

Interviewee: Marcella Fagan Hance, class of 1944

Interviewer: Betsy McKlveen, class of 1991.5

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Transcribed by: Lorena Garcia, class of 2012

MCKLVEEN: This is Betsy McKlveen. Brown class of 1991.5 interviewing Marcella Fagan Hance, Brown class of 1944 on May 6, 1988 at the John Hay Library at Brown University at Providence, RI. Okay. Why did you choose Pembroke?

FAGAN: I was born and raised in Providence. For women of my generation to go to college was very unusual. I have a classmate who worked for the Census Bureau. And at one of our reunions she said that there were only five percent of us who went to college, which is an amazing statistic to me. My father was a man of very limited means who very desperately wanted his children to go to college. And I had my choice of Pembroke or what was then known as RICE, Rhode Island College of Education. I knew I didn't want to go to RICE.

MCKLVEEN: Why is that?

FAGAN: It was a teacher's college. I had gone to a grade school here in Providence known as Henry Barnard. It was a Montessori school. It still exists. It's up on the RICE campus and it was then also part of the RICE campus, which was downtown. I really didn't want to go where I had gone to grade school. And I was also aware of the fact that I wanted something more than RICE had to offer as far as education was concerned. So it was Pembroke or RICE and I chose Pembroke.

MCKLVEEN: What exactly were you looking for that you weren't going to find elsewhere?

FAGAN: I don't really know. I come from a generation where you were generally either a nurse or a teacher. And I knew I didn't want nursing because I couldn't handle that kind of blood and all the rest of that kind. I don't think I had the empathy necessary for it. So I felt that I was going to be in some area a teacher. One of the things I knew was that I wanted to major in French, which had been my forte in high school. I knew that I couldn't get what I wanted at RICE so I felt that Brown was- and also there was a great deal of pride in my family. I was the oldest and as I say my parents were not educated people. Self-educated but not formally educated. It was really my father's wish that my sister and I both come here. My sister is a graduate of the Class of 1950.

MCKLVEEN: You were the only two children?

FAGAN: No. I have a brother. A younger brother who also went to college but he went to the University of Rhode Island. So it was just one of those things that as I grew up I was going to Pembroke. There was just no question. I don't know. I've given you an

analysis of it versus RICE and I'm not sure that that analysis is really valid. But it was just as I went through high school it was when you go to Pembroke.

MCKLVEEN: I see. What was your experience here on the first day or do you remember?

FAGAN: I remember a tea. As a matter of fact, as I told you before we turned on the tape Betsy, I kept a diary the year of 1940. And that was the year that I entered Pembroke as a freshman. I spent some time this morning going through picking out things that I might talk to you about. Now young people receive their social security number practically when they were born. I got mine January of 1940. In January 30th, I had an interview with Dean Mooar. I'm about to get down to-[pages turning] I was accepted on July 9th. We took SAT tests and I never- I didn't remember that until I went through my diary and saw that-

MCKLVEEN: Oh is this the same kind of test as now?

FAGAN: All I said was that I took SAT tests on July-on April 13th I notice in my diary that I took SAT tests. So I assume they were the same kind of thing but I don't remember taking it at all.

MCKLVEEN: Was that a big aspect of the application or was there-

FAGAN: It had to be a very minimal part of it because I don't remember taking it. I had, as I said, in January I had an interview with Dean Mooar. I did note that on April 18th I had to have a vaccination, which was required at Pembroke. May 21st I noted that I had not received any word from Pembroke yet. On July 9th, I was accepted. September 18th was the first day and that's all I made in the notes because I figured I could go to it. 'Today I went to college. I took many exams this morning and then this afternoon there was an official greeting from the dean and then a tea on the campus which was very lovely.' I remember that. It was a tea for our parents and I ran into people with whom I had had acquaintances pre-school, grade school and then lost them in junior high and high school. [5:00] So it was rather fun to find myself catching up with people that I had known as a youngster. It was a lovely day. Coming to Brown I don't know- now I know that Brown is one of the big schools in the country and one of the prestige schools to get into. But in those days, the prestige here in Providence was very great. I remember reading an article in a magazine called The Saturday Evening Post after I graduated and was in Providence-or in Saint Paul, Minnesota". And the article said, "In Providence a Brown graduate can do no wrong." I was working at the time. This was before I had a family and I promptly showed it to my boss so that he would be aware of how valuable a person he had under his belt. He wasn't impressed but there was a great deal of prestige here in Providence at that time to go to Brown. And I remember feeling very very important that I was going to be a freshman at Brown. Frightened because of the academic pressures but knowing that I was going to be doing something important.

MCKLVEEN: Did you have a large class? Or do you remember how many women-

FAGAN: About a 125 women. They kept it very small. The student body on the whole at that time, as I remember, was approximately five thousand or fewer. Small classes. The men- the ratio of men to women, as I remember, was at least three or four to one.

MCKLVEEN: I see. Did you have a roommate?

FAGAN: I was a city student. A dayhop as we were called. My family lived on Hope Street. At the other end of Hope Street. As a matter of fact it was 1000 Hope Street. Almost to the Pawtucket city line. In those days you could buy what we called a street card. There were streetcars then not patent buses and you could buy a streetcar pass for a dollar. So I had a streetcar pass and I'd just toddle back and forth from home on the streetcar sometimes as many as three or four, five times a day. Because I was fortunate. My father, as I said, was a man of very limited means and I was able to come to college but living on the dorm or living on the campus was just not possible financially. I would have given anything to do so but it just was not possible.

MCKLVEEN: Well did a lot of women do that?

FAGAN: Yes. There were a lot of us. One of the things that I think was too bad about college in our day is the dormitory girls and the city girls really didn't mix. There were one or two of the city girls who became very friendly with a couple of dorm girls. But for the most part, it was the city girls versus the dorm girls. I don't mean to imply that there was any antagonism or anything like that. We just we didn't have that much in common. And the dorm girls because they were here all the time really ran the class. They were the class officers. They were always the ones who chaired the dances. Were head of whatever. We didn't do that. We were active but we didn't have the cohesiveness as a group to elect one of us to something. To a prominent position or an officership of an organization or whatever whereas they did. They would get together and almost to a man vote for one particular individual. It was very obvious that's what was going on but we either were too naive or didn't care. I'm not sure.

MCKLVEEN: Did you not care? Did you feel negatively toward that?

FAGAN: Not negatively. I talked to a classmate of mine this afternoon before I met you, who was interviewed this morning. We got into great philosophical discussions about our attitudes. I don't think we questioned as you do today. It was just sort of one of those things that happened and you sort of accepted it. We might have said it's too bad that's the way it's going on. If we even voiced it. We certainly weren't concerned enough to do anything about it and there were enough of us that hadn't been concerned. I think we could have gotten together as a group and at least presented some formidable opposition but we didn't. Whether we didn't care or I just don't know.

MCKLVEEN: Did you end up being in the head of any of the organizations?

FAGAN: I was very active in the glee club during my four years and I became the senior class representative the beginning of my senior year. That was a very difficult academic, as I remember, I was working part-time and going to school. And by then, of course, the war was in full swing. It had started during our sophomore year and they quit reading periods altogether and had to speed up the academic year so that the students, particularly the men, could get through maybe before they were drafted. So we would classes would end on Saturday and the exams began Monday. And it was just a terrible thing. [10:00] Classes end on Saturday and we still have exam notices get posted and I had three exams in my major field on Monday. One at nine, one at one, and one at seven in the evening. By the seven o'clock one in the evening, I was wiped out. My brain was a blank and I flunked the exam. And I got a D in the course.

MCKLVEEN: Which course was that?

FAGAN: It was a French course. My major was French. And it brought my grade level down so that I had to resign as senior class representative of the glee club. I couldn't stay on because of my grades. And unfortunately, that was the one semester where my grades dropped to that level. I was never a good student but adequate. But that semester and it was largely because of that particular exam which I flunked. So I really never became the head of an organization. We had at that time-and I'm sure it was in the system longer- an organization called the question club. And it comprised the seniors who were heads of all the various organizations on campus. That was the prestige group.

MCKLVEEN: What did they do?

FAGAN: Well they were head of the Brownbrokers, they were editor of the Record, they were editor of this, they were class president, they were heads of each of the various organizations on campus. And they formed, as I say, an organization called the question club. And they wore a little pin and there was a great deal of prestige to be in the question club but I never made it. Nor interestingly enough, as I remember, did any of my good friends who were city girls. There was one girl, her name was Shirley Messenger, who became very active and became a very close friend of really the city girl-of the dorm girls. She may but I don't remember. She's deceased now.

