

Transcript – Steven Krawiec, class of 1963

Narrator: Steven Krawiec

Interviewer: Rebecca Krawiec

Interview Date: April 2, 1988

Length: 36 minutes

Rebecca Krawiec: This is Becky Krawiec, Brown class of 1990 interviewing Steven Krawiec, Brown class of 1963 on April 2, 1988 in our home in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Dad, could we start by you giving me a short biography of yourself, your mom and dad's education, and your hometown and your high school and why you decided to go to college and why you decided to go to Brown.

Steven Krawiec: Yes. My father's name was Theophile Stanley Krawiec. He was born in Central Falls, Rhode Island. He went to catholic parochial schools through age 14 when he went to public school. He had an initially ragged college career, having gone to what is now University of Rhode Island, not having like it at Providence College, not having liked it when one of his high school teachers, Ms. Louise Ross pay for his education at Colby College. He graduated from Colby College and he became a graduate student at Brown University, got a Master's degree, and then became a Ph.D. student at New York University. His education was interrupted by World War II.

My mother was born in Taunton, Massachusetts, went to public schools in Taunton, Massachusetts, and became a Registered Nurse, receiving her training at Newport Hospital. That's my parents' education.

I was born in (inaudible), Oregon, but I spent the bulk of my childhood in Saratoga Springs, New York, where I went to public schools, and at the age of 17, graduated from Saratoga Springs High School with not a particular desire to go to college. What I wanted to do was I wanted to join the Army, because I wanted a regimented activity. And an environment that would provide food and shelter, plus an income, and a great deal of privacy through anonymity. My existence would be somewhat public, but nobody would particularly care, and I thought that having a period of several years in which I had food, shelter, and spending money and no responsibility would allow me to mature. And my parents would have nothing of it, and forced me to go to Brown.

RK: Could you tell us a little bit about your parents' occupations at that time?

SK: My father was then a professor of psychology at Skidmore College and my mother was what was euphemistically called a homemaker.

RK: A homemaker! But I'd just like to point out before the audience on the tape that your father was a male professor at a women's college.

SK: That's correct.

RK: That's an important point for the purposes of this interview.

Could you describe to us what you remember about your freshman year, your first day at Brown, your roommate, your dorm.

SK: After my parents left, I went over to Thayer Street and bought a pack of cigarettes and smoked half a pack of cigarettes. That's my most memorable impression of my first day at Brown.

RK: What was your roommate's name?

SK: His name was John Knowlton. [laughter]

RK: Snortin' Norton!

SK: That's correct. Snortin' Norton Knowlton! [laughter] Yes. From West Hartford, Connecticut.

RK: And what courses did you take your freshman year?

SK: My first semester, I took an English composition course which was then required of people who had not placed out of it, and very few people placed out of it. I took "Identification of Criticisms... Identification and Criticism of Ideas in T. S. Eliot's Poetry," which was called an I. C. course, English 21, French, and Introductory Biology.

RK: And what dorm did you live in, do you remember?

SK: Olney House.

RK: What sort of extracurricular activities were you involved in freshman year?

SK: Frankly, I don't remember.

RK: Do you remember what sort of feelings you had towards the faculty?

SK: A great deal of respect. I was impressed with them.

RK: Could you describe...?

SK: Especially Paul B. Weiss who was teaching biology.

RK: Could you describe a little bit what your perception of the relationships were between Brown men and Pembroke women in a social context? For example, I have, in the course of doing interviews and reading yearbooks, run into a general stereotype that Brown men considered Pembroke women (inaudible). Is that..."

SK: I think that there was an impression that the Pembroke women outperformed the Brown students and the general claim was that Pembroke females did better during the first two years than did Brown males, but that the pattern reversed in the last two years. There was a general thought that females were more mature than were males, that they were less distracted by the prospect of engaging in antics than were males. The males [tended to?] act up, do crazy things, and the female students were less susceptible to that sort of thing and had a greater sense of responsibility, that they studied more.

RK: Mm-hmm. How about in the classroom? You guys had co-ed classes.

SK: That's right.

RK: Was there any sort...what was your perception of the relationship between men and women in the classroom? [long pause] Dad?

