

Transcript – Anna Hass Morgan '17

Narrator: Anna Hass Morgan  
Interviewer: Joyce Tavon  
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Track 1

Joyce Tavon: [00:00:00] – My name is Joyce Tavon, class of '84, and today I'm interviewing Anna Hass Morgan, who attended Brown 1913 and 1914. We're doing the interview on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1987. I'd like to start by asking you a little about your family, and a little about your life before you attended Brown. Maybe you could start with where you're from, and –

Anna Hass Morgan: My father was of German background, born in Germany. Came over when he was about seven years old, and he trained to be a lithograph artist. My mother was of Spanish background, and when she was a young woman, she went to New York [00:01:00] and trained to be a dressmaker and a tailor in a Hollander's school of some kind, and – which she became independent. By the time she was 20 years old, she was completely independent and working for herself. And when I was – I was born in Providence. I'm the middle child. I had a sister, older, and brother, a little bit younger. And Rhode – I was nine years old, we moved over the line – state line – to Rehoboth, Massachusetts, where my folks bought a small farm. So I grew up there, on a farm, with farm – all surrounded with farm children. I went to a one-room school, and when I finished the one-room school, I went to high school in Taunton, [00:02:00] and then from Taunton I went – I had become engaged to be married, but I –

JT: How old were you then, when you became engaged?

AHM: Eighteen. And I wanted to be a – I wanted to study nursing, but at that period, a girl had to be 21, and it seemed like an awful gap to wait, and so my mother convinced me that maybe I ought to go to college instead. And I planned to go to Mount Holyoke because a teacher in high

school had graduated from Mount Holyoke, and had talked a lot about it. But I became engaged to be married when I finished high school, and my mother said that I couldn't get married for two years. So I decided, if I was not going to be home more than two years, I would stay at home [00:03:00] and be with them, and I would go to Brown, where I would be nearby, and commute and be home every night.

JT: Why is it you couldn't marry immediately?

AHM: At 18? She didn't approve of it. She was afraid I might change my mind. But meanwhile— I was engaged to marry a Cuban, and at that period Cubans were as conservative and proper as the Spaniards were, (laughter) so a woman's life was completely in the home, outside of maiden ladies or widows who might become schoolteachers. And my mother felt that, with an old Spanish idea, that she had [00:04:00] to protect me and deliver me properly to my husband. So I stayed home and went back and forth, and carried out my usual social life in Rehoboth, which was a small town. And the congregational church was the center of all activity at that time — social life, activity, and so forth.

JT: Let me ask you at this point — you came from a small town, but you had met your husband-to-be, who was from Cuba?

AHM: Yeah. Well, he had won a scholarship and had gone to Cornell University to study, but when he was ready to sail and leave Havana, the government, giving him his scholarship, told him that they needed veterinarians for the eastern part of the island. [00:05:00] In those days, they used oxen entirely in the cane field, and they wanted him to study to be a veterinarian. At that time, there were three young men together, all 18 years old, who had won the scholarships from different parts of the island, and the other two changed their minds when they got to Cornell. They didn't tell the government, and they became engineers. My husband was very honest - very good man - and he felt, if his government was paying him for an education, paying his education, that he ought to do what they wanted him to do.

JT: So, but how did you meet him if he was at Cornell?

AHM: It happened that his mother was friendly with a Cuban schoolteacher in Havana, [00:06:00] and she had married a cousin of my mother's. And this schoolteacher had come to Harvard on a summer course, right after the end of – soon after the end of the Spanish-American War. She had come to study American methods of education, and she had married a cousin. So after my husband entered college, his mother died right then, that fall, and left him the care of an 11-year-old brother. So he was going to give up college, but the Spanish colony in Allston – all my relatives – convinced him that, between them all, they could take care of a boy that was only 12 years old at the time. So he brought his brother [00:07:00] to Boston and he went to Cornell. But every summer, he came to Boston and he worked in that big veterinary hospital – what is it? Angell (inaudible) they call it downtown – and he worked there every summer to help out on his income, and help the costs of his brother.

JT: So you met him, really, through your family – your extended family?

AHM: Yes. Yeah, and he went back, and then we became engaged by mail, and then he came up every summer, each summer, to visit. And when I graduated from high school, we became engaged to be married.

JT: So at 18 you were engaged to be married?

AHM: Yeah.

JT: And you decided to attend Brown?

AHM: And I knew I was going to go to a [00:08:00] remote part of the island. He had told me what life would be like out there. So when I went to Brown, I had a conference with the dean in which I told her I didn't want to spend any time on mathematics or science – that I could read that, but I wanted to study – I especially wanted the English course “Training to Write Better” and so forth, and I wanted anything I could get in history. But I especially wanted to study Spanish. And Pembroke did not teach Spanish, so they sent me over on the hill to the men's

college to study, and I was in a class with a Professor Albert Bushnell Johnson, who was about past middle age, a bachelor – [00:09:00] teacher, a professor. And he had a class of 25 men, and I was the only girl in it. He didn't like the idea that the dean had consented to me studying Spanish, which he felt as though one girl in the class would disrupt his class. So he made me sit in the back row, and all of his men students sat in the two front rows, but every time he called on me, 25 heads would turn around to look at me. I was too self-conscious to do any damage at all. (laughter) Then he would stop to announce, "I am going to call on Miss Hass. Please don't everyone turn around to look. She is here." (laughter) And then the dean told me, [00:10:00] in the interview we had, that she felt that if I was getting married, I ought to study biology so as to learn what marriage was all about. So I consented, although the subject I wanted to take had a conflict with the history that I wanted. But she still insisted that biology, she felt, was more important, so I had to take that over in the laboratory on the hill. And that was a whole girls' class that went over to the laboratory. No men in the class. And to learn my relationship with a new husband, my first specimen was a worm.

JT: (laughter)

AHM: My second specimen was an embryo pig. My third specimen was a dried-out cat that I had to share [00:11:00] with another girl, because dried cats – they have a scientific term for them – but they were treated for nerves and muscles, so you could study all the nerves, the veins, blood vessels, the nervous system, and muscles. And I had to share the cat. I thought that was the height of indignity. I had come from a farm. As far as I was concerned, there were more cats in this world than there ought to be. (laughter) That was Miss Danielson. Was not only a wonderful teacher, but she was pretty advanced, I thought, for her age – for the period we were in – because when she talked about sex, she was much [00:12:00] more explicit than – much more than the dean was, (laughter) and very much more than most of the married women I had ever met were at that time. And she did pull down the shades on the side of the room where there a lot of men. I don't know whether it was a men's dormitory or classrooms also, but she always carefully pulled down the shades on that side. However, in her teaching, she was very explicit in drawing on the blackboard and making us copy into our notebooks for us to understand, and apparently up to then – I had studied physiology in high school, but the sex organs were completely omitted.

[00:13:00] I had studied one short course in physiology in the eighth grade in grammar school, and sex organs were completely omitted. Well, as a farm girl, I didn't need much instruction in sex, because it was all around me in the springtime between cats and sheep –

JT: (laughter)

AHM: – and the cow – having cows, and all that sort of thing. And the relationship of bulls to cows was especially common discussion on the farm, where the housewife mark up the calendar when the calf was due, you know, and that sort of thing. But the dean thought that it would just finish my education, so I took it, see? The second year, I –

JT: Could you first maybe say a little bit more? [00:14:00] Do you remember any other classes you took your first year?

AHM: Oh, yes. I have some notes here. At that period, I was very conscious that girls came from everywhere. One girl I met came from Iowa. I never developed a close friendship with her. She was very nice, but she seemed very remote. The morning I went up to college, because Providence was so near, to me it was just like going to high school, so my mother didn't go. But when I got to the dean's off– outside her waiting room, outside the dean's office, [00:15:00] I was surprised to see a number of girls, and their mothers were with them. I never found out whether they were town girls or girls who were going to live at the dorm, but I was a little bit surprised that mothers came to register girls in college. I can understand why (inaudible).

JT: And did you walk to school? How did you get there?

AHM: No, I took the Interurban into Providence.

JT: Was a train?

AHM: Yeah, it was an electric trolley. And then I walked up from Market Square. And at that time, the cable cars were running, and one of the big excitements was once in a great while a cable car got loose and went racing down the hill.

JT: (laughter)

AHM: [00:16:00] But traffic was so light, and then there were no automobiles that I could remember. It was just horses and wagons, and so forth, and nothing ever happened. I guess it happened... Well, I guess, maybe two or three times while I lived in the Providence area or out in Rehoboth, that this type of an accident happened, but I never rode on the cable car because the fare was five cents, and I walked up the hill. I just took it for granted. Such a short distance up a hill. You walked. Who would ever take a trolley? Looking from it now, from my age, I would be very glad to have a trolley to go up that hill. At that time, in the English class, [00:17:00] I had all classmates – that was all in the women’s college, and our professor – our teacher – was John Henry Williams taught us English. He was very, very good, and he had an assistant called Carl Cooper, and I didn’t like Carl Cooper because he would mark up your thing correcting it, but he never had a very good explanation of why. I always wanted to know why. Not that I cared particularly about the mark itself, but it was, you know, “Why this?” or “Why that?” And then, as I said, Miss Danielson – I had a strange experience some years later –

JT: She was the biology teacher?