MCKLVEEN: How about, can you tell me about the Sewing Club?

FAGAN: Oh. During World War II, there were a great many military men on campus. And they, I don't even remember how it started. I was looking at the yearbook, my yearbook, while I was waiting for you. And let me go back to that reference because it's not quite as I remember it. There was an organization on campus, which tried to do things for the military men. And one of the things that we did was, they would send over their uniforms that might be missing a button or have a torn pocket or a ripped whatever. And they would pile it all in one of the rooms and we would go up there one afternoon a week whatever and do the various sundry things that they needed doing.

Then stick notes in the pocket and say write me a note at my box number and hopefully they would contact us.

MCKLVEEN: Did you do that?

FAGAN: Oh sure. We all did it. Sure.

MCKLVEEN: And did you meet them?

FAGAN: Oh yeah you'd meet them and often meet them for a coke. They really weren't much good as date material because being in the military they had to be back in the dorms at seven o'clock at night to study and then their lights out were at ten. So but you would meet them on the campus and have cokes with them and that sort of thing. You didn't have much [inaudible 0:13:17] due in any of your classes. Part of the yearbook, the organization that we formed was P.A.W.S. The Pembroke Auxiliary War Service. And I find it very interesting because again the list of girls who were on the general staff were, with the exception of two, all dorm students. And even though I know perfectly well, I was quote "head of navy sewing" unquote my name is not on there which is immaterial. But there is a picture of three women sewing and they're all dorm students, which is interesting. I look at these things now. There's another picture on the same day-page of engineering students, one of whom was my classmate. I don't whether you're familiar with the Pratt & Whitney students during World War II.

MCKLVEEN: No, I'm not.

FAGAN: I was not involved. Pratt & Whitney was an aircraft firm, which was in Connecticut. I'm not sure just where. I can't remember which city. And they needed engineers desperately during World War II. They came in to the school and went to the cream of the crop in each class- it didn't make any difference what their major field was whether it was Humanities or whatever- and offered them full scholarships if they would switch their major field to engineering. And then guarantee Pratt & Whitney two-three years, whatever it was, of work after their graduation. And I have several friends who were involved in that and it was great. It was great for them.

MCKLVEEN: But what happened with them after that period of time? After they'd put all that work into it?

FAGAN: Oh they went on. **[15:00]** One of my friends, who I believe at one time was a Brown trustee and she might be a good person to interview at some point- went on and stayed in the engineering field and had a very successful engineering career. Some of them because most of the people in my generation we didn't look for careers. We looked for husbands.

MCKLVEEN: Oh, you did?

FAGAN: Well I say that. I'm not sure that it was a conscious thing but we were brought up with the idea, most of us, that your eventual destiny was housewife and mother. So you weren't really thinking career. Career was sort of an interim thing you did until such time as you married. And some of the women did go on and maintain their careers or pick them up after their children were in school or grown but most of the women in my generation stayed home and took care of their families.

MCKLVEEN: Well what did you do?

FAGAN: I stayed home and took care of family. Married-I went into World War, went into the service after I graduated from Pembroke. I went into the Navy and met and married my husband who was a Minnesotan who moved out there. And worked briefly until I had my first child and then I raised five children. And then until such time as my youngest went into school- I went back then and did some substitute teaching for many years and that's what I did until such time as my husband became ill and I had to look for full-time work.

MCKLVEEN: Substitute teaching in French?

FAGAN: Everything. I substitute taught everything from kindergarten through senior high school and I did every subject. The only one I didn't do was woodworking. I did shop metal. I did everything.

MCKLVEEN: Why did you go into teaching if in fact you didn't want to go to the R.I.C.E school for teaching?

FAGAN: As I said, for my generation nursing and teaching were sociology and social work. But I didn't know anything about that kind of thing and I came from a very structured family. And it just seemed that if I wasn't going to be a nurse I would end up being a teacher. And I did take what education courses were offered here on the Brown campus. They were not enough to give you a teaching certification as they do now. You couldn't get student teaching. There were other things that were not available. I ended up-when I graduated, this is very detached. It is not flowing from day to day. We're jumping all over the place here. When I graduated, I had worked summers on the Providence playground system. And RISD gave courses afterschool on Saturdays and Sundays for grade-school children to teach them art and come in and learn about the museum. I got a job with them as a recreation director dreaming up things for these things for these kids to do, games and that sort of thing, in between the structured material that was being offered to them. Well it was very boring because I didn't particularly enjoy what I was doing and I worked Sundays. Everybody else had Sunday off and my day off was Monday. And that became very boring very quickly and so I applied for the Navy and went into the service.

MCKLVEEN: What did you do there?

FAGAN: I was in what they call communications. I went from my basic training was at the campus at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Then when I finished that, I went over to Mount Holyoke campus and spent another three months training in communications learning secret codes and that sort of thing. Then I was assigned to the headquarters for communications in Washington, D.C.

MCKLVEEN: I see. I'd love to know more about your social life here because I know it was probably different than social life now.

FAGAN: Oh. Extremely. We did a lot of the formal things. I don't think that you have proms and formal dances and that sort of thing now. Do you?

MCKLVEEN: Now? Yeah. There are organized dances but they're not anything like they were then. They're not nearly as formal as they were.

FAGAN: We had formal dances. We wore formal clothes. The boys wore tuxedos and many of them had tails. One of the things that I remember, I lived close to the campus and we had-the girls in the dorm had very strict dorm rules. And my parents were very strict with me through the high school years but once I reached college they kind of took the wraps off. My house would be a dormitory because remember the men couldn't get cars very frequently because there was gas rationing. So I have memories a couple of times of the girls coming to my house. Some of them city girls who lived so far out they couldn't come in or the guys couldn't go get them. And sometimes dorm girls would go to my house. And the dorm girls wouldn't dress there but sometimes the city girls would come to my house and we would dress. [20:00] And then get on the streetcar in our formals with our dates and ride down to the campus and get off at Meeting Street and hike up the street to Alumnae Hall. And then go home the same way because that was the only kind of transportation you could get. Very often the taxi cabs, if you even then could have afforded it, would not take you when you were in formal clothes because obviously you were playing. And gasoline in those days was not for playing.

MCKLVEEN: What kind of dances did you have? How about May Day?

FAGAN: May Day I remember very specifically my senior year. In fact I have a lot of pictures, which someday I will give to the archives. I'm not ready to give these things up just yet. The girl who was the May queen my senior year was a girl named Peg. And I don't remember her last name at all. A very lovely blond. Oh and we did the traditional things of the May pole with the ribbons and winding in and out and all that sort of thing. And we gave our- we had senior sisters and we gave our senior sisters May baskets with gifts and candies. You know typical May baskets with flowers. We all wore white. Street dresses but white. The May queen and her court wore long white dresses. She was crowned and the whole it was a very formal thing. And that existed even in our day. That was our senior year but I remember one of my classmates being crowned May queen. And we had the same kind of thing, which occurred. I think there was a picture of it in the yearbook...It mentioned in some of the questionnaires that I went through,

sophomore mass. I have no recollection of a Sophomore Masque at all. I have no idea what it was.

MCKLVEEN: Sophomore Masque?

FAGAN: Mm-hmm. It's on the questionnaire I think that you, some of the material that you gave me to go through. There's something about a Sophomore Masque but I don't remember that.

MCKLVEEN: Did you participate in- did most of the women enjoy participating in all the activities or were you required to participate in certain activities?

FAGAN: No. You weren't required. Social activities no or extracurricular activities. We had to take four years of Phys Ed.

MCKLVEEN: Physical education?

FAGAN: Four years. And I grew up here in Rhode Island and my family for many years had a summer cottage. When I say summer cottage I'm talking about four walls with the plumbing outside. But it was away from the city for the summer. So I learned to swim shortly after I learned to walk. One of the requirements was that you had to pass swimming during your four years at Pembroke. Well it was one of those things I kept saying oh I'll go over someday. I'll go over someday to the pool and take the test. I knew I would pass it without any trouble. Never got around to it. The last semester of my senior year I had to take swimming as my phys ed project because I hadn't passed the test. [laughs]

MCKLVEEN: So what happens if someone just absolutely can't pass it?

FAGAN: I have no idea but I think they saw to it. Well what did pass, I'm sure that passing amounted to being able to keep yourself afloat and that sort of thing. I'm sure there were instructions given to help them do that. I don't know. I just when I had to take swimming for my phys ed I just came over and swam laps. It didn't seem to ire them. I didn't need any instruction.