SK: I just have the feeling that there were male students and female students. I had gone to a coeducational high school, and there were male students who did well, there were female students who did well; there were male students who did poorly, and there were female students who did poorly. And my impression, once I was at Brown, was that I think that there were male and female students, and there were generally performances, that these were more or less serious students.

RK: Do you have any remembrances of men talking more than women in class, did you have discussion sessions with women?

SK: Sure, we had laboratory instruction, and in laboratory instruction, there was plenty of opportunity for participation. And as I advanced in my curriculum, I was in courses which were discussion courses or seminar courses, and I guess that...that's in my concentration. The "Identification and Criticism of Ideas" course was supposed to be a discussion course, and the person who spoke *least* in that course was myself.

RK: Mm-hmm.

SK: (inaudible) what was going on. But in that freshman course, I had no impression that males dominated, that females were submissive, or that female students were more forceful and the male students were (inaudible) the female students.

RK: Or vice versa?

SK: Nothing of that sort. The first (inaudible) of the males being dominant, I had no sense of that whatsoever.

RK: I guess...could you...could you tell me a little bit about whether or not, within your fraternity, Delta Phi, that was...did you perceive among your brothers any sort of negative attitudes towards Pembroke women? One of stereotypes of this time... [laughter] time period is that fraternity men were the ones who brought so-called "imports" in from, you know, Wheaton, and Wellesley and Smith and Vassar, and were very disdainful of Pembroke. Did you run into that among your...?

SK: Not in a serious way. There certainly...there was that image that existed on campus, and I...I think that people have fun with it, and talking about going up to the kennel, and things of that sort [laughter] for a visit...

RK: That's not funny!

SK: ...to Pembroke.

RK: You referred to Pembroke as a kennel?

SK: Yes...where they kept the dogs. That...I think that that is an interpretation that is imposed that really fit the situation. That is, I think that the male students dated the female students for the pleasure of their company, companionship, good social interaction, things of that sort. But many of these individuals had more established relationships with women that went to other schools, and for special occasions would invite these people, towards whom they had made some kind of commitment, and had some type of enduring relationship, rather than to invite a Pembroke with whom they were having some sort of casual relationship that provided companionship.

RK: Mm.

SK: At the same time, I have a very distinct impression that Pembroke women were going elsewhere for equivalent special occasions, they were going off to some place like Ithaca or something of that sort. So I don't see that the...the way that Pembroke women were treated was different from the way that other women were treated elsewhere, or the way that males were treated.

RK: Mm-hmm. Did you have—the men, where you lived—did you have sign in and sign outs, and were you allowed to have women in your rooms, and did you have curfews?

SK: Ah, we were not allowed to have women in our room. That I remember. I don't remember about the curfews per se...I have the impression that gates were locked...some gates were locked. But I also know that in the Delta Phi fraternity, we ignored the gate, because we came over the wall from Charlesfield Street, rather than use the gate, because it was more convenient to where cars might be parked—it was not then the Graduate Center, there was a parking lot there. So that the gate on, say, Thayer Street, by your present dormitory, being locked was not an inconvenience to us. I have the impression that the gate at the Arch in Wriston Quadrangle was always either open, or if not open, there was a guard that was in the room there, so that you could be admitted.

RK: Mm-hmm.

SK: So I think there was some control of traffic, but it was not that it was impossible for us as male students to be out of the dormitory. One of my other impressions from the first week in Providence was to live out a fantasy that I had that my parents would not permit me to act out in Saratoga Springs, and that was to walk around town between three and four in the morning, just to see what's going on. And I remember having left Wriston Quad, walked down Benefit Street over to the Capitol, and walked around the Capitol building, and things of that sort, and then returned to the Wriston Quad. Just to see what happens at four in the morning.

RK: And is it your...is it your impression that a woman who lived in Pembroke would have had that same opportunity to leave her dorm at three?

SK: No. I know that she would not have had that opportunity. Because when I dated Pembroke women, there was a concern about having them...anyone returned by a specific hour.

RK: What do you think was the basis of that concern?

SK: There was no concern on my part. Besides it's very difficult...

RK: Yeah, well. Concern of the Administration. Why...why do you think the Administration was concerned?

SK: I don't know. Pardon? I think that that was an expectation that existed among the students and among their parents and...that the administration (inaudible) was cooperating with that expectation.