AHM: – yes – while I was in this very remote, small town in Cuba, and during the crop, it had a colony of about maybe 12 or 15 American couples. And one of the couples had a guest, and so she had an afternoon tea. Well, I lived in two worlds. I was associating with the Cuban women. I would go to their homes and visit them because they were friends of my husband’s, the families. But I would visit the Americans, because I was an American too. And one of the women gave an afternoon tea, and I went, and I was surprised to meet this woman. And I commented to her, I said, “I don’t want to make a comparison, but you look so much like a teacher I had at Brown, that I just can’t get over the similarity.” [00:19:00] And she said, “Who was she?” And I said, “Her name was Miss Danielson from Connecticut,” and she said, “Oh, I’m her first cousin.”

(laughter) Small world after all. That struck me as strange. And as I said, Professor Johnson, I thought he was very grumpy, and (laughter) –

JT: He was your English professor?

AHM: No, Johnson taught me Spanish.

JT: Oh, your Spanish –

JT: Yeah, and I thought he was pretty grumpy. And years later, when my husband was there as a teacher, there was a young couple – DeLand – Graydon DeLand - taught Spanish and my husband taught Spanish, and Professor Johnson had bought a place out in Rehoboth. And he had meanwhile married, and so they used to invite us out there periodically for dinner, [00:20:00] and of course, as he was Head of Spanish, we were very much on our good behavior. The two wives were behaving properly, naturally, but we were always very, very amused that he always talked at the table – he would still talk to me as if I were his student, although he was now merely outranking my husband a little bit as a professor, naturally. It was very – I thought it was quite amusing. When I went to the college, I enjoyed it very much, but I felt older than the other girls. I don't know whether it was my life on the farm compared to [00:21:00] – most of these other girls were city girls. I had the same feelings about my cousins in Allston, Massachusetts. When I visited them in the summertime, I used to think, “They don't have anything to do all summer.” But on a small farm, there's chickens to feed and give water to. And my mother, who felt – she didn't have an outside job in those days, so there was a lot of canning. As the different fruits and vegetables came in there was a great deal, and I know a common thing for her to do in the morning was to wake us up and say, “You got to get a big start today. The huckleberries are ripe. You got to go down there. I don't want you to stop until you've picked 20 quarts.” And she'd hand out pails, (laughter) and that was it.

JT: So you had a lot of responsibilities at a young age?

AHM: Yes. And I enjoyed fun, but when I got to college, I was [00:22:00] awfully surprised – another thing – maybe because all the boys I had been raised with –for example, going through the one-room school – you were with those same boys. I entered in the third grade. From the third grade through the ninth grade I was with those same boys. I got acquainted with them almost like brothers. I never could've fallen in love with any of them. I knew them too well, you know? (laughter) And then in high school, I had little time for the boys because we took the Interurban trolley. We'd ride just when school was beginning. School let out in time for us to just catch the trolley home, or wait another hour, so half the time we spent almost jogging for the trolley. We had no time for social life, so that outside a little bit of conversation [00:23:00] with the boys in class, usually about subjects you were studying, I had no relationship with those boys at all. And so when I got to Brown, I would go in with the girls, and listen to them and so forth, and I used to be quite surprised at the conversations they were having. And they were very, very much interested in boys, which I didn't understand at that time. It was funny. But I enjoyed – At that period, they had, in the basement, a small counter –

JT: Basement of Pembroke Hall?

AHM: – at Pembroke – where they served coffee, and the only drink I remember was Moxie from that period. And Moxie was sold all through New England, but it was only years later, after [00:24:00] I got to Chicago, I discovered that some people in the United States had never drank Moxie.

JT: What is Moxie?

AHM: It's very much like Coke would be. I don't know whether sarsaparilla's the base, or what it is. And also they served coffee or tea. But when I would get down at noontime – the way my classes came out, I had to wait over from morning over to the afternoon, and so I took at least a hot drink, and many times I'd buy a sandwich. But by the time I would get there, coming back from my Spanish class, the dorm girls, as we looked around, were all so intimate, they were all paired off at tables. There were little tables that held two. And so I was usually in the position [00:25:00] of sitting with someone else, and I sat – I became quite intimate with one girl. She

lived on the hill and her father was a musician, and she was very interesting. She played in the Bijou movie picture house at the foot of the hill. She was an only child.

JT: Played piano, or?

AHM: Piano. Yes, and this was the days before the music came with the film, and she studied piano for years, and she was such a musician that she could watch the film or carry on a side conversation, and according to what the film showed, she would play the proper thing, whether it was a wedding or a hanging, or a baptism, or whatever it was. They all did it at that time. That's the way the piano players handled it. [00:26:00] And so she and I had quite a [warm?] friendship, and one time I had the – I mean, periodically, I'd go to her house, but – and then one day I came in, I sat down with – I asked a young girl if I could sit down with her table because all the tables were filled, of course, and we sat there and we got acquainted, and she was Jewish. And I was so surprised, because I never remembered that I had ever known a Jewish person before. There might've been Jewish girls in high school, but I never socialized in high school because I was always running from the bus or to – I mean from the trolley or back to the trolley. I had no social life in high school. And so she – for the first time in my life, [00:27:00] I heard somebody talk about discrimination. And this was a whole new idea to me. My father was – My mother never told me for many years, but my father was a secret Socialist (laughter) – I mean, he was in sympathy with the Socialists. And so a lot of his interpretation was along that line, without me even knowing why. I know that at one time – it was right after an election, and I came home and I – I was in high school – and I said, "There were three Socialist votes in Rehoboth," and my father said – oh, I said, "I'm pretty well I know a couple of them." And my father said, [00:28:00] "Who are they?" And I said, "Well, one is that little German on the other road who has a machine in his barn that makes tacks." And then there was another one, a woman, that people said she was a socialist. But I didn't know who the third one was, and my father said it wasn't any of my business how people – that's why we had the secret ballot, you know? (laughter) It was kind of funny. So this young Jewish girl talked to me, and I told my father about it. He told me a lot then about discrimination, either race, and all that sort of thing. Then, she and I became very good friends, and I found that somehow or other we clicked quite well. I was very curious about lots of things, and I said to her [00:29:00] once, "You know, I've never

been to a burlesque show,” and she says, “Neither have I.” And I said, “My family would have a fit if I went, but why don’t you and I go together early enough in the evening so that it wouldn’t be dangerous?” So we went to this burlesque show in Providence – I think it was on Westminster Street – and we were standing there, and I said to her – you know, we said we wouldn’t sit down. We’d just stand in the back – and I said to her, “We have to be very careful, because if the dean came in, we could be kicked out of school for that.” And she got to laughing so hard at the idea of the dean coming in to the burlesque show, that it attracted a little attention, and all of a sudden, a cousin of my mother’s, who [00:30:00] worked for the Providence journal, walked over in surprise, and he said, “What are you doing here?” I was awfully afraid he was going to tell my parents, but nothing came of it. I don’t think he ever told.

Another time, Mr. Williams, the English teacher... I should explain that for English, we had to write a theme – a short one – every day in the week. And then we always had one long one a month due, and that was always [writing?]. You had to do research for it. It had to be a subject you had to go into. And I guess that from my themes, he knew a lot about my thinking, naturally, and one day he came down to my desk where I was sitting, and he said to me, “There is going to be a meeting tonight at the foot of the [00:31:00] hill, and I think Eugene Debs –” that was the socialist candidate for the presidency – he said, “I think he’s going to speak. I thought you’d be interested.” So I thanked him, and that night – or that afternoon – I found my Jewish friend and I asked her, “Would you like to go tonight?” We found the place was roped all off. The police were there. A lot of men were protesting, some women, and they said there was going to be no meeting. But I was awfully surprised to find my father there. I was really quite afraid, because I thought my mother would now know that I was at the meeting – she’d scold me. So I went up to my father and I said, “Hello,” I said, “I told Ma I went to a movie.” And he looked very embarrassed, [00:32:00] and he said, “I told your mother I was working overtime.” (laughter) So the both of us... And another thing interesting thing looking back – this girl went back to the hill in the evening alone, and I got on the trolley with my father and went out to the country back home. And she thought nothing of coming down the hill and going back after dark and so forth, where now, so many years later, it’s more or less difficult for girls to go around much alone in the city at night, especially some parts of the city.