MCKLVEEN: Was that the only kind of physical education?

FAGAN: Oh no. I took my freshman year, I was looking at my diary, and I got into field hockey, which was exhausting. Just chasing that barren thing up and down. We did everything. Everything was available to us. There was a bowling alley down in lower Pembroke. I don't know whether it was still there or not in Pembroke Hall over on the Pembroke campus and we took bowling. We were our own pin boys. Oh there were all kinds of physical things available to us. There was a dance group. A modern dance group and I tried to get into that and enjoyed it. But I fell and banged up and ankle and so it didn't last. Not seriously but just enough to prevent me from doing it. The gym, the head of the gym department was Bessie Rudd. Who at that time was a woman with

iron-grey hair so I suppose was probably in her fifties. I don't know whether you've heard about Bessie or not.

MCKLVEEN: No.

FAGAN: She was a legend in her time. She wore navy blue tam [?] with her gym suit and was quite a lady. We had a Mrs. Hopkins and I remember her as being- she was involved with the horseback riding group. I never got involved in that. It was a little more expensive than I thought I could give to. It was one of the few things that cost money. We did all kinds of things. You had to take four years of phys ed so you just-unless you became a real nut about one particular thing- you just kept wandering from one activity to another and getting a taste of almost anything that was offered.

MCKLVEEN: Did you get to compete?

FAGAN: No. **[25:00]** There may have been competition on campus but I was not involved. Or with other schools but I don't remember because I was not involved.

MCKLVEEN: But the men could-the men were competing.

FAGAN: Mm-hmm.

MCKLVEEN: Was that a very social event?

FAGAN: Well, the football games were big things but I worked part-time on Saturdays and I had classes Saturday morning and then went downtown. Into downtown Providence to Sears Roebuck, which had a store on upper Weybosset Street at the time. Across from what is not the Performing Arts Center. And worked there until nine o'clock. I didn't leave until nine o'clock every Saturday. So I did very little as far as Saturday socializing. I'd get home in time to go to the dances. The proms or the fraternity dances or whatever I was going to but didn't do much before.

MCKLVEEN: So-

FAGAN: Let me tell you one thing about the phys ed department we-has anybody ever told you about posture pictures?

MCKLVEEN: No.

FAGAN: Oh they were things that anybody would remember back in my era. We had to have posture pictures taken and then for the four years they were supposed to work at us in the phys ed department to improve our posture. Remember in my day this was extremely important. I remember one of the things-so the posture picture was a naked picture profile, which showed your slumping shoulders and you sagging chin and your-but everybody took them. Somebody assured us that those posture pictures had been destroyed. [laughs] I hope so. They were terrible.

MCKLVEEN: Who saw them?

FAGAN: Just the phys ed department I'm sure. I guess they told us we had to do these things and we did it. It never occurred to us to flaunt authority as you people do in this day and age. You will say, 'who me? You can't make me do that.'

MCKLVEEN: Well what do you think about this?

FAGAN: Well when I think back and I think how ridiculous. But it was one of the things that everybody did it. I don't know whether the men did but the women certainly did and so you just did it. You went and you lined up and you got your posture picture taken. Bessie Rudd took them. She just stood there and it was completely- you didn't have the feeling- I remember being embarrassed because there I was stark naked in front of God and everybody. But that was my embarrassment. It was not a feeling that, 'oh God this is going to be a permanent record.' You just didn't think about it. And then one of the things I can remember Bessie Rudd doing for us, or it might have been one of the other phys ed teachers. I don't know as far as posture was concerned. And I so distinctly remember it and it worked. She said pretend that there is a button sewn on your chest with a long thread attached to it. And if you pull that thread from there it will lift your chest, push your shoulders back, and it will improve your posture. Try it. Just put your finger there and pull that thread. Pull your chest up from that thread. Your shoulders go back and you have much better posture. That's all it takes. That's one of the things I remember them telling us. Obviously it wasn't terribly successful but they did that.

MCKLVEEN: Why do you think there was such concern with that then?

FAGAN: It was part of the morays of the day. These were the things women were supposed to taught. Walk tall. Stand straight.

MCKLVEEN: Part of manners?

FAGAN: Part of, that's right. Part of the way things went in those days. I don't know that it did any of us a great deal of good. But it was just one of the things. Everybody from my era will tell you about the posture picture. It was incredible.

MCKLVEEN: What was expected of the proper women? Manners-wise what were the expectations?

FAGAN: Oh we never went out without a hat and gloves. In fact, one of our class reunions we had a class reunion chairman who went out and found from people's attics and stuff all kinds of hats from our era. And we had our luncheon at the Biltmore, which was where we if we were really living it up we went to the Biltmore. And she had a whole bunch of hats and when we came into the reunion we all put on hats. She had mirrors so we could find one that we liked. And we had our class luncheon in our hats and white gloves. The ladies wore and we were ladies. There were, how can I put it?

There were certain standards by which we lived. The world is very open today. People talk sex, they you know, many of them think nothing of having relationships on either a casual or permanent basis. Not in our day. You just didn't do it. Now and there were a few. I shouldn't say we didn't do it. There were a few in our class who I think, they had the reputation. Whether it really happened or not I don't know. But you really didn't become friendly with those girls. They were sort of a group unto themselves. I wouldn't name them because I might be maligning them unjustly. [30:00] But the thought with the rest of us was there. And so you just, you know you didn't cut them. You didn't not speak to them. You had classes with them. You played bridge with them. This is where I learned one of my vices, bridge. But you didn't really go out with them because some of that reputation might rub off on you. And you really didn't want that to happen. You wanted people to think of you as a lady or a good girl. Now that may have been simply my Irish Catholic upbringing. But I've talked with some other of my friends, those women who were my friends on campus, and we all thought very much the same way. We were all brought up in a very sheltered background. I remember when I was in the Navy. My father had come down to Washington, D.C. to visit me and I went to the train station to see him off. And the Washington, D.C. train station has a big gate that closes and you can't go to the train. And I turned away from the gate with a tear in my eye. And a woman spoke to me and wanted to know if I was alright. I was fine. Would I come to her, could she buy me a cup of coffee. No I didn't drink coffee. Well would I-she kept at me. Would I come to her apartment. Could she help me. Two things. Now I'm a college graduate. I'm twenty-two years old and I'm living on my own in Washington, D.C. Two things: I knew I didn't go anyplace with strangers and two, I had to be on duty at the navy in the next hour or so. I, at that time, was going to meet with the man who eventually became my husband.

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FAGAN: (continues) We had a cup of coffee or something together. And I was telling him about this woman and he said to me, 'Don't you know what she was?' And I said well she was a very nice lady who was being very polite to me and was being very courteous to a young woman who was in trouble. And he kept after me. And this was the only answer I had. He finally said to me, 'Sit down. I want to talk to you.' And obviously what it was that she was a lesbian looking for companionship. I was shocked. Absolutely shocked. It never occurred to me. I wasn't sure that I even knew what a lesbian was. And he said, 'Oh my God.' He was a Marine. He couldn't believe that anybody could be that innocent but I had no idea. It just it wasn't part of my world.

MCKLVEEN: But did you, you didn't notice it since it was an all women's college. Did they take any kind of precautions against that?

FAGAN: If they did I didn't know about because I didn't know that such things existed. And neither did the group with which I traveled. Now maybe some of the more sophisticated women did but I certainly didn't. And neither did my friends because we've

talked about it and laughed about it. Wondered how we survived in the world. We assumed that that kind of thing had to exist but we weren't aware of it. As a group we were not because we've talked about it. It's amazing. How naive and innocent we were. Whether it was our upbringing I don't know. It was a whole different world. It really was.

MCKLVEEN: Speaking of values, such as that, you lived off campus so you might not know details but what kind of religious practices were there available on campus for the women who were here? What kind of activities around, surrounding that?

FAGAN: The Catholic students had a group called the Newman Club and I was involved in that. I did become an officer in the Newman Club. I don't remember in my last year or year and a half here. But it was not one of the so-called prestigious organizations on campus. The Catholic students went down to St. Joseph's Church on Hope Street. There was no chaplain on campus or chapel. I can't tell you what the other girls did. I'm sure they went to, well I shouldn't say that I can't tell you, I know that some of them went to-what's the church over here that backs up on the campus down on the park lane.