RK: That the parents had an expectation that the University would regulate the comings and goings of their daughters?

SK: And look out for their security and welfare.

RK: Mm-hmm. How much was birth control talked about on campus?

SK: Not at all, to my knowledge.

RK: Wow. After you graduated, were you at all aware of the so-called "Pill Scandal" of 19...I think it was '65?

SK: No. Probably not.

RK: Did you have any contact with Pembroke deans, or the running of Pembroke at all, as a Brown male?

SK: Yes. There was an individual named Walter Kenworthy who taught the second biology course in the sequence, an invertebrate zoology course, and he became some sort of head resident, or something, up at Pembroke. And then subsequently left Brown and became dean at Wheaton College, and because I had him as a professor, I was aware of who he was. So when I was visiting on Pembroke Campus and would see him, I'd always greet him.

RK: How much time did you spend on Pembroke?

SK: Uh, quite a bit of time. I had a lot of friends up there. And I had classes up there as well. For instance, I took Classics, in the Alumnae building, and I took Religious Studies in Pembroke Hall, so...

RK: Did...could you describe to me any sort of perceptions you had in differences of atmosphere between living on Wriston and being on Pembroke? I mean, obviously, you didn't live on Pembroke, but could you gather some sort of difference? I mean, what...the...the whole time you were in college, you lived in an all-male system and the women lived, you know, five blocks away on Pembroke, or whatever. How...how would you describe that sort of atmosphere?

SK: Well, Pembroke was much more decorous.

RK: Mm-hmm.

SK: That you could go up to the individual houses, a dormitory, say, on Brown Street, and they were...pleasant. They were like homes. You could go to that old mansion that was up on Prospect Avenue across from Mrs. Sharpe's house, and play cards there and it was very much like being in a lovely home. You could go to the dormitories, the buildings that were built as dormitories in the quad, and they more orderly, you could have conversations there. In the Wriston Quad, it was much more raucous, noisier. The type of behavior was different.

RK: Mm-hmm. Did you have any sense of Brown's attitude towards developing women's ideas of their own role in society? I mean...I mean...I don't...I don't know if

this is a fair question to ask, but did you any sense of any sort of blatant sexism or sex discrimination going on anywhere on campus?

SK: Well I would want to back up and talk about my background a bit, and that is that I grew up on the Skidmore College campus, and there were a thousand young women who were seen as people who were getting college educations and they were being taught by a faculty of 80 that was predominantly female, and that women should be educated, and that there should be very competent women in education was perfectly natural to me. I had no sense that women were being patronized at Pembroke, or that their legitimate interests were being ignored. I have a feeling that there were young people, males and females, that were getting educations, and that the thing that we had in common that was of fundamental importance, was that we shared all classes.

RK: Mm-hmm. So...

SK: I didn't have, you know, any...any feeling that there was something wrongful or inappropriate that we had separate living facilities, or that some students were favored because they were over at Pembroke or some students were favored because they were in what was then West Quadrangle, or Wriston Quadrangle, or Hegeman or anything of that sort, that just was where housing was, what was the principal focus of our lives as students was the classroom.

RK: And you didn't...run in any sort of discrimination in the classroom?

SK: None of which...I was not aware of any, no.

RK: Did you read the *Pembroke Record* at all? I mean, did you follow Pembroke affairs that closely?

SK: No.

RK: That you would...okay...so...does...boy...does the name Charlotte Cook or Ann Peterson mean anything to you? Did you follow the elections of the Student Government Association or anything?

SK: No.

RK: Did you have any feelings about the merger in 1971?

SK: Well, it struck me as something that was very much in the spirit of the times. (inaudible) I was not that...in the years that had preceded it, I had been a graduate student at Yale and while there, there was (inaudible) active consideration as to whether Yale and Vassar would unite as a single school. And it was decided that they would not merge. There was a great deal of consideration among lots of schools as to whether they would find another institution so that there could be both male and female students or whether individual schools that had been single sex would then become co-educational. I...a

response that I had at the time, and it's a response that I wouldn't even consider now, is that it's unfortunate, because what it does, is it homogenizes educational institutions. That maybe that having an all-female institution is useful to some women, and having an all-male institution is useful to some men. And if all institutions become coeducational, then you exclude what is a useful circumstance for some people. One of the misgivings that I have about the institution with which I am presently associated is that whenever an important issue comes up, what...