Another thing that amused me that – we had to go to chapel every morning, and we were allowed something like, I guess, three absences a month or something. It wasn’t very much,

[00:33:00] and a monitor kept a record. I was excused from gym because the dean recognized that I had plenty of exercise on the farm, but she didn't excuse me from chapel. And this was a little difficult, because I had to make chapel, and then I had to wait over – but I took that time for studying – and then I went to my Spanish class. And it happened that in this chapel – it was very interesting. The upper-class girls had a singing group of some kind, and they used to sing very nice little classical pieces that they had rehearsed, and so forth. They had a monitor that took our attendance. And then the dean would speak a few inspiring words, or sometimes instructing us on something. And I remember at that time, of course an awful lot of [00:34:00] talk was about white slavery, and the dean had explained to us the dangers of girls talking to strange men or allowing strange men to talk to them, and she told us never to admit that we go to college, because some men might trace us easily to Pembroke. And she told us never to discuss anything with another girl on the street or on a trolley, or in any place where we could be overheard, in a restaurant or someplace. In other words, everything was very, very careful for the girls, you know what I mean? A guidance or protection, where nowadays, any girl would know all of that before she finished grammar school – [00:35:00] I mean how to take care of herself, you know? Another things was that she used to read very inspiring bits of poetry. And I personally liked her. I liked her very much. I thought that –

JT: Is this the dean we were talking about before the tape began?

AHM: Uh-huh. I liked the Dean King.

JT: Her name was Dean King?

AHM: Yeah. I liked her very much. I thought that she was kind of innocent in the world. In other words, some of things she – I don't know whether she was keeping her lectures for proper young ladies. Maybe, but her very (inaudible) talked to me – she spent some time with me trying to convince me, for example, that I would be better off not to get married then. Another thing that [00:36:00] surprised me –

JT: Why did she feel you shouldn't get married?

AHM: She thought I was too young, inexperienced, and so forth, and it was just – it wasn't interfering, it was just kind discussion about marriage. And I told her that I would much rather become a nurse, but to wait till I was 21, I thought, was an awful gap – 18 to 21. And then, after I got married, I became pregnant, and within one year I came back to the States to have my first child. And I was at the homeopathic hospital in Providence, and the young nurse took care of me, and she was only – she was my age then. She was just 20, see, because my birthday comes late in the year. [00:37:00] She was just 20, and I asked her – and here she was, already on the floor, taking care of patients. And I asked her, "How did you get this training, when everybody I approached, they said I had to be 21?" And she said, "Well, my mother lost my birth certificate. It was burned up in the town hall fire." And I said, "What town was that in?" She says, "My mother never could remember." In other words, the mother had sworn her age, and had said she didn't have a birth certificate because it had been burned in a fire. And I was very annoyed with my mother. When she came in, I scolded my mother for – why didn't she look up some town that had burned up –

JT: (laughter)

AHM: – and sign up for me? But it was altogether too late then.

JT: I'd like to ask you a little bit [00:38:00] more about your time at Brown. When you entered the school and you were engaged, did you know at that time that you wouldn't be staying for four years?

AHM: Oh, yes. That's why I told the dean I wanted to choose special subjects, because my feeling was that I wanted these subjects, and not mathematics, and not science. It was what I was particularly interested in, and was sort of a broader knowledge. And I was very disappointed when the history that I wanted – instead of the biology – came at the same time, and she said, no, she still felt I ought to take the biology.

JT: So you took biology, English, Spanish –

AHM: And Spanish. And that's the three subjects that I took as a special student, see?

JT: For the whole two years you were there?

AHM: [00:39:00] No, and then second year, I went to Professor Johnson and I told him I thought the class was going very slowly.

JT: The Spanish class?

AHM: The Spanish class. And he said that he couldn't make it go any faster, that students weren't studying any faster. And so he agreed to tutor me, and so then I went back to the dean and told her, and she says, "He doesn't usually do that," but she says, "I'm not going to object to that," she says, "because you do need Spanish, and I want you to get all that you can get." And then I told her that I wanted American and English literature, see, and so she told me that – oh, and then what she was offering me – I didn't want the literature [00:40:00] she was offering me. It was beginning with Chaucer, and I had covered Chaucer in high school, you know? I had had quite a lot of that. In fact, the high school preparation at that period was a college preparation, and then if you weren't going to college, you took the English course, which was considered much easier. And so then, I signed up to study two afternoon courses in literature, but Professor Johnson gave me a period that was right after the twelve o'clock ended – twelve o'clock study ended. It was considered the lunch period. So I made much more progress that way, because I could go faster. And then [00:41:00] I found that the book I was studying from was a book - although my husband was studying – was a veterinary student. In order to earn money in college he had helped Olmstead and Gordon to write a big thick Spanish grammar. And my husband-to-be had written all the Spanish exercises.

JT: In your Spanish book?

AHM: In the Spanish book. And he had also proofread the whole thing after it had been set up, so that in the introduction, in the preface, the professors had thanked him for the Spanish

guidance for them. They were both Americans. And so in other words, he was a good scholar in his own [00:42:00] language, and he would like to have gone in that. After we married, I discovered that he was the last man in the world that should have been a veterinarian, so when we came up here – and the reason that we had to come back was that I –

JT: Can I just interrupt you? And we'll come back to that –

AHM: Yeah.

JT: – later. I just want to finish. In your second year at Brown, you still continued with the Spanish through tutoring, took some literature... Any other kinds of courses that you took?

AHM: And it was history.

JT: Oh, you did take history? What kind of history did you take?

AHM: Yeah, and it was just – it was called World History. It was like a survey. And then after that, after I came back from Cuba – I came back because I had [00:43:00] tropical malaria, and I had been very sick, and they always said the first child died because I had had it so bad while I was pregnant. So anyway, after I came back, and then I introduced my husband to Professor Johnson and reminded him that this was the man who had done all the work on the Spanish exercises in the book, and Professor Johnson was interested, and he engaged my husband in the fall to – And so then after my husband had been teaching for some time – I guess a year, or maybe two – Dr. Faunce, who was president of the college, wrote him a note and said that if he was going to continue teaching, he would like to have him have a liberal arts degree for the appearance of the catalogue. [00:44:00] After all, a DVM, you know, when you're teaching a language, isn't so impressive. And so then my – And what annoyed me at the period was that they did not give my husband a comprehensive exam, you know, in the language, in English. And his English was excellent.

[00:44:26] (break in audio)

JT: You were going to say that you – something you enjoyed at Brown?

AHM: One thing I enjoyed very much at Brown was that periodically, on Sunday afternoon during the winter, they had a tea, and the girls gathered. And I wanted to know the girls better, and so after I left church, I would go then into Providence. I'd go up on the hill. And the tea was around – I don't know, I guess it must've been three o'clock in the afternoon. It was a little bit later. [00:45:00] And some local person – some interesting teacher or somebody – would come in, and I know we sat in a circle, and they would discuss something, the speaker would, maybe about music or a book, Something of that sort. And we'd all have that, and we'd have general conversation. It was like a social hour. I guess that for the girls in the dorm, it was one more tea that they went to. To me it was a little trip into town and associating with girls, because naturally, on the farm, as I was older – my mother felt that we ought to do more for the minister, that he worked very hard. So she always had me line up to drive the minister around town to call on sick people, because the minister had no horse and buggy. And I would [00:46:00] drive him around, especially to drive to funerals. My mother always promised the carriage with the horse, and the carriage that held three other people besides myself.

JT: So your Sunday teas, then, were your opportunity to – your Sun– the Sunday teas were your opportunity to get away and socialize.

AHM: Yes. So I had a chance to mix with a lot of young women, and hear them talk and discuss things, and I always found it interesting. But sometimes, around four o'clock in the afternoon on a school day, they would have a very interesting lecturer who came from someplace. And one woman stood out in my mind, and her name was Lillian Wall, and she came from New York, and she was a social worker. And another one was the author Reisman or Reeseman, something – [00:47:00] he wrote books along that line, about social work, and I thought he was very interesting, because when I was a child I always thought I would like to be a medical missionary, but as I got older I realized I wasn't religious enough, and I didn't think any church would take me on because of that.

JT: Can I ask you a little on how you paid to go to Brown? Did you parents pay your way?