MCKLVEEN: I don't know the name of it but I know where you're talking about.

FAGAN: But there's a big church down there. I can't think of the name of it. I assume some of the Jewish girls went to the temples, which there are several temples are fairly close by. But there were no active religious facilities on the campus at that time.

MCKLVEEN: Was there a good religious mix of people or did you find there was a minority-of-a minority of Jews, for instance?

FAGAN: There were very, a limited number of Jews. And I talked to one of my classmates who has also been interviewed as alum. And she said they were aware of the fact or somewhat aware of the fact that there was- what's the word I'm thinking of- a limited percentage of Jews allowed on the campus.

MCKLVEEN: A quota?

FAGAN: A quota. I couldn't think of the word. She said they were vaguely aware of it. But there were Jewish girls on campus and I don't remember that there was any I can't associate with you because you're Jewish. I think that there was a natural division. We weren't best friends. We were certainly good friends. One of the girls, whom I sat next to in chapel, all four years of campus of college was- and you know we went to chapel twice a week. We had to- was a girl named Doris Fain. My name was Fagan and hers was Fain so alphabetically we were next to each other and we're still good friends. So I didn't feel that there was any feeling that I couldn't associate with the Jewish girls. I don't remember a Black girl on campus. I don't remember any Black girl. There may have been but I don't remember. But I don't feel that there was any reason why I couldn't associate. There was not that kind of a division. You kind of didn't go out with Jewish boys.

MCKLVEEN: Oh you didn't?

FAGAN: No.

MCKLVEEN: Was that just part of the time or?

FAGAN: I think it was part of the time. They really didn't want to go out with us either. The one thing I do remember- **[5:00]** I keep jumping- one year the big weekend was Brown broker weekend. There was a-you went to the Brown broker on Saturday night and something on Friday night and something on Saturday night. The fraternity parties and all that sort of thing. And dates were hard to get because there were not many men around who weren't military and they had to go to bed early. The one guy that I thought might ask me did not and I was heartbroken because I thought oh I will never get to any of that weekend. I worked part-time as I told you for Sears Roebuck. And there were several students from the campus who worked there. And one of the fellows that I worked with and I knew him. Saw him on campus and hi how are you and worked with him. But that was the extent of our relationship. He called me and asked me for the weekend. I could have almost kissed him right over the telephone because I was so pleased to be going. And it turned out- he was a redhead- and it turned out he was Jewish. And I ended up going to the Jewish fraternity for the parties and if you could have seen the expression on my Jewish friends faces when I walked in. Not upset that I was there but many of them were people with whom I'd gone to junior high and high school who knew that I was Irish Catholic. And they just couldn't believe that I was walking into the Jewish fraternity and we laughed about it. It was not, there was no, they were not upset with me being there nor was I upset to find myself there. I was surprised but not upset. My parents happened to be away that weekend and I did not tell them. I was not sure that they might have appreciated. I don't think it would have bothered them but I just felt that it was better they didn't know about it.

MCKLVEEN: Moving on to a little different subject, who were some of your role models on the faculty? Or people that you were especially close to or you looked to for advice?

FAGAN: You didn't get any.

MCKLVEEN: You didn't get any advice?

FAGAN: I think that some of the women in our class did. I have one friend who- that I would like, again, whose name I would like to give you for an interview because we've talked about it and her name comes to mind- she had academic problems and was going to drop out. So she did talk to people a couple of times. I had an interview with Dean Mooar prior to coming into Pembroke. And I don't remember talking to anybody in all my years here. Never.

MCKLVEEN: There was no one to advise you for classes to take or the options that were available to you?

FAGAN: There were not.

MCKLVEEN: So how did you find out about it? About things.

FAGAN: Well if you were going to major by the end of your sophomore year you made up your mind what was going to be your major field. And then the catalogue was there and you just took all you could get in that field. It was- now others may have had different experiences but that was my experience. I don't remember going to anybody for counseling or advice or anything else.

MCKLVEEN: Not even one of your teachers? Did you like any of your teachers really in particular?

FAGAN: I had a Professor Salmon, who was in the French department, and I do remember that I liked him enormously. And he was a very learned man and I enjoyed his classes. But I don't remember that I ever had any contact with him other than class contact. I did take, I also took Italian thinking that if I were going to teach here in Providence with the heavy Italian population it would be a good thing to learn. But college is no place to learn a language. Most of the people in my class were Italian, spoke it at home, so by my sophomore year we were reading Dante's Inferno in Italian. I still hadn't even figured out what any of the grammatical basics yet. And so I just used trats, English trats. And the professor knew I was doing it but it was the only way I could get through it. And I do remember he inviting us to his home one Sunday afternoon for a tea. I remember that very clearly because it didn't happen before or after. He was very Italian and spoke with a very strong accent. And brought his baby out from a nap for us all to see. And everybody said, 'oh he looks just like you'. I was very smart. I kept my mouth shut because he told everybody the baby was adopted. [laughs] I remember thinking I didn't think it was a very attractive baby that's why I didn't say anything. I was so glad I hadn't. [laughs] But that's the only, other than classroom contact, I really remember having. Now we're talking forty years ago. Forty-five years ago so I could well have had it. But I don't remember.

MCKLVEEN: Were there men in your classes?

FAGAN: Yes. What you have to remember is other than very basic freshman English-themed course, which everyone took so there were so many of us, all of our classes were over here on the Brown campus. People say you graduated from Pembroke. I did not graduate from Pembroke. I did not graduated. English grammar [inaudible 0:09:57]. I did not graduate from Pembroke. I graduated from Brown. **[10:00]** I have a degree from Brown University. Our basic courses, as I say they were required courses then because so many of the women took those required courses during their freshman and sophomore years, very frequently they were held over on the Pembroke campus and were all women. But especially when you get into the junior and senior years in your major fields of course you had other classes with the men. There was no distinction there at all and we never felt put down by them or anything else.

MCKLVEEN: You didn't? You were treated pretty equally?

FAGAN: Absolutely. I never felt otherwise. I didn't feel that- in fact, when the merger occurred. I think it was a big mistake. As did many of us from my era because we had our own yearbook, we had our own school newspaper weekly. It was not a daily it was a weekly. We had our own question club. The women who were heads of our own organizations so we could be the president of this or the editor of that. For a long time after that if you watch the records, the papers as they came up, the women were assistant editors, vice presidents. They were not the leading people in whatever organization was involved.

MCKLVEEN: When was that? When did the merger?

FAGAN: The merger took place in 1971. So no I never, I don't think... I did not feel inferior. I did not feel inferior at all.

MCKLVEEN: Even with the war going on did you feel any special any big responsibilities when all the men were away? Or did you feel like your life was different because of the war?

FAGAN: Oh very definitely. There were not enough men for dates for one thing. That was a terrible thing socially. You hoped and prayed that the guys that had gone into service would be home on leave during when there was a prom coming up or whatever. Sometimes you wrote to them and said possibly if you could get home because there just weren't that many people around. We had rationing. Gasoline, as I say, you couldn't, it was very seldom that a guy could have a car. Most people in my day did not have cars on campus anyway. There were very very few. One of my classmates, two of my classmates had cars. One because she lived here in Providence and she had a convertible and had the money and this sort of thing. Another one because she lived far enough out in the suburbs where there was no transportation and she drove to and from school every day. But very few had cars. Very few. You could find a place to park without any problems. No difficulty there. Food was rationed. Within it, it wasn't too bad but you could only buy x number of pounds of meat per week. And you sometimes you couldn't get all get the meat. You could have food stamps and not find meat.

MCKLVEEN: You ate here on campus?

FAGAN: No. Well I did at noon. I did at noon. I'm sure the school here had some kind of arrangements as far as how much and what foods they could get. Maybe the kids had to bring their stamp books. I don't know. In order to turn them over to the University for purchasing food. The ration food. Sugar, wheat, and that sort of thing.

MCKLVEEN: How do you feel like your Brown education has affected your life? Or what do you think it's done for you?

FAGAN: That's a big one.

MCKLVEEN: That's a big, that's a very large question.

