

Transcript – Clarice Pitta Chapman '33

Narrator: Clarice Pitta Chapman  
Interviewer: J.F. Rauch  
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Length: 4 audio tracks; 1:41:42

Track 1

J.F. Rauch: [00:00] – thirty-three.

Clarice Pitta Chapman: This is Clarice – will that pick me up from here?

JFR: Yeah, it should.

CPC: This is Clarice Chapman, class of '33, Pembroke College.

JFR: Can I get your date of birth?

CPC: Date of birth is April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1910.

JFR: OK. And your parents' names?

CPC: My what?

JFR: Parents' names?

CPC: My father was John Carlos Pitta, P-I-T-T-A. And my mother was Anna Mackay d'Almeida – small *d*, apostrophe, A-L-M-E-I-D-A. [01:00]

JFR: OK, nice. And parents' employment?

CPC: My father was a physician and surgeon. My mother was a housewife. We do not consider that unemployed.

JFR: It certainly isn't. Marital status?

CPC: That's a matter of opinion. I'm a widow.

JFR: And what was your husband's employment?

CPC: He was – in his last years, he was a business agent for International Longshoreman and Warehouseman's Union. [02:00]

JFR: And do you have any children?

CPC: I have two. A daughter, who's the elder, and a son.

JFR: And what is their education and work?

CPC: What was what? I don't –

JFR: Their education and work did they do?

CPC: Anne, at present, is working her way through for her master's in clinical psych, and she expects to get her degree in May. And my son is interested in law, but not much involved with it right now. He's more involved in litigation than law at the moment. He was doing his own [03:00] research, that sparked his interest.

JFR: So they both went to college?

CPC: No, he never did, Anne did.

JFR: Great. [inaudible]?

CPC: John went to the school of hard knocks.

JFR: [laughter] Yeah, my brother did that, too, so.

CPC: Which is one way to go.

JFR: Yeah, you certainly can learn a lot that way. Well that's it for the formal part. So we just have really general questions, if you want to talk about maybe your freshman year, and what it was like to get there, where you lived –

CPC: Oh, I thought you were coming to talk to me about the Spanish Civil War.

JFR: Really?

CPC: Yeah. [inaudible].

JFR: Just your experience at Pembroke.

CPC: The letter I got from Brown was about the Spanish [04:00] Civil War, and “What do think about the Spanish Civil War?” And here I am been racking my brains, Jennifer. I mean, after all, I've had friends who were there, people who have written some very good books about their experiences. And my experience is second-hand. It's interesting to me, because the man I had thought to talk to you about was a little boy whose father was killed during the war. And he came over here later. And this was going to be the story of Jose, my hairdresser, who's now retired and living in the Hawaiian islands.

JFR: Well, I suppose –

CPC: But that's not the story of Clarice Chapman, which... [05:00] Jose's story is much more interesting than mine. [laughter] Because I've been close to being a shut-in for what seems like too long. Actually it isn't all that long. But I'm the kind of person that likes to be busy with something, and that something has been getting a little too much for me.

JFR: Yeah. Well, we're hoping to get, for the archives, it's just some idea of how you – your experience at Pembroke has influenced your life in what ways that are significant? And while you were there, how [inaudible]?

CPC: I