AHM: Oh, yes. And they didn't object – It wasn't easy, but for the times we were in it wasn't impossible. And the car fares were only – let's see – 20 cents a day. Although, 20 cents in those days meant [00:48:00] more than now. And another thing I enjoyed was that the girls used to say that the Brown boys looked down on the Pembroke girls among themselves. They would say that quite often, but – and I didn't have a chance to find out, because being engaged, I didn't expect to date. In fact, I wore an engagement ring with a diamond so that – and my husband-to-be made my mother promise that I would wear the diamond every day to college, and she checked that as well as she checked wearing my rubbers. And then they had (inaudible) that every time we went on the men's campus we had to wear a hat and coat and gloves. And one day, the first day of spring in my first year there, it was so beautiful that I just happily left the farm, and I didn't wear [00:49:00] – well, I might've had a jacket with me and hung it up in Pembroke Hall, that was all. And I was so surprised, when I came out of the Spanish class, that two upper-class girls met me and they were very serious, and they said, "You know that you shouldn't come over here without your hat and coat and gloves," and they had me walk back with them to Pembroke Hall, just as if I was under arrest, but then when I got there, they told me that they wouldn't report me to the dean. Oh, and another time, one of the girls told me that I mustn't come through the main gates – that's the gate that looks down on Waterman Street, yeah. I mustn't come up through the main gate, that only the men came through that gate, that we must use the side gate. Well, I never came to class through the main gate, but when I was going [00:50:00] home it was a lot shorter, and I went home through the main gate and down the hill. I figured that I wouldn't meet anybody that way. And I know that – I didn't wear my engagement ring, and I know that once, Professor Williams asked me to come to his office, and I was kind of concerned, because everybody is, you wonder, you know, "What's the matter with my schoolwork? Am I not doing..." And then he asked me if I was engaged to be married because I wore an engagement ring, and I said yes, and he asked me if I had considered a career of any kind. And I was so surprised at a man instructor – he was very respectful in every way, but I was just surprised that a man instructor would [00:51:00] raise the question where the girl is already engaged, you know? So then he asked me who I was marrying, and I told him I was going to Cuba. And he shook his head, but he was very polite about it in every way. And then another time, one of the men in the professor's class

approached me and asked me if I was going down the hill, and I said yes, and he said that – wanted to know if he could walk along with me. And I said, “Certainly,” so we walked along, and right away he began to ask me, was I engaged to be married? Because I guess there had been some gossip at that period about a girl wearing a diamond ring, as young as I was. And I told him yes, and then afterwards it dawned on me that maybe the [00:52:00] class – the men among themselves – were curious about why one girl from Pembroke comes to study Spanish, but was – Oh, and one of the interesting students that I met – and she was a special student. In fact, she had been getting permission for special courses from the dean, and she was about 35. She was an Italian widow, and she wore heavy crepe, as they used to – in those – She did have a modern hat on, but we called her Donnie Jones. But a heavy, heavy veil hung down with a big heavy border around, and everything she wore was black. And one of the girls told me that she was a widow, and she was from Italy, and she was studying science, and she was studying just science, and that’s what she wanted...

JT: [00:53:00] Most of the other girls – were any of them engaged too, or was it unusual?

AHM: No, it wasn’t usual. My sister went to Simmons College, and they had a two-year – that was in home economics – and they had the “diamond ring course,” which was for engaged skills, and my sister said that the whole emphasis was on practical cooking and housekeeping, and so forth. And they got a diploma, which was for the two-year course. And my sister finished, and then she went to Columbia afterwards, then she worked for the Y.

JT: So – But at Brown, the emphasis wasn’t on home economics –

AHM: No, no.

JT: – or things like that, when you were there?

AHM: I wasn’t even aware that they had a course at that time of home economics. I think they were all [classical?] courses, and some [00:54:00] science. So anyway, then – and I know that many times, on nice days – the minister’s son from my town had entered the same year I did. We

didn't travel always on the same bus or the same trolleys, because of the arrangement of the classes, and – but some days it came the same, and we used to walk down on South Main Street, which was really (laughter) a seafront – like a seafront situation there. A lot of sailors of different colors, and a whole lot of stores, and you heard foreign languages all around you. And we used to think it was one of the most exciting places that we could imagine, and it was just South Main. [00:55:00] Wickenden Street, Providence, you know? I think of that many times, and now I drive through there, and here the – everything has been changed, with the big highways and everything else like that, you know?

JT: Any other memories of Brown? Any bad memories?

AHM: No, I didn't – Periodically they had parties at night, and when – and they allowed you to bring a friend, of the town girls. I had a friend that I could stay overnight with in Providence, and I'd bring her to the party, and they celebrated like – I remember Halloween and Valentine's Day, but it seemed almost to me like a strange party, because there were no boys. It was all girls. In other words, I was very conscious of the atmosphere [00:56:00] of all girls.

JT: Separation.

AHM: Yeah. And later on, when I went to the Midwest where they had these great big colleges, coeducation, I thought it was much closer to life. The girls might've got into trouble more, but on the other hand, those that did at least were closer to life. They associated with boys in such a way. They didn't have that extremely romantic idea of the boys.

JT: So in your time at Brown, they never had, I don't know, mixers or dances with the boys from Brown?

AHM: No, and I never heard of the local girls – of the girls going – among the girls, I used to hear criticism and talk that the boys didn't date the Pembroke girls. But it never concerned me because I wouldn't have been dating any of those boys [00:57:00] anyway, on account of being

engaged. It wouldn't have been proper, you know, of course. But I – as I say, that was a very small part of my life compared to everything else.

JT: But you didn't even – it didn't seem to be going on, that there were the socials with the –

AHM: No, but I wasn't – I mean, I heard no talk about – the way you hear now among girls about “the dance last night,” “I'm going to a dance, I'm going to –” or “what I'm going to do,” and all that sort of thing, you know, see?

JT: Was there a real division between the girls who lived in the dorms, and people like you, who commuted?

AHM: Was there what?

JT: A real division.

AHM: I don't think – I think the dorm girls were so concentrated on their lives because they were together. I don't think that they were aware of us [00:58:00] so much, of us outside. You might sit next to one in class, and she'd ask you where you're from, you know, and you're a local, see? But the girls outside were really very scattered, so when I made a friend with a girl on the outside, it was more unusual than if I had been living in the dorm. Now, this young Jewish girl that I met, her folks had a summer place down the river, and when spring came she asked me if I would go with her over one weekend, and help her put the cottage in order, because the family was coming, and we went down. I got permission from my mother, and we went on a Friday night, and I know we sat on the embankment and watched the New York boats go out. [00:59:00] And somehow we talked – we talked an awful lot about religion because it was a such a difference in religion. And my mother's side of the family was Catholic until she married my father, and my father's Protestant, and I was raised in the congregational church, so that I had been exposed to religions more. And so we compared a lot about what our religious backgrounds were, with a very frank talking. And another thing – she had her problems, because she wanted to take engineering, and oh the dean couldn't get over that, a girl... And you know, I figured, she

would've graduated in 1917, just when we went into the war. I often wondered what became of her. Maybe she went to Washington. (laughter)

JT: Did she take engineering?

AHM: What?

JT: Did she take engineering?

AHM: [01:00:00] Yeah.

JT: They let her?

AHM: Yeah. But she said that – And we used to raise the question in our discussion, were they against her because she was studying engineering, or was it because she was Jewish? And she was convincing me it was a good part of it because she was Jewish, and she would explain to me how she had experienced discrimination, you know, because I wasn't aware of it at all. Although, my mother told me that when she was in Cambridge, in her childhood, that she was aware that people discriminated awfully against the Irish at that time. And then my mother, as a young woman, some of her cousins married young women from Irish families, and they claimed there was discrimination where the cousins that had married from a German family, at that period, said [01:01:00] that they had – they weren't aware of discrimination.

JT: So I guess it was still unusual for there to be a Jewish student at Brown at that time.

AHM: I guess so. I never – Because I wasn't experienced with names or anything like that, I wasn't aware of it in high school. And in high school, we had only one black student in the whole high school.

JT: How about while you were at Brown?

AHM: Oh, I don't remember any black students. I don't remember seeing any black students. If there were, they must've been pretty light, you know? No, some American Negroes were quite light – could be taken for Italians or something, you know?

JT: I'm going to stop it.

[01:01:54] (break in audio)

JT: You were going to comment on the dress code?

AHM: Well, one thing I remember was that the dean [01:02:00] said that a lady always wore a hat and gloves, even if it was too warm for a jacket, that's out on the street – that she always had a hat and gloves on. Another thing was that we were supposed to wear our hair up. We were young ladies now. In high school, some girls of the senior class who had very thick hair had perhaps two braids, or one braid, or something. But the dean didn't want any girls to wear their hair hanging down their back at all. And another thing – the hobble skirt was at its height then, and the dean was very worried about the –

[01:02:49] (silence)

Track 2

JT: [00:00] This is part two of an interview. My name is Joyce Tavon, class of '84. I'm interviewing Anna Hass Morgan, who attended Brown in 1913 and 1914. Today's date is February 1, 1987. You were talking a little about the dress code and the fashion at that time, and the dean's fear of the girls wearing the hobble skirt.