FAGAN: I think it expanded my horizons phenomenally. Both academically and socially. I was naive when I walked into Pembroke. I was naive when I walked out but not nearly as naive as I was as a freshman. I learned to deal with people. I don't know that I received the kind of education that I would get were I to go back with more maturity because my study habits weren't good. I worked very very hard for very average grades because I didn't know how to study. A lot of what I learned was memorization. You know you brought it in through the eyes and you spewed it out through the pen and then you forgot about it for the next exam. Thank God we didn't have comprehensives when I was on campus. I do know that the name Brown has been an entree for me very frequently. When it became known that I was a Brown graduate, people would say, 'Oh. THE Brown?' And I would casually say yes. [15:00] I didn't tell people that I was a dayhop. I didn't think that it was any of their business. But it has done that for me. It gave me a feeling of confidence in who I was and what I was. That and parents who gave me a feeling of being a solid human being. It gave me a feeling when the time came that I was ready to do the substitute teaching that I did for fifteen years or more. That I was as good if not a great deal better than many of the other people on the faculties with whom I worked because I had a Brown background.

MCKLVEEN: Well are you glad you came here? Do you feel like all those qualities that you feel you have now are because of the Brown education in itself or do you feel like just going to college those are typical things that you gain in that education?

FAGAN: I think they are typical things that I would have gained, hopefully would have gained at any place else where had I gone to college. I do not think I would have gained those things had I gone into RICE for example. I think that the academic atmosphere here at Brown was very good and I know I learned a lot. I can't remember very much of it but I do know I learned a lot and I absorbed a lot from the people around me. We only took four courses per year. You graduated with sixteen credits. And so when you became a junior and senior went into your major field, you really didn't have time or academic time to do much in other fields. In order to get your credits to graduate you pretty much had to stick within your major. But the two years of forced interdisciplinary work as a freshman and sophomore, those opened up all kinds of worlds that you didn't get into in high school. Philosophy, psychology, all kinds of things. My oh was freshman biology an eye opener for me. I'll clue you it was incredible. But all of these things that you would not have been exposed to in many schools. I think it was particularly good because in my generation many women were very fortunate to be able to stay in school long enough to finish high school. Remember I got out of high school in 1940 and we went through the depression years. And a lot of people were working part-time in high school IF they could find a job. My first job, by the way, I got thirty-three cents an hour and I was lucky to find a job. I found it because my mother knew somebody here in Providence.

MCKLVEEN: What did you do?

FAGAN: I worked part-time at Sears Roebuck and she knew somebody who worked for whatever job governmental or city thing there was. And she knew somebody and called her up and said, "Marcella needs a part-time job while she's in Pembroke" will she help find her one. So I worked at Sears. But a lot of people of my generation didn't go to college and went right to work. So I think I gained a great deal. I particularly am contrasting myself with a classmate, with a high school classmate of mine with whom I am still good friends. Her world was probably about that big. How can I put that on tape? An inch around. And her world isn't any bigger today than it was then. It really isn't. It's pathetic. She's a good woman who gives of herself to her church and to elderly relatives and that sort of thing but her world hasn't expanded mentally. And hopefully mine has and I credit Brown for that. I think part of it is my own interest in things but I think that Brown stimulated that interest to a large extent.

MCKLVEEN: Did they look for that quality in their students as I feel they do now?

FAGAN: I can't answer that. Getting into Brown then was not nearly as difficult as it is now. And at that time it was more of a local school than it is now. The majority of students, at least the women in my class, the majority of them were Rhode Islanders, Westchester County, Pennsylvania, a few northern New England. We had one girl who came from Chicago and we thought she came halfway across the world to come here to school. It was a much more local college than it is today. So I don't know what their requirements were. I did note in my diary that I was certified to come to Brown. So apparently I took the SAT tests. Whether that certification came from those or not I don't know. I always had the feeling that it came because I got very good grades in high school. [20:00] The only area in which there was a question was mathematics and I was very weak in mathematics. And I did get passing grades in high school and did manage to pull that up to a C plus or B minus average and so I was accepted. I don't remember that there was ever any discussion of SAT grades at all. They may have been looked at but I never knew it. I couldn't tell you how I did on my SAT exam.

MCKLVEEN: What you said you have five children?

FAGAN: Mm-hmm.

MCKLVEEN: How did that- did you have aspirations for a career and if you did, how did your children affect that?

FAGAN: I didn't have aspirations for a career. Remember again as I say, I grew up in a generation where once you married and had children you stayed home and took care of those children and ran your home. Your outlet largely was volunteer work. I did church work up the yahoo. I did everything from wash dishes in the kitchen to being president of organizations to putting on charity raising whatever within the church. I was very involved with cub scouts with my son and girl scouts with my daughters. That was your outlet. People say how could you possibly stay home. Young people today I would have gone crazy. Sure I would have gone crazy if I had stayed home in the house with five

kids and just did housework. But you had other outlets. It was not a paid career but you certainly were very involved in making your community function.

MCKLVEEN: Well during wartime did you do an excessive amount of volunteer work for any aspect of that?

FAGAN: No because I went into the military service so that's where I was involved in that time. And I was in communications, which meant a rotating shift. I worked two days from, the week began on a day where you worked two days three to eleven. Then you worked two days eleven to seven. Then the next two days you worked seven am to three pm and then you had forty-eight hours off and you started all over again. So there wasn't much time to do much of anything. You couldn't get involved in the community because just your time wasn't your own. And it just wasn't done. As I say, it was the women's thing to do after she was married. There are women in my class who had careers and very successful ones but for the majority of us it was stay home and take care of your family. And then we began to branch out into different things and go back and use some of the education as your children went into school. But again it was not what the majority of us did. Although I shouldn't say that. I'm thinking as I say it about my classmates, the lady who was interviewed by one of your interviewers this morning, went back and became a very successful special ed teacher. Another one became very involved in social work here in Providence and had quite a career. One of my classmates, as I said, worked for the U.S. Census Bureau. Another one got her Ph.D. and is very involved in psychology. There were several of them who became very involved in the psychological fields. So they did but it was not something you did early on. It was something you did after our children were in school and partially raised.

MCKLVEEN: Do you feel that the opportunities were narrow to this field of social work and teaching and things like that?

FAGAN: Nursing. Psychology. I really do and I don't know how it would have worked out if one of us had gone to a local bank and tapped on the door and said I'd like to be trained to be a financial officer in the bank. It just wasn't done. Maybe there were some who were frustrated by this. It just wasn't something that most of us really gave much thought to because that's the way life was. And there were not women's movements to get you involved and hyped about this sort of thing. It's just the way it was. That's all.

MCKLVEEN: No there weren't. And I've noticed that you've said a lot, 'Well that's the way things are and so we just followed that.' How do you feel about that now? There are always protests and things going on here against this and that. How do you feel about that?

FAGAN: I look at some of the protests and think oh go on back to your dormitory and study. I find an awful lot of it very ridiculous. I can't see what they think they're going to accomplish. Some of the things maybe yes. But I think about the defamation of the portraits in Manning Hall and that really upsets me. To me that's sheer out and out vandalism. If you have a protest there has to be another way. [25:00] You don't go in

and destroy what are almost priceless portraits. I find that unconscionable. And I see some protests as valid but I also find that in many cases their way of protesting irritates me to no end. And I'm sure that's a product of my generation and my upbringing. I don't object to them doing some of the things. Protesting if they feel very strongly about it. But don't interfere with my right to do what I want to do and function the way I want to function. And I don't think you have a right to say, as an example as this happened from time to time, that the CIA can't come onto campus to interview. If you don't want them, if you don't want to be involved in the CIA then stay away from them. But for the student who might want to go to work for them, don't you interfere with his right or her right to talk to the people in the CIA. I find that wrong.

MCKLVEEN: That's an issue of my year here right now. Were there any similar reasons to protest in your time when you didn't protest but can you think of anything that you now feel was unjust or that you disagreed with that would have given you reason to protest?

FAGAN: Not really. Not really. As a whole, we were an accepting group. World War II came along and the whole country was very gung-ho. We all went all out to support the government because there was a different attitude as again some of the other wars, which we've been involved in since then because we were attacked. So, therefore, we were all you'll never do this to us. But I don't remember that I was, I was perhaps more upset by some of my parental restrictions than the University restrictions. Far more so. I don't remember that I felt put upon by any of the restrictions. There was a dress code. When I say a dress code you just didn't wear slacks. Women and no girls did. You just you couldn't have bought them even if you wanted them unless you went to a men's department to try to get fitted. And we had Saturday morning classes and very often the dorm girls would come to class on Saturday morning with shorts in the spring. But they had to wear a coat over so that they couldn't be seen.

MCKLVEEN: A long coat?

FAGAN: A long coat. And then they would sit in class in the coat because they weren't supposed to be on campus-

MCKLVEEN: Well, do you think that was some kind of statement? Because why wear the shorts with a long coat?