RK: Lehigh. Lehigh University.

SK: Lehigh University...they claim is that a similar sort of circumstance has been experienced at our 14 peer institutions, the institutions with which we like to compare ourselves. And my question is always, "Why don't we do whatever we want to do? We're a private institution. We have perfect freedom to do what it is that we choose, and we can select the population that favors what it is that we offer, rather than attempting to mimic other institutions. Establish our own identity." So, it struck me that with Pembroke becoming part of Brown, that the institutions, Pembroke and Brown, were simply doing what was commonplace at the time.

RK: Well, up 'til then, Brown and Pembroke had been sort of unique, especially among, I guess, the Ivy League colleges, in that they offered neither separate education nor coeducation, but had the...what was called the coordinate system. That is, that Brown was coordinate with Pembroke, they shared classes, but did not share living facilities, and so it differed in that respect from, say, Penn and Cornell, but it also differed from, like, Harvard/Radcliffe, Yale/Vassar, whatever. Do you think...

SK: So you're telling me then at Penn, they had...they had dining facilities in common, and things of that sort?

RK: I don't know; I'd have to check that. But do you think that there were any ad...what do you think were the advantages of the coordinate system, or, in that...in putting that question in the negative sense, do you think that there were disadvantages to having such...such separate social contexts, very regimentedly defined—at least for the women—in their parietal system, and so on, and so forth...and yet have academic freedom, where you had the mixing of the sexes. Do you think that caused a tension between the two? Were you aware of that?

SK: Between the two what?

RK: Academic and social. Well, between Brown and Pembroke.

SK: I'm confused. I'm not quite sure what a tension would be between an academic and social...

RK: Well...do you...my perception of the situation is that in...in academics, as in the classroom, it was a very free mixing of men and women, and you all got along, and you

shared notes, and so on and so forth, but that then when you left the classroom, things were very much separate. You...you ate separately...

SK: Yes.

RK: You lived separately.

SK: Yes.

RK: You weren't allowed in each other's rooms, yet in, or later, you were allowed into each other's rooms and shut the door...

SK: You couldn't do that.

RK: You couldn't even have your feet leave the floor...

SK: Right. Couldn't go to the room of a student of the opposite gender. You simply couldn't do that. If you were going to study, you went to the lounge. Or a study room.

RK: What sort of...what sort of...I guess...dynamics did that create?

SK: It seemed perfectly natural to me.

RK: Mm-hmm. See, I guess my whole problem with it, is that, you know, 20 years later, while I'm at college, it seems totally alien to me, and it seems...it seems to me that from reading all this stuff about the Pembroke...the Dean of Pembroke at the time...and this other stuff, is that you had two very separate things: you had academics, and then you had social. And that while academics things were sort of allowed to happen the way things were going to happen, you know, some women were smart and some men were smart, some women weren't so smart and some men weren't so smart...socially, or non-academically, things were very regimented, and, as far as the women were concerned, there seems to be this very nervous attitude that the women...if the women didn't have these rules to control them, and if that things weren't kept separate, everything would sort of fall apart.

SK: I'm not quite sure what you meant, "Everything would fall apart." What does that mean?

RK: That the women would start having sex, and they would start getting pregnant, and they would start having to drop out of school.

SK: I don't know...I can't comment...I...

RK: Did you know any...did any of the women that you knew at Pembroke have to leave because they were pregnant?

SK: Yes.

RK: What was your reaction to that?

SK: I was startled. One of my fraternity brothers was dating a young woman at Pembroke, and one day he came to a number of us and said that he was going to get married that weekend, and would we attend the wedding? And the wedding was at an historic church in Boston, and a whole bunch of us piled into cars and went up there, and he said that he loved this woman very much and that he wanted to marry her, and that was the whole basis of this decision. I was a bit surprised. His folks lived in Saudi Arabia, and did not come for the wedding, so it was just a bunch of us from the fraternity house that went to this congregational church up in Boston and witnessed the wedding. And he moved out of the fraternity house, into an apartment nearby, and three months later, it was evident that his wife was heavy with child. She was big! And I was commenting to...some of my friends from Pembroke that she appeared pregnant, and they said, "Oh, yes! She had been throwing up in the bathroom for several weeks."