AHM: Yeah, the hobble skirt came down – all girls' skirts came down to their ankles at that time, but the hobble skirt had the narrow hem at the bottom. It tapered in so that it had to have a slit on the side, or you couldn't step up on the trolley car. And finally, the skirts became so narrow at the bottom that there seemed to be a competition to see who could wear the narrowest

skirt. So that's wear the word "hobble" came in [01:00] on the skirt. And then, to be able to step up on the trolleys, you had to have – the side seam had to be split up to the knee, otherwise you couldn't step up. And so the dean said that she didn't like the hobble skirt, but those of us who were wearing it must fill the space of the slit with a four-inch ruffle, and she would like to have the ruffle to match in colors, even though – not material. You might have woolen plaid hobble skirt, but she'd like to see colors to match. But some of the girls didn't like that at all, and they would wear the ruffle that looked as if they had the wildest petticoats on you could imagine, you know? And [02:00] there was always that feeling of, "Is the dean going to see me in this skirt with the slit on the side of it?" And the ruffle, it was so wide, you know? I followed the rule of the ruffle, because even my mother didn't like hobble skirts, and I never had it to such an extreme. But when the dean said we should put the ruffle in, I did put the ruffle in. The idea of a ruffle was to conceal the leg. And I put my ruffle in because the dean wanted it, but my mother was very glad that the dean had us do it. That was [to me?].

[02:47] (break in audio)

JT: You said you wanted to comment on the current events of the time while you were at Brown.

AHM: Yeah. I remember, at the time, that we – that there was the [03:00] Bulgarian War going on in the Balkans. And at that time, what impressed me was Bulgarian bacillus was developed, and that became for a period of time a treatment for children with serious intestinal infections, which so many of the American children got in the summertime, because in the wintertime – in the cool climate – you don't have those infections developing. Another thing I remembered was that in – at that period, was a lot more talk – first of all, one of the interesting things was that all around the streets of Providence, there were signs – "Do not spit on the sidewalk." [04:00] There was a big drive against tuberculosis, and the "Don't spit on the sidewalk – \$20 fine." And another thing was the fear of – as I spoke before – about white slavery. And the Mann Act was passed at that period, and that's still in effect, of course. And then another thing that had come up was the sinking of the Lusitania, of course, but that was in 1915. But there was a lot of a [war?] feeling among the people. Newspapers carried news of what was building in Europe, you know?

JT: Already, during your time at Brown?

AHM: Yes. And meanwhile, things got very tense on the question [05:00] in Mexico, because the United States wanted the Mexicans to give us a 20-gun salute. That was to punish them for violating something or other, and they refused, but Wilson allowed it to go on. Another thing was the Chinese Sun Yat-sen revolution, which set the Republic, and the Chinese cut off their pigtaails. But when I was a young girl, all the Chinese that we knew that had come all wore long pigtaails curled up around on the top of their head, and a tiny cap on the top. And that – I don't know, maybe those things came to our attention more because – [06:00] at the dinner table at night –

JT: So were these things that you really discussed at Brown, or was it more you discussed at home?

AHM: It was at home, but it influenced me, and all my things I was writing. Looking for an idea to write, I was making the comments on the day. And you see, women didn't have the right to vote yet, and so periodically I was picking that up for comments in my little daily theme that I had to produce, was the women's right to vote, and that sort of thing.

JT: Well, what was your opinion at that time?

AHM: Oh, I wanted the women to have the right, but I lived in the country. I wasn't anywhere near the demonstrations that were going on in Boston and in Washington D.C., and all of that, you know? (laughter)

JT: Were your parents supportive of you attending school, [07:00] forming your opinions, and all of that?

AHM: Oh, yes. And at the table, everything was a regular debating society for part of the time, because things came up, and we all expressed opinions on it, and discussed all those things. And I had a grandfather who was on the (inaudible) lines, and he would visit us, and would tell about

trips that he made to Vera Cruz, and Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro, and Havana. And I used to think it was just marvelous to travel. Maybe all of that interest helped to influence me in being interested in a man who came from faraway Cuba. Cuba was much farther away in those days. The year that – 1914, [08:00] first the Panama Canal was finished. That was a very big thing. Another thing in 1914 was that the Key West Railroad that came all the way to New York was finished, so you could go from Havana on a ferry to Key West. And they had a popular song then, “Twenty-Four Hours from Broadway,” and that was the height of speed, when you could think of it, to think that you could come on a train from Key West, and you were going to come from Havana across to Key West, and then on the train to New York. And you were 24 hours from Broadway. So the world was getting smaller. And of course, after the war was over, naturally, there was a lot more flying and passenger planes, and all of that.

JT: I want to turn to your time [09:00] after Brown.

[09:02] (break in audio)

JT: So let me ask you now, after you – You left Brown after two years. What happened then?

AHM: I went to Cuba and lived for four years, but I got very sick with malaria. However, I only had a couple of mild attacks after I got back, and it cleared up. Then we settled in Rehoboth, and in time, my husband went to teach at Brown.

JT: Let me go back and ask you just a little about your time in Cuba. At that time, your husband was working as a veterinarian?

AHM: Veterinarian for the Cuban American Shipping Company.

JT: And you were what, raising family?

AHM: No, I had the baby and then I taught in the company school. I taught English, and I had classes, and then, at that time –

JT: This was what, the American Sugar – one of the sugar com–

AHM: Cuban American Sugar Company, yeah. [10:00] And at that time, young people – only the boys went onto – most of the – went onto high school, unless the girls went to a religious school of nuns. But boys who wanted to go to the big city to high school wanted more preparation, and they asked me to tutor them, so I would tutor them at night, after January, from January till June when school closed. I would tutor them, and mostly in mathematics, geography, history, and that was what they had to have most of. But in the daytime I taught English to the students, and then I came back here to this country, and then my husband taught at Brown, and we built a house across the road from my [11:00] mother, and I'd built up chicken business in six years, because I thought I was settling there. But then this feeling came of all the teachers – after my husband had planned to get the Master's at Brown, then came the idea of, well if you're going to do college teaching, you have to get a PhD. And so then we sold the chicken farm, and one year I lived in Providence while he wrote his Master's thesis, and I did the vocabulary work and the typing. And for extra money, I went down the hill, and I used to pick up letters at the banks. They didn't do enough trade in Spanish then to hire secretaries in Spanish. [12:00] And then I'd take it back to my apartment and translate it, type it, take it back the next morning, and they used to pay me a dollar a letter, which was supposed to be pretty good money in those days, you know, just to translate.

JT: I guess by then you were fluent in Spanish?

AHM: Oh, yes. And then at the end of that year he got his Master's, and that was in '28, and so we went over and we traveled the first summer in Spain.

JT: How many children did you have at this point?

AHM: Two boys. I took them with me. Then I decided, since I wasn't going to have to work on the chicken farm or do anything like that, I would gamble on having a girl. And he didn't like the idea, because his mother had four boys. Never had a girl. And he was sure that I would have a

boy. But I decided I didn't have any heavy work to do or anything to take up much time, (laughter) [13:00] so we settled in Tours.

JT: Tours in France?

AHM: Yeah. And he studied at a branch of the University of (inaudible) and I was at home. I took lessons from a neighbor, who was a well-educated woman, in French. So my boy one day said, "Yeah, Papa speaks French, but Mama only talks it," meaning that the father was fluent in French, and I was just talking it. And she was born over there. I got a girl, and she was born, and then there was a great mix-up on citizenship because my husband was very unfortunate in getting citizenship. First, the law was, if you moved over state line, you had to file again to be a citizen. He moved from Massachusetts to Rhode Island (inaudible). [14:00] He had to file again. Then we went to Europe, and then while we were in Europe, they passed the law that you could only visit your mother country. If you visited any other countries, you lost your application. So he filed again when he got back, and each time he had to serve five years. It was over 15 years becoming a citizen. And so then, after he finished in June at the University of (inaudible), we traveled in Italy. Then we came back to the States, and we went right through to Chicago and settled there. And I remember that it was in the fall, September 1929, and in October the stock market crashed. (laughter) But I had sold the chicken farm to my brother, who was a very good businessman, and he paid me regularly [15:00] all through the Depression, which kept the family going. But first, I took student roomers, and then – at that period, there was too many apartments empty, and there were so many apartments empty that the University of Chicago paid me at night just to sit on the first floor in the front window with a sign over it – "Apartments to Rent." And people would come in off the street, and I'd show them the apartment. That's another funny thing about the change in our life. Who would dare nowadays to take a four-story apartment house and show strangers who come in off the street at night, all around the building? You know, you don't do that now. And then he finally got his PhD, and [16:00] meanwhile he got a job teaching at DePaul University, first downtown and then out on the main college. And meanwhile the Depression had deepened. I saw the Depression all around me. It was horrible. My husband was up to his neck in studying. He wasn't well. He had ulcers, and he lived in his own room in an ivory tower. I mean, he didn't realize. He didn't know the people that were begging in the

stores. He didn't know the people that came to the door begging through the day, and all of that. It changed me. It changed me a lot, because I had been in the country, where the last thing you worried about was something to eat. And to see people that would stand outside of the A&P asking me for a loaf of bread – you know, [17:00] there was a time they would beg for a dime, and people would say, “Oh, they're going to spend it on drink,” you know? But now it was very serious. And then they came, and people were being evicted. Here we had empty apartments all over the city, but if people couldn't pay their rent they were evicted. And then there were men that were organized, and came and moved the people back into their houses. And then I used to go to Washington Park with the children every Sunday, and there were groups all over. There was an injunction. You could say anything you wanted to in Washington Park. So I'd go from one group to the other to hear the lectures, and I found that these people that were getting the food and organizing the city – the city broke down completely feeding the people, [18:00] because we had no welfare programs or anything like that – and the Communist Party was doing it, so I got very interested. Then, my two boys finished high school and were moving downstate, but the Depression wasn't over yet, and we were moving for the boys to go to the state university in Champaign, Illinois. So we moved downstate, and downstate I joined the Communist Party, and I organized the city, because Roosevelt had come in, and in Washington they were declaring all kinds of relief for the people, but Champaign wasn't giving it. So things got quite hard. Meanwhile, the war in Spain broke out, and I joined a strong peace movement and was very active in that all the time. Because I had [19:00] two sons I could see war coming, and of course they both had to go in the war when it came. But one was in the Navy –

JT: What did that mean when you said you organized Champaign?