FAGAN: I never felt it was a statement. It was just they got up and put them on and they just didn't feel like getting dressed in a skirt and a sweater or a skirt and blouse or whatever. It was just easier. They had put these on in the morning and that's what they were going to wear all afternoon. So just wear them and put the coat over it and hope you don't get caught.

MCKLVEEN: City girls didn't do that?

FAGAN: No because you see we had to come from our homes. And you didn't- you wore a dress. Women did not wear other than dresses in those days. If you went to the beach you wore shorts or a bathing suit obviously. But on the streets in the city you just did not. You just didn't do it that's all. No women did. Not just us as young women. Our parents. Kids. Little kids. They girls were always dressed up. They all wore skirts to school. Always. Slacks just did not exist for women. But now there's a lot of girls who don't even own a dress. Which is fine. It's just a whole different way of life. A whole different way of life. Completely.

MCKLVEEN: Okay well this is kind of a summing up question or unless you have something else you want to talk about?

FAGAN: I have all kinds of things that I will leave with you.

MCKLVEEN: Oh. Is there anything else that you'd like to say?

FAGAN: Well, as I say, I went through this thing. We had to freshman year you had to pass an English comp course. And you took- you wrote two themes this week and one next week. The two this week were due on Tuesday and Thursday and they were three hundred word themes. And the following week you wrote a thousand word themes so you only had to write one. And there was a box in lower Pembroke. You didn't have to turn it in in class. You had to have it in the box in lower Pembroke by four o'clock that afternoon. And they meant four o'clock. If it was ten minutes past four it was too late. The box was closed, gone, and disappeared. And I did note in my diary some of the themes that we had to write on and one of them was thirty detailed descriptions. Another theme was poetical and practical. Oh I have here I went to a French club party and danced with my professor. [laughs] [30:00] Oh I do note that in October there was a political rally. Let me quickly look and see what that was. I don't know. I didn't say what it was but there was a political rally in school. I went with some of the seniors. 'There was a parade on Cushing and Thayer and Waterman streets behind- we marched behind the Brown band. There was almost a riot on campus. On the Brown campus but the deans arrived and the whole thing stopped.' What the political rally was all about I didn't note so I have no idea. But apparently just the appearance of the dean was enough to stop whatever commotion. But now when I say riot, I'm sure in my day it was not what you would think of as riot today.

MCKLVEEN: But you got close to that then?

FAGAN: Yes. Apparently I was involved in some way. I'm sure it wasn't anything too involved. I'm just looking to see what some of the other things might be. [pages turning] Another theme I had to write on was labor and leisure in a historical incident and I note that I talked about Douglas Corrigan. You probably don't even know who he is.

MCKLVEEN: No. Who is he?

FAGAN: He was a pilot who flew the wrong way. He was supposed to be going cross-country and ended up in London. Whether that it was one of those things that you never really believe. They called him Wrong Way Corrigan. And whether he really was that mixed up or whether what he was doing was flying the Atlantic. I don't know. Two, one note I commented that the Belgians surrendered to Germany in May of 1940.

[end of tape 1 side 2]

[beginning of tape 2; counter starts anew]

MCKLVEEN: This is Betsy McKlveen, Brown class of 1991.5 interviewing Marcella Fagan Hance, Brown Class of 1944 on May 6, 1988 at the John Hay library at Brown University in Providence Rhode Island. This is tape 2.

FAGAN: These are building up, little things that I noted which were building up to the war. An uncle of mine had been for many years a chief engineer for the standard oil lines, the oil tankers, and he went into the Navy in the fall of 1940. I've also one of my least favorite subjects was biology and I commented on the dissections that we had to do in lab. Oh God I hated them. I hated squinting through the microscope and doing all the sketches of it. And at one point we dissected a frog and apparently the frogs were newly killed or something because when you touched the heart it went on beating. Ughh. My reaction in my library and in my diary is just horrified. It just upset me terribly. Not from the standpoint of the poor frog but because I hated I was revolted by it.

MCKLVEEN: Well did you have to take that class?

FAGAN: Well, it was part of- you had to take fulfill requirements in certain groups and biology was one of the things that I took to fulfill the requirement of whatever that group was.

MCKLVEEN: Science or math/science-

FAGAN: It might have been of some sort. Math and philosophy were grouped together. I did not take math. I took philosophy. It was a struggle. But those were just some of the things that I thought you might find interesting. We did take our senior citizens-senior sisters. Senior citizens that isn't right. Our senior sisters out to dinner that fall very formally. We dressed in long dresses and the whole thing. Now this was prior to the war and shortage and most of us couldn't get cars because we were sixteen, seventeen but the seniors by then were old enough to drive.

MCKLVEEN: What was the senior sister?

FAGAN: Each senior was assigned a freshman and she became your senior sister all the way through your freshman year because obviously she graduated at the end of that time. And she was supposed to help you over the hump and bumps. You know just a relationship so that you felt you felt you had someone on campus who was older and

wiser and smarter than you. My senior citizen, my God [laughs] my senior sister was a biology major and I saw very little of her. But she went with a group of women who were good friends. In fact, I know that they still keep in touch because I was talking with one of them fairly recently at the Phone-a-thon. And they were happened to be senior citi-my God- senior sisters to many of my friends. And so I was very involved with them as a group. And I don't remember that we turned to them particularly for advice or anything of that sort but they were just someone that you felt- that gave you a feeling of belonging to the campus immediately. They wrote you a note before you came to school and made a point of getting in touch with you your first couple of days here and introducing themselves. And saying if I can help in any way, being available, and going out of their way to say hello to you and seeing you. They tried to match up dorm daygirls together and we ate in the cafeteria in lower Pembroke. I don't what you call it over there now?

MCKLVEEN: Verney. Verney-Wooley dining hall.

FAGAN: Okay. It was split in half at that time. Half for the day students, who most of whom brought their lunch or could eat they had a cafeteria line, and the other half was for the dorm girls who did not all fit into the dining room of-whatever the two dorms are across the street on Cushing. I can't remember the names of them. You probably aren't aware of them either.

MCKLVEEN: No.

FAGAN: Oh. [sighs] I can't remember the names because I obviously wasn't a dorm student.

MCKLVEEN: What street was it?

FAGAN: Cushing Street, which Cushing is now closed, but in our day Meeting Street was in front of Pembroke Hall. And then the next street north is closed. There's no triangle. That was an open street when we were here and just across that street there are two dorms, which face each other. Not the street but face each other. And I think Wooley was built, I know it was as a third dorm to form a triangle in there. Miller and Metcalf. That's what they're called. Miller and Metcalf.

MCKLVEEN: Ah. Okay. Sure.

FAGAN: And some of the girls, there wasn't room for all of them in the dining room so the girls- oh and then there were East and West House, which were wooden buildings right next to Pembroke Hall. There where that pretty terraced entrance is to the Pembroke campus on Meeting Street now. And they were dormitories and the girls lived there. A lot of them liked them very much because they were older houses basically, and it was a more intimate dormitory living. And they also ate in the cafeteria. How did I get into all this? **[5:00]** I don't remember. [laughs] But whatever. That's where I learned to play bridge for one thing. And then there was a smoking room in lower Pembroke, the only place you were allowed to smoke.

MCKLVEEN: Oh did you smoke?

FAGAN: Yes. Started a little bit in high school and then picked it up in college.

MCKLVEEN: Was that the thing to do?

FAGAN: Oh absolutely. Absolutely it was the thing to do. And I did it and eventually quit. When lung cancer and smoking killed my husband I decided one of us was enough. But I smoked for many years. My first class cut- we were allowed three cuts a semester and so you rationed them very carefully.

MCKLVEEN: What's a cut?

FAGAN: Me not going to class.

MCKLVEEN: Oh I see.

FAGAN: They took attendance and then if you cut more than three times then it was a disciplinary thing and the professor could bring your grade down because of it. And so you got three cuts in each class. In my first cut in one of my classes, I had a nine o'clock class and a ten o'clock class at Pembroke Hall. And so you went down to the smoking room as the social someplace to go for that ten-minute break. And I sat there and had a cigarette and I inhaled for the first time and it made me dizzy and I had to cut my ten o'clock class. [laughs] What a waste of a cut. [laughs]

MCKLVEEN: Well speaking of something like that, did you ever do anything else with your friends that was kind of an act of rebellion or something termed naughty that you did while you were here?