RK: Lovely!

SK: So she had morning sickness well before the marriage and indeed the child was born about six months after the marriage. We were wide-eyed and wondrous.

RK: The fraternity members.

SK: Mm-hmm.

RK: How did your Pembroke friends react? I mean, what seemed to be their attitude towards it?

SK: Well, they...the friends that I had were much more nonchalant about it than I was...I mean, I was...amazed. And, you know, they seemed much more at ease with the situation than I.

RK: Why do you think? Do you have any idea?

SK: Why were they? I have no idea! I think that they should have been equally stupefied, but they weren't.

RK: And in the...in the context of talking about this...this friend of theirs who had had morning sickness in the dorm, was there any sort of discussion...did you ever discuss with any of your friends from Pembroke, you know, how they felt about the curfews, or did any of them...do you know...did you ever...here we go, here's a (inaudible), you don't have to quote this from the tape if you don't want to. Did you ever help any of the women get around the parietal system? Break the curfew? Sneak in late?

SK: They...one instance where I violated the curfew, very clearly, that I remember, was with a young woman named Patricia Campbell Towne...and my watch broke! And it seemed like this evening would never end! (inaudible) we just hung on and hung on, because there was the expectation that you could not return a woman to the dorm early. That was very, very bad form...the curfew was one o'clock on a Saturday, or two, I think it was for seniors when we were seniors...we stayed out 'til two. Well suddenly, the sun started to come up! I thought, "Gee, this is interesting." And so, it was quite evident that my watch was now broken, so I returned her to the dormitory and did what was then considered the noble thing to do, was to shoulder the blame for this fiasco, and so I spoke to the person who was there, and said it was strictly my fault...

RK: But you never snuck anyone through the back door of Andrews or anything like that? Did you have any sense that that was going on? That Pembrokers at parties at the fraternity were staying past curfew?

SK: Well there were a few, yes.

RK: And that...then there wasn't (inaudible) surprising, or how they were going to get back in, or weren't they going to get kicked out?

SK: Oh, no, it struck me as silly, essentially. That is, when we had fraternity parties, at the fraternity house, the parties were supposed to be over at a specific time, and there were people who were responsible for seeing that the parties concluded.

RK: Bouncers.

SK: Well, not bouncers. Fraternity officers, people who had signed the party registration sheets and things of that sort. And it was their responsibility to see that the bar was closed, and that the band had disappeared, and that certain things were occurring such that there was not an active party. But there was always a group of males who felt that they had to have a private party continue on their own. And there were female counterparts that would want to participate in these parties and I think that was to break the rules, to defy the system, but it did not strike me as mature behavior, that somehow there was a sophistication that was exhibited by males and that there were equally sophisticated females that were...I don't know...celebrating the (inaudible). It just struck me as silly.

RK: So you never did that.

SK: Did I do that? No.

RK: So, when you were president, your junior year, of Delta Phi fraternity...

SK: Yes.

RK: Were you in...did you register the parties, or were you in charge of parties, or something like that?

SK: Register the parties? Yes. When...there were two...Wriston gate...there was the office there in the residences, and you registered parties...they kept a tally of how many parties you had had in your fraternity, you indicated whether you were having a band, or not having band, what types of foods you might be having, how many parties you have had that semester, what was your schedule of activities, and so forth. And I was one that adhered to that, I thought that type of process was sensible, an adult responsibility, and I thought it reflected favorably on young people to accept responsibility and to be accountable for what it is that they had accepted.

RK: So, overall in...in looking at years from 1959 to 1963, you thought that there was a healthy atmosphere between men and women academically and socially.

SK: Academically, yes, and socially, I thought that these were young people...I certainly thought that I was not a mature person...and that it was an environment in which you had an opportunity to grow and develop.

RK: And...I guess...is there anything that you specifically want to talk about? I mean, as far as your remembrances of Pembroke, or...

SK: I'm very fond of (inaudible) Pembroke (inaudible). They were really fine people; I enjoyed their company thoroughly.

RK: Ah, thank you, Dad.