AHM: Well, I organized all the unemployed that were begging for help. And there was a welfare office that didn't do things for the people. It was mostly in the hands of one woman, and she couldn't believe – Champaign, Illinois, at that time, was a farming community, you know? She couldn't realize what was happening. She couldn't understand it. And so we organized people into [the work of the lines?]. We made a protest to get them – benefits to get them relief. And a child died of a ruptured appendix because no [20:00] doctor would come, because the woman had no money to pay them. And right away, the university got involved, and the medical

department of the university, the doctors, they said that they must be notified immediately, and they got after the city, and all that sort of thing. Of course, this made trouble when my husband, who couldn't understand it –

JT: Trouble between you and your husband?

AHM: Hmm?

JT: Trouble between you and your husband?

AHM: Oh yeah, and it became very serious. And so he told me that I could choose him or the Communist Party, so I chose the Communist Party. And I moved to Indianapolis then, because that was another state. I knew I wouldn't embarrass him there with my actions, and whatever. So he went on teaching at DePaul, and he'd visit me in Indianapolis.

JT: Were all your kids older, at least high –

AHM: Hmm?

JT: Were all your kids older by then?

AHM: Oh, yes. And the boys then went into service. One got his Master's and immediately went into the Air Corps. The other went in the Navy. But because they had been radical in college, agitating (inaudible) for peace before we went into war, and so forth... The Army in those days, – or the government in those days, kept very close records, so one got stuck in Guam during the whole war, and the other got stuck in Puerto Rico for the whole war. (laughter) And meanwhile I had continued, and after that, when the war ended, I married – my husband had divorced me. Then I married an archaeologist from Champaign – or from Columbus, Ohio.

JT: Now, were you still in Indianapolis at this point?

AHM: [22:00] Yeah, all through the war. And then when I married the man from Columbus, Ohio, I moved to Columbus. And there, I became involved with the Progressive Party. And the Progressive Party had – I'd say the biggest percentage were liberals, but a lot of Communists were with the Progressive Party. But then Truman was running as the Democrat, and he took over a whole lot of the programs of the Progressive Party. At least he promised it. And of course, that took the votes away from the Progressive Party, which, as Communists, we thought was good, you know? Truman did what we wanted to see done. I think without the Progressive Party he never would've done it. So anyway, by that time I was really involved – and right after the Progressive Party, of course, Joe McCarthy, the Republican, came down the pike. [23:00] And the whole policy in Columbus, Ohio, was to break the United Electrical Worker's Union, which was very strong, and of course Ohio was an anti-union state at that time. So when they began to call people in on the State Un-American Committee, they called me in too. Meanwhile, Ohio State University fired my husband because he married a Communist, so we bought a little farm on the outside of the town, and I worked in a hospital in nursing, and he worked on the farm.

JT: Oh, were you a nurse at this point?

AHM: I had taken some training in practical nursing, and we were getting On along. And then the Committee called me in, so [24:00] my husband and I agreed – I was only past 60 by then. We agreed that somebody had to stop the Committee, and maybe I was (laughter) the one to do it. So I couldn't find a lawyer in the whole city. It was a very rough period. They threatened our lives, and they threatened to burn our property, and all that. So a very young woman who graduated from Michigan agreed to take the case, and everybody said – I wanted to appeal the case on grounds of harassment, and a big lawyer said that nobody had ever appealed a case on that before. And I said that I took the Fifth Amendment, because every question they asked me they knew the answer for. Then, some time later – Oh, so she began to file, [25:00] and then they arrested me for contempt of the Committee, and then she filed and began to open the case. And of course, cases that embarrassed the government, they stall on. They took seven years to enter The Supreme Court, but she kept at it the whole time, and by golly she won. All the nine old men decided in my favor.

JT: What year was that, then, that it came to the Supreme Court?

AHM: The case ended in 1957. And for her, this was a great feather in her cap, especially a young woman. She went to the West Co— Oh, her husband divorced her then, because she had taken a case to defend a Communist.

JT: (laughter)

AHM: It was all politics then. And she went to the West Coast, and she set up the [26:00] Meiklejohn Library Law School. And she has quite a name now on the West Coast. And Meiklejohn was long before your time, but he was a very progressive radical, and a professor at Amherst, who was fired and persecuted before my time, (laughter) but she was a great admirer of his, so that was the name of it. And she lectures and writes books on law. She has quite a reputation now. And you know, there are not enough cases in the country. Every lawyer would like to go to law school – I mean every lawyer would like to go to the Supreme Court, but they don't have enough cases, (laughter) and so it's... She was very glad to get a case of a woman, and she herself being a woman, and the woman who did the research for her was another lawyer. [27:00] She was a lawyer for the CIO Union, and she was brought up before the Committee, and so they stopped all the 22 cases in Ohio while they waited for my case. It was the test case.

JT: Did you have to testify before the Supreme Court?

AHM: Huh?

JT: Did –

AHM: No, I couldn't – When they had the hearing, I felt I couldn't afford to pay what I wanted to pay on the case, so I worked all that day in the hospital. And right in the middle of the hearing, the prosecuting attorney from Ohio raised a stupid question, so they had to call a recess. My lawyer had to call me at the hospital and straighten it out. You see, when I married, according to

Cuban law, they gave me dual citizenship. But according to the American law in those days, I lost my [28:00] citizenship. But when I came back five years later, I got my citizenship. I went –

JT: Got it back.

AHM: – just like a foreigner. I went through and got it. And this prosecuting attorney picked up that one point, and right in the middle of the last day of the hearing, he told the Supreme Court that I had become a citizen in 1929. He said I became a citizen then. Well, the Supreme Court jumped to the conclusion, “Where was she born?” And so they called a recess and told – said that this changed the whole thing. I was foreign born. And my lawyers – I had told her before, and she didn’t think it was important. She never made a note of it. She never remembered the detail of that. So she called me long distance and said, “Where were you born?” I said, “Providence, Rhode Island.” And she – “Well, what’s all this problem about citizenship?” And I said, “When I went to Cuba in those days, I lost it.” [29:00] You don’t lose it now. Now you’ve got foreign men marrying American women so that they can get into the country. And so then she brought it back to them, and they – and then they decided in my favor.

JT: So the verdict meant that you were – it was agreed that you had been harassed?

AHM: Oh, yes.

JT: To have to testify in before the –

AHM: And the Committee felt so guilty that the lawyer resigned, the prosecuting attorney – of the Council, I should – of the Committee – resigned, and they couldn’t get another lawyer to take his place, because you could see down the pike that they were going to lose, and a lawyer would get a bad name that was handling this case. And the politicians that had set up the Committee for Ohio – as the Ohio Un-American Activities Committee – they tried very hard [30:00] to go on from there. What happened was that when the hearing came up, I was called, and I knew it was to get after me because of what I had been doing, and everything that the – because all the Party leadership was under attack, you know, in other parts of the country. So I wrote a leaflet, and the

day I was – had the hearing, the United Electrical Worker’s Union came and they – because they knew the Committee’s idea was to break the union. So the men came over to the State House, and they circled the State House and gave out my leaflet, which was a letter to the Committee, an open letter. And they distributed it to everybody. Well, the newspaper picked it up and printed the letter, which gave wonderful circulation and explanation. But lots of people who [31:00] were just – who had no more idea what Marxism was about, or anything – they were just automatically anti-Communist. And they are today. Look at this film they’re going to give today – *America* – you know? The whole thing, you know? I think it’s to prepare the youth psychologically for war. And Reagan’s dreaming of war, but it isn’t going to come because there’s such a resistance of the older people who went through this before. They saw it in Vietnam. They know what’s happening – for your information, Father Drinan got my FBI record for me.

JT: This is years later?