FAGAN: Oh I supposed we did but they were such basic little things. Gone with the Wind came into Providence freshman, sophomore year or whatever. Had to be freshman year because we wanted- if you went to the movies in Providence before noon it was cheaper than between noon and five o'clock. And we decided that we wanted to go see Gone with the Wind but wanted to get in on the cheaper. And it was the morning of one of our exams in biology. So we just made arrangements that at eleven thirty-it must have been on one of our final exams because it was a three hour exam-and we just at eleven thirty everybody got up and walked out. Now it was not a mark of rebellion. We were just trying to save ourselves a little money and the exam was so damn difficult we were all through anyway. We'd all had it.

MCKLVEEN: You all walked out of it?

FAGAN: Well I say all. A group of probably six or eight of us who wanted to go to the movies.

MCKLVEEN: So what happened with the exam?

FAGAN: You just turned them in and walked out. I mean you were through. You didn't you just well now that's not very rebellious. [laughs]

MCKLVEEN: Well maybe for that time it was.

FAGAN: We didn't do that kind of thing very often. I remember one afternoon spending a long time-it was during exams-and I spent quite a while looking for some of my friends to ensure that we would meet to go home and that sort of thing. Couldn't find them and finally gave and curled into a corner somewhere to do some intensive studying and met them-we had an arrangement if we didn't see each other we met automatically at five or whatever it was-and they were there and I said where the heck were you? They'd gone to the Avon. They'd decided that whatever studying they did the exam wasn't going to change their grades so to hell with it and they just went to the movies. [laughs] I said you didn't. Why didn't you let me know? [laughs] It sounds pretty. It sounds so silly and such but it's the way we did things.

MCKLVEEN: Oh so the Avon was still there.

FAGAN: Oh yeah. We went there or we went downtown. They movies were a big thing then. You went to a lot of movies and they were always double features plus a newsreel and a cartoon of coming attractions. [laughs] I just wondered if there was anything else on this list of things that I grabbed out of my diary as I went through it. We had a wonderful freshman dance because there were far more men than there were women. Not only that but the senior class, some of the upper class men, came. The girls didn't. They weren't allowed in but the men did. They roped their way in.

MCKLVEEN: Wait you just said the girls weren't allowed?

FAGAN: The senior, the upper class women. This was a dance for freshman and the upper class women, except those seniors who were on the committee were the only ones who came, except for the freshman women. And transfer students as there were some. And all the freshman men. But there were upper class men that were there. That was alright. It was alright for the men to come and the senior women had some of their male friends in. And I remember doing the same kind of thing when I was an upper classman. Going to the dance just because I wanted to look over the freshman crop and bring in a couple of my male friends in with me.

MCKLVEEN: Was that kind of a written rule or just understood or-

FAGAN: I guess it was understood. I don't know. It was just the dance was for freshman so only the freshman women went. And on the whole the men were freshman so what did sophomores and juniors want with these lowly freshman males. Who needs it.

[10:00] Again, now the young people don't pay much attention to that but we were very conscious of it. Go out with him he's only a freshman and I'm a junior for goodness

sakes. I don't go out with him. Some, I'm not sure there were some who did but on the whole you didn't. It just- I don't want to go out with a freshman for goodness sakes. Who needs him. And one of the things that I picked up on- we had a week that we called scut week. When the seniors took the freshman over the coals. Sort of like fraternity hazing only not nearly as serious. And we had to wear high heels, gloves, and veils to classes. And the first day of high heels my feet broke out in blisters so I had to borrow a cousin's shoes and wear shoes a size too big for me all week. And then we had a day in chapel where the seniors punish the freshman who broke the scut rules. You know we had to saloon to them. Silly stuff. And I can remember one of my classmates sitting up on the piano during the whole chapel and singing I'm a bad girl, I'm a bad girl. And I remember somebody having to do a scene as Juliet to a Brown man up in the balcony in Pembroke in Alumnae Hall. Silly stuff like that. That was the kind of thing that we did and had fun with and enjoyed. And I never felt-I'm sure if the seniors tried to do that to the freshman now there would be a riot and screaming. Who do you think you are. But to us it was fun. It was the way it was done and we enjoyed it.

MCKLVEEN: Often they make them drink to quite an extent.

FAGAN: Yeah.

MCKLVEEN: Was that the thing then too?

FAGAN: There was a lot of drinking. I don't think as widespread as it is today. It was more at fraternity parties and within the fraternity houses. And it was- now you read the papers how they're throwing things out of the windows and that kind of thing. They're throwing fraternities off the campus. It was not that bad. There was drinking. I didn't drink particularly. I didn't like it. I didn't like the taste of it but there were a lot of people who did. And I don't think it was- I'm sure it wasn't as widespread as it is today. It just wasn't done. What else is there around here that I think you might find interesting. I guess that's enough. There's a limit to how much you can put down. One of the things we enjoyed was glee club because it- oh my first report card was an A, a B, a C, and a D. Terrible.

MCKLVEEN: Oh that's quite a range.

FAGAN: Right. A real range. I didn't mark down which classes I got which grades so I have no idea. But for someone who had been an honor student in high school that was a terrible shock. A terrible shock. An A and B were high but a C and D were unacceptable to me and also to my parents. Very unacceptable.

MCKLVEEN: Well was that a reflection on you or was the work just much much harder than high school?

FAGAN: I think both. I think it was a reflection on me because I did not have good study habits. I don't think I ever acquired them and certainly nobody made any effort to help me acquire them. And also I don't think that the high schools except perhaps maybe

those who were fortunate to go to very good private schools. But most of us were products of public schools and I don't think they really prepared us for the kinds of things that we were going to get in college. The high schools it was everyday don't forget there's a test on Friday. Don't forget. Don't forget. Here you came in as a freshman and the professor gave you your assignment and he would say, 'There'll be an exam on November 15th and you will cover x pages in the textbook, my lecture notes, the following outside reading.' And he might not mention it again until you walked in on November 15th and that is a whole different way of life. And of course you came to school and you only had classes in the morning. There's all this free time. You played like crazy until the academic thing caught up with you.

MCKLVEEN: I can identify with that.

FAGAN: You realize that that free time was not to play in. It was supposed to be doing some studying and it took many of us awhile to get wise to that one. So it was just a whole different way of living. In many ways, I think it was an easier way of life. We weren't out fighting the world. We accepted it for what it was. Good, bad, or indifferent. Either the world or our acceptance of it. I don't know which it was. But we weren't out there fighting. That may be wrong but it was certainly an easier way of life. You knew what was expected of you and how you were going to live as a general rule. You knew the standards by which you were going to exist. It was just an easier way of life. Completely. Much easier I think.

MCKLVEEN: Easier than, what are you comparing?

FAGAN: **[15:00]** Than today where the young people have so many options open to them. I'm sure yours is a more interesting world. And I'm sure you're far more aware of the world around you if for no other reason than television. I don't think any of us really paid much attention to even the newspapers. Remember we did not have television. There was only the radio. And we just weren't as aware of the world. We were as the war went on because of our involvement through boyfriends, brothers, whatever who were away. But beyond that we weren't too concerned. And then in the early years of marriage- I remember when I was teaching. During substitute teaching, the students were going to have a fifties day. And I knew that I would be subbing on that day and one of the other subs said to me, 'Are you gonna wear a costume for the day?' And I said, 'Gee, I don't know. What were we wearing in the fifties?' And she said, 'I don't know.' And it finally occurred to us that we were both housewives with small children. All we had was a housedress. [laughs] And a few dressy clothes when we went out. We didn't know what was going on out there. We were too busy with our children and whatever volunteer work we were doing. You just didn't you weren't that aware of what was going on out there. We were not old enough to have children in school. Most of us our children were preschoolers or at best early elementary. We didn't know what kids were wearing at school in the fifties. We had no contact with them. I just think it was an easier world to live in. The pressures weren't on us the way they are on you to be somebody. So many of the people of your generation or recent generations, younger people, have this

pressure to be something. I have to have a career in banking. I have to have a career in this. I have to have a career in that. We didn't have that kind of pressure.

MCKLVEEN: Why do you think that is?

FAGAN: More options for one thing. You had fought for it. Whether it's right or wrong. I don't know.

MCKLVEEN: You say we fought for it, do you mean we as women have fought for that chance?

