, right. (laughs) Yeah.

JL: Well, thank you very much indeed. Thank you for –

JTE: Well, thank you for –

JL: – all of this.

JTE: You're very welcome. Thanks for the opportunity.

JL: It's a great – [01:01:55]

- END -