AHM: Huh?

JT: This is years later?

AHM: Yeah, and I have it now. And there were over 800 pages, just on what they gave me, and that doesn’t count on what they sorted out. And that began from the time I first went to Champaign, Illinois [32:00] and worked on the – the very first case I worked on was a protest against the Nazis. I went to a Chicago demonstration, and the Nazis were allowed to parade on Division Street, north side. And it got quite rough, and then I thought, “Well I’m strong, I don’t have to run.” So I stood in the line and I held onto a tree, and the police tried to make me move away because I was witnessing the way they were treating the Jews on the whole of that street – Division Street. And I couldn’t do anything with the police. There were so many, and they were so strong. But every time I saw a policeman hit – and they were so cruel – they hit the Jews right in the face, and if they knocked their glasses off, [33:00] they stepped on them, see? And when the women came crying and tried to stop them, they threw the women in the wagons too, you

know? And so I wrote down their numbers to be witnessed, see, and then I went back to Champaign, and I began to organize a protest. And from that day on, all those years, they –

JT: FBI had all your records?

AHM: Yeah, they got the whole record. I couldn't get any other job. A friend of mine who had graduated from the University of Illinois in business management, she conducted surveys for companies from all over the country. Well, Columbus, Ohio, was considered a city that, if you ate it, or you wore it, or you slept with it – it would sell anywhere. It was an all-American [34:00] city. And so she had quite an agency that offered – and when she saw my name in the paper so much attack on me–

[34:11] (break in audio)

AHM: – She knew me through the Progressive Party, and she saw it. She just called me up and said, “I can give you work,” and she said, “It’s pretty low pay, but I can give you work at any time.” So I used to go from house to house, and in the record, they admit that they followed me, and they used to go into the houses after I left and ask the housewife what I talked about. Well, I used to go in – maybe I was asking, “Did you try chocolate pudding?” you know? “How do you like the chocolate pudding?” you know? So then I said, “Gee, that’s a nice-looking mantelpiece. You’ve got on the mantelpiece here. Who is that?” “This is my son, (inaudible).” And I said, “Where is he?” They said, “He’s in Korea,” and they told me how they worried. I said, “What are you doing about it?” She said, “What can I do? He’s in the Army.” [35:00] I said, “You can protest to the president. We shouldn’t be in Korea. What are we doing on that side of the world?” And they got all of that in the FBI record. [laughs] And I said, “Whoa, What do you know?” The whole biography is there. And then I went to Mexico on a trip. I’ve been to Mexico several times. I went to Panama. I thought Reagan would fill the ditch in before I got there, but he didn’t. (laughter) I got there first. Anyway, and then I went to Puerto Rico. I went to Puerto Rico when they were having an election, and I thought, “Gee, it would be a good place to make a survey. How do the real people – the working people – feel about independence?” (laughter) I went all around –

JT: When was this, now? What years?

AHM: That was in the '70s. Let's see, '76, maybe '78. [36:00] It was an election year down there, and everybody was talking politics, of course. They would say to me, "Well yeah, but we look to the United States for our money, you know?" And I would say, "Well, the United States are making the profit out of – because they have that 10-year law." For 10 years, they were – any company that goes in is free of taxes, for 10 years. But instead of building up the business, they would quit in nine years, move back, rent the buildings, and it goes on and on and on. There's no end to it, you know? But I didn't educate the whole country before (laughter) I got back. I was on a short vacation.

JT: Anything else you were involved with in the '60s, '70s, or – your work, or community work?

AHM: Well, and then I went to Mexico because my husband wanted to see the pyramids in Mexico. So we rented a house in Chicago. Meanwhile, we moved to Chicago. [37:00] We rented a house in Chicago, and we went to Mexico with the idea of staying a year, and af– we went in July. In November, he died quite suddenly. He had an aneurysm, and the doctors had never diagnosed it. Anyway, he died around six in the morning, and they arrested me because I was alone in the room when he died, and it was very suspicious. I was living in a small Mexican hotel, and the woman there did all she could to help me, and after a day they released me, and then I buried him down there, and then I came home. And then after a year, I – oh, I went to the Soviet Union with my son, [38:00] and then I came to live with my daughter in Newton Highlands. She was a nurse and she had three small boys, and they grew up and went to college, and then I came over to live with my granddaughter, Anne.

JT: Here in Somerville?

AHM: Yeah, and at that time I got – I belonged to the Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom, but I also got interested 10 years ago, when they organized Mobilization for Survival, and I belonged to CP Pax, and I worked for all of them until I developed this glaucoma.

I'm having it treated now. So CP Pax sends me work at the house. I don't go down there anymore. Well, I'm 92 now. (laughter) It's kind of more difficult to get around like that, especially in this kind of weather, you know? So that's the end [39:00] of the whole thing. I guess I'll keep on like this until the end. (laughter)

JT: Well, we can go back over any particular times that you would want to highlight, either during your time in Cuba, or... You didn't say much during – I don't know – after the Supreme Court verdict. I'm sure – I imagine the whole time during Vietnam – were you an active person then?

AHM: I was very active during the war in Vietnam, always on protests, marching on Washington. Well, all my political work has been marching on Washington. My first marches on Washington from Illinois was against Jim Crow, and Columbus, Ohio was very Jim Crow at that time. And I know that – I remember the morning that – I remember the day that they – of Hiroshima, and I was going to talk to a [40:00] sorority house on campus about Jim Crow, but meanwhile the bomb had gone off, and my husband and I had a discussion with it. And we were both very, very upset about it. We felt that it was a terrible thing to wipe out so many people in an open city, and – because we could see through the government's argument that it ended the war. And so meanwhile, one of my sons was –under the government – was studying Japanese, with the idea of jumping into Japan, of course. And he said – And so anyway, I went to the sorority meeting. When I came into the room, you know, they all said to me, “Anna, have you heard about the bomb?” And I said, “Oh, that was a horrible, horrible thing. We never should've done it, because we're so near the end of the war [41:00] right now.” And all those young people, they jumped on me, so I went home and I said to my husband, “I'm in the doghouse.” He says, “Why?” I said, “They're all gung ho for the – they all approve of that.” And time went by, and so forth, and now you hear it, but – now, I don't think the States are quite so proud of what they (laughter) did. But meanwhile, my husband was working on the Jim Crow question, because Columbus, Ohio was extremely bad at that time. And since then, of course – now, Martin Luther King came to Chicago while I was there, and that's when they threw the rock and he fell to his knees – but he got up again and went on. So then the next week, we decided we'd march to prove that, by golly, we're going through that neighborhood and we're going to carry Martin Luther

King's banners, [42:00] and black and white would run together. (laughter) And oh, it was really very awful, the way the people came out to cuss us. And they didn't throw rocks. They didn't get – maybe because of the scandal it was when they hit Martin Luther King. So then we marched as well as the railroad track, and a freight train was coming by and we couldn't cross the railroad track. And then the police began to – they said – the police – they sent the police paper – they sent some big moving van and made us all get in the moving van, and took us back downtown again. (laughter) It was the most ignominious ending of a march I'd ever been in.

JT: In all your years of political activity, did you ever feel unusual as a woman being so active, or ever made to feel [43:00] uncomfortable?

AHM: All the – The name of the game is to embarrass a woman. You have to grow a very thick skin, and you have to learn to wisecrack back and never – I know I was arrested in Columbus, Ohio, and I hadn't been so experienced. I hadn't been arrested before. And a union woman that was with me, she said that – oh, we picketed a plant that was on strike. It was all black workers, and they wanted something in the chimney. It was zinc oxide. They wanted something in the chimney to purify the air so their kids in the village could breathe pure air, and not breathe that zinc oxide stuff. And we helped them with the picket line all winter long, and then the judge was going to [44:00] declare an injunction, so we got a group together, and we went out – a dozen of us – and we made a token picketing. But we didn't know until we got arrested – one of the fellows driving the police car, he said, "Oh, did you know that the judge already signed the injunction?" And we said, "When?" And he said, "I go back to his house this morning at five o'clock, and he signed it." See, we counted – he would sign it nine o'clock, and we were going to break the picket line before nine. Instead of that, they signed it at five, so legally we were arrested, but it was an unfair way to... (laughter) So we were all in jail overnight, and so forth. It really shook up the whole city, but it ended the strike, because the scandals [45:00] exposed that these poor people... And at that period, the Communist Party had sent me word – would I be – take the chairmanship of the relief Committee to help these black men? These people weren't Communists. They were poor rank and file workers. And I thought, the quickest way to raise money and save their houses – \$25 a month – pay for the house insurance and the loans on the house. And so I went to host there. Every second week, my husband and I gave a party at the

house and invited faculty people, and I'd ask them to loan me \$100, and then I'd sign it. My husband said, "Someday this strike's going to end, and you're going to find an awfully big bill there." I said, "Well, I'll cross that bridge [46:00] when I come to it." But the faculty people only invited the strikers (inaudible), and when they heard the stories about these people had to put up with, by the time the strike ended they were so sorry for the people that they all cancelled their (inaudible) as – they felt embarrassed. They were making good money, and these people... And then a German refugee – who was Jewish, but he was a refugee from Germany – he saw the paper was [panning on television?] giving him bad publicity, because naturally, the paper was siding with the men that owned the plant. And it happened that I got a note from him, and he said to come and see him. I couldn't imagine why this doctor, in the midst of all my problems, would want to see me. But I went over, and he said, "I know everything." He said, "I had to leave Germany because [47:00] I know everything of what you're going through." He said, "I will treat those people free, but," he said, "I want you to tell them that when I send them a bill, they should write me a note and put in it one dollar, and say 'This was all I can pay now. I will pay more later.'" He delivered babies, he treated people for pneumonia, and everything else. He was so good to those people. But I never had contact with him, see, because I didn't want to hurt him when people were already attacking me. But the good thing about it all was that my husband was in complete sympathy with what I was doing, see what I mean? And so I didn't have that double feeling at home that I was crossing him, and – anyway...