FAGAN: Yes. I think so. [sighs] I don't know whether I want it or not. I don't know whether I would want to struggle to be somebody. I worked for fifteen years before I retired. And I knew my husband wasn't going to live. And I thoroughly enjoyed my job. I worked in the Bank Trust department and found it most fascinating. But I was more than well equipped when I was ready to retire and I'm not sure that I would want to have struggled for thirty-five years maintaining a home and children. If that would be the choice of this type of person and trying to hold down a full-time career. The pressures were phenomenal. I distinctly remember one day getting off the elevator and it had been a particularly trying day. My customers had been testy and it has just been a bad day. And all I could think of was to get home, get my shoes off, put my feet up and read my paper. And my children by then were all gone. I was living alone. My husband was dead. And as I got off the elevator one of the younger women said, 'well, now home to the second shift.' Which meant that she was going home to a family and I thought oh my God. I am so exhausted that the thought of having to go home and face children, and getting dinner, and coping with their homework and their questions and their answers, and bathing them and getting them into bed. I would have been a basket case. All I had to do was go home and put my feet up. And to do that- to have that kind of a struggle through the years when I had been raising my children would have been awful. I don't know how I- I felt that I was overextended in many ways raising five children and coping with the homework and all the rest of it. And when I say coping with the homework, kids had homework and I sat down with them and helped them through it and worked with them and that sort of thing. But to do that after a full day's work in an office where the pressures had been to produce, I would have hated it. I know I would have. I think it's asking a great deal because women today still, in spite of the way things have changed, they still-if you read surveys and everything else- maintain or handle most of the responsibilities at home. Yes, the young men today do more but really the woman does it. She organizes it. And if it doesn't get done who's going to do it but the woman because the men as a whole don't see it. [20:00] And that's asking an enormous amount of them. An enormous amount. I'm, in my own way, feel that a lot of the problems with the young people today drugs and etc. is because there isn't the supervision. There isn't the cohesiveness of a family because they're all going divergent ways. And I don't mean that really as a criticism but how can a young woman raising a family who spends eight to five in an office- if she's lucky enough to be able to work eight to five. If it doesn't take her into the evening or whatever- how could she possibly be as aware of what her children are doing? The influences that the outside world or

their peers have on them as I could when I was home all day every day. Knew the people in my community. Had the time to get to know the teachers and know what was going on in my area. I don't say that as a criticism. it's just an observation.

MCKLVEEN: So, in other words, the expectations of women have changed too.

FAGAN: Oh enormously. Enormously. Whether for the good or bad I don't know. Women expect a great deal more of themselves and want more intellectually and as a career. That's their choice.

MCKLVEEN: They're not so much like you were anymore in just taking things as they are.

FAGAN: No. Obviously not. Obviously not.

MCKLVEEN: As you said often, you said that's the way things were and so we accepted it that way.

FAGAN: Right. Right. Women do not do that today nor do men. I'm sure that men probably had a lot of the same restrictions. Socially, the men picked up the bill, the tab, when you went out. There was just no question. I remember we had a foreign student living with u and she was a girl who was twenty-one, twenty-two years old. And first time she dated an American man she said to me, how much money will I need? I said, 'What do you mean?'. She said, 'How much money will I need?' Now I'm talking back in the mid to late sixties. And she said, 'Well, I'm going out.' I said, 'you don't need any money. He will pick up the tab.' Well she was shocked. She was used to dating in groups or paying her share when she dated in France. And her immediate reaction was, 'What does he want from me if he's going to pay the whole bill.' I said, 'He doesn't want anything. At some point, if you went out with him for a long time that might become a problem.' But I said, 'Certainly not on your first date.' But she couldn't quite believe that. She came home and said to me, 'you're right.' [laughs] It was a whole- so the men had things that they did that were expected. Things that were expected of them too I'm sure. I'm sure. I remember as a little girl my father always wore a hat. I'd be walking down the street and I can remember even as a little girl. And I'm talking about seven, eight years old. If I passed a friend of mine and said, 'Hi. Mary' my father tipped his hat because that was the courteous thing for a man to do in that age. Absolutely. Even to a child.

MCKLVEEN: Did they have to pay those certain courtesies when you were here at school?

FAGAN: Oh you know there was the door opening and the stepping back and letting you go through first and that sort thing but that was instinctive. Most of the men their fathers did it. I see my brother. He is now a man of fifty-one, fifty-two years old who was-when I say trained by my father he learned by doing and learned by example- and he's wonderful with his wife. And does the kinds of things that my father did around the house and this sort of thing. And my sister-in-law gets hysterical because her friend's

husbands are not like my brother who learned from my father. She said the neighbors' wives keep saying to their husbands, 'Why don't you go take a course in Barry 101.' My brother's name is Barry. [laughs] But most women, most men of our generation did that sort thing. He is a little bit unusual in his generation but he learned it at home. This was the example that was set for him from the time he grew up. He doesn't know any different. He said, 'If I could be less than the kind of man I am it might be a lot easier.' But he doesn't know how to be otherwise. And I'm sure that for many of the men in my generation the same kind of thing. They didn't help around the house. My father did. He was unusual. But most men did not. They earned the bread and butter and that was the extent of their involvement. Though when I say the extent of their involvement, they did things with their kids but not the way- today you see a man, a young couple, in a shopping mall or someplace and the men are carrying the children. No way Jose. If you had two, he might carry one and you carry the other. But it was not. [25:00] It just wasn't done that's all. As a whole. No doubt there were exceptions. So we've gone like this forever Betsy.

MCKLVEEN: Ok. Would you like my final wrap-up question then?

FAGAN: Sure. Go ahead.

MCKLVEEN: Okay. I've noticed throughout the interview that you've referred to a lot of things that have been going on especially during this semester. I remember when you referred to, for instance, the painting. How are you keeping in touch with Brown that you know these things? What are your connections with Brown right now?

FAGAN: A couple of ways. I have worked with the MAC doing student interviewing for quite a few years. Both in Minnesota and here. I got into it. And of course the local papers. And when I lived in Minnesota, Brown did something really far out and it hit the local papers. I remember one of the students went to the- you probably don't remember this but there was a big thing about, whether it was nuclear or what it was- anyway, the students went to the medical department and wanted suicide pills.

MCKLVEEN: I remember that. Sure.

FAGAN: Well, it hit all the newspapers in the country. And of course the fact that the University refused it was never mentioned in the articles. It was just here are these crazy nuts at Brown doing this sort of thing. So the papers. And of course now that I live locally Brown makes the Providence paper quite regularly. And I do get BAM, which is the Brown Alumni Monthly magazine and there's a great deal going on that they give many good articles on what goes on in the campus. And since I've come back-I've come back to Providence to live- I've come to various functions on the campus that I have found interesting. So I try to keep somewhat abreast of what's going on. And of course, as I say, the destruction of the paintings in Manning Hall made the newspapers here and there was quite a bit about it. So and Brown still despite of that fact- when I grew up Brown was looked up to with almost reverence within the community. Now that is not true. Brown is often a nuisance in the community. They don't want them expanding.

They're taking over property that would be normally taxed and that sort of thing. So there's a great deal of friction between the community and Brown in many areas.

MCKLVEEN: Personal? In personal ways? Or student ways?

FAGAN: I don't have any problem with it. There's an example, there's a new dorm they're trying to put up down on Brook Street, down Charlesfield. Down that area. And they're having a terrible time with the local people who don't want Brown to do what it's going to do and there's conflict there. I'm sure it will eventually be resolved. When I was here, remember, the green as it stands here within the fence was the campus with the exception of a few buildings. What's this one over here? Charlesfield just beyond the Rockefeller Library?

MCKLVEEN: Brown? George?

FAGAN: Well, whatever the streets. There were a few older houses that had been taken over and the Pembroke campus. And that's all the campus consisted of. Even the Wriston quadrangle was built, I think it came in shortly after World War II. But the campus consisted solely of the green so there was not the conflict with the community. And it's an enormous expansion that there appears to be now. So I have kept in touch partly because my years here were happy. I worked very hard but I enjoyed my years on the campus and I take pride in being a graduate of Brown University. And I'm not saying that just for the tape. I really have. Particularly when you're a Midwesterner and you've lived there for years and they will say, 'you went to Brown? THE Brown?' And it's a prestigious thing. Even now more so but even then it was an Ivy League college and it was recognized as such. It gave you a certain cache in the world when you're a Brown person.

MCKLVEEN: And it still does.

FAGAN: It still does. Absolutely. And I take pride in it and enjoy it.

MCKLVEEN: Well, thank you very much for doing this.

FAGAN: I've over-talked I'm sure but that's one of my faults.

MCKLVEEN: No, not at all. Thank you.

[end of tape 2]

[End of transcript]