JT: Which I guess you had more of in your first marriage?

AHM: Yes, and he just couldn't understand it. I know that if he had – If he had lived [48:00] to see the change in Cuba –

JT: This is your first husband now?

AHM: My first husband, the Cuban – to see the change in that country – the poorest people and where they are now, the education they're getting, the health centers, the baby centers, the independence of the young women – not only working, but handling their own money – the rights of the women, you know what I mean? If he could've lived to see that, I think he would

approve of the revolution now, you know? And the same is true even of the religion. It's open, but the church, the Catholic Church is still attacking – one branch of the church. And the other churches are there, and none of them are – except Jehovah's Witness – [49:00] and they've (inaudible) out of trouble –

JT: Can I – I just wanted to ask you, in looking back over what we've discussed this afternoon – when you talked about your time at Brown, it sounded like you were very interested in what was going on in the world around you, but it sounded like it wasn't till later that you suddenly became very active. What do you think was the – was there one particular thing that led you to suddenly become very active?

AHM: The Depression. Seeing people suffer in the Depression, and knowing that we are such a rich country. And the same thing I feel now. To know that there are people on the street, and to be in Central Square and see people go through those garbage pails, and pull out a package of (inaudible) and not know who threw this stuff away, you know what I mean? It's horrible. And still, I don't know, the [50:00] Americans seem to be accepting, you know what I mean, of it. It's been like that for some time now, and it doesn't change in spite of all the struggle, and all that. And we're putting all this money – we're following the path of Germany. We're putting our money into the armaments – more and more armaments – and the government doesn't tell us it's dreaming of war, but when you get the 1948 program and you know that the ambition of the country is to crush the Soviet Union – and what's the difference in the Soviet Union? The whole thing is about dollars, about profit. You can't get profits under Socialism, that's all. You may get some [crooked?] politicians, and you have to handle them, but you don't get a profit system. But here we've got a profit system, and you've got a bunch on the top making the money, and the middle class is getting squeezed. [51:00] But as long as they can possibly pay, they won't squawk. And then you've got the bottom ladders, and that's the way it is.

JT: Back in the '30s, when you started to get very active, was it at all unusual, even within the leftist movement, for a woman to be as active as you were?

AHM: No, leftist women were active. The bourgeois women were still embarrassed for us. The leftist women – we had picket lines demanding that the – and that sort of thing. And I know that we had one good committee that was going down to the mayor’s office, and the women said, “I think we ought to take our children,” because it would show the man that the people are suffering. And I said, “Yes,” but I said, “I do know this – that as soon –” [52:00] this was Mayor Daley. I said, “Mayor Daley has a trick, that he closes all the toilets – has them locked.” So I proposed that we all go to the 10-cent store and buy metal wastebaskets. And we were ready. They were so shocked. They said, “Oh, we can’t do that,” and I said, “Well, how are you going to have a picket line in his office?” I said, “As soon as your kids are going to cry they want to go to the toilet, or a couple women want to go, your line is broken. And that’s it.” And the whole line fell through just because they didn’t want to think in terms – and I said, “You can go in the elevator and take a metal wastebasket with you. Will you?” And I said, that’s satisfactory” and so... (laughter) My second husband was from a very conservative family. He was easily embarrassed, and sometimes some of the things that [53:00] I would say or go to do – when they were having the hearings, I wanted to find out – I was running a bookstore, and I had a house I rented to a Communist organizer, and the mob burned it down, and then the mob threatened to burn the bookstore. But the bookstore was only two doors from the Salvation Army, and the Salva– I didn’t know this, but after, afterwards I was told by the neighbors, the Salvation Army – when you heard on the radio that the house that I owned that was occupied by a Communist organizer – was my house and had been attacked, then he walked up the street and told everybody, the men, to come with him and protect the bookstore, because the bookstore – [laughter] [54:00] it was in a poorish neighborhood. And this wasn’t a radical bookstore with Marxist books. This was a bookstore that merely had Negro culture. And Carter Woodson, Head of the Committee of the American Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, the top culture organization in the country – I had all their publications in my bookstore, for black people to be able to buy those books, and so – but when the poor women in the neighborhood, they’d come in and say, “I have to go to the dentist. Can my little boy stay here till I come back?” I would give him a picture book from the bookstore and sit him at a table to keep him quiet till she came back. So I had more friends than I knew. And when I sold out on a sale, the people were awfully upset about it. But I knew that [55:00] the atmosphere had come so in the city that we were heading deep into the McCarthy period. I knew that you couldn’t even have a

bookstore for black people. So that's what happened. And then I was afraid that this – I rented the apartment upstairs. I gave it to a couple, and the wife put time into the bookstore when I wasn't there. In other words, she earned her rent. And her husband, at night, was – she wanted her evenings with her children, so at night he used to – he had a rocking chair in the bookstore, and he kept it open for me till nine o'clock, but he read all the time. He liked to read. He was a union man. And then I saw the paper. He was going to be a witness against me. And I didn't know what he would say, and I thought [56:00] "I can handle myself better if I know what he said." So I waited till about five o'clock, when I thought the state office was closed, and I went down, and there was a very conservative group of women called "Watch Washington," and I said to him, "I'm a Watch Washington woman. I come in directly. I want to know what you're talking (inaudible) - for a witness." And an elderly man says, "Oh, sure." He pulled the whole file out and gave it to me to read. My heart was in my mouth. And then I thanked him, I read it, and everything he said was good.

JT: (laughter)

AHM: It wasn't bad at all. And just when I was leaving the office, I met the lawyer for the committee, and he was so surprised, and then the next – couple of days later, everybody in the Party got a lot of – saying [57:00] "Keep away from her. The Party convinced her – she's betraying you. She was in the state office." And of course, the whole thing was just a – the FBI did it to find me, see? And the games they played were simply scandalous. And of course, in the middle of the night the telephone would ring, and the people would say, "Are you coming out? We're going to burn the place down." But my husband had it wired so I'd throw one switch, and the whole chicken farm, the whole farm, was lighted up with bright spotlights, so that if anybody wanted to come, they had to run a chance that they're invisible, because we would've seen them, you know? It was very interesting.

JT: Well, were you afraid, though?

AHM: What?

JT: Were you afraid?

AHM: Oh, I think they would've killed us if they had a chance, because they did in other parts of the country. Yeah, I'm sure.

JT: [58:00] So you did live under some fear, then?

AHM: Oh yes, because we had no way to protect ourselves, see?. We had No way. And I know we were into the second floor on the farmhouse – it was a big farmhouse – and we had remodeled it. There was an apartment upstairs and one downstairs, and I said to my husband, “I wanted the people to stay here when they find out who we are.” And they stayed and they stayed, and in spite of a subpoena being served, in spite of the sheriff coming, and all of that harassment. And then one day the wife says to me, she says, “I'm a Nazarene. I know what persecution means. I got a religious – You got political persecutions, I got religious.” (laughter) I said, “Well, misery loves company,” all in the same (inaudible). And so I don't whether the country will go through it again or not. I think that there are lots of forces like that, that [59:00] would like to – you know what I mean. But I don't know whether they would go that far.

JT: Well, we're coming to the end of our tape. Unless you have anything to add –

AHM: I don't.

JT: – we can close up here. It's been very interesting, and I want to thank you very much.

AHM: It was when [they?] first contacted me with the letter. I had it in my mind that, to be honest, I'll tell you who I am and what I've done. And that's my own life. (laughter)

JT: Well, I think it's been very interesting.

AHM: It's not – it doesn't involve my children and my grandchildren. They all think – everybody thinks –

JT: Has their own ideas, yeah.

AHM: I'm just the great-grandmother. (laughter) Who agitated in their spare time, that's all.

JT: (laughter) Thanks again.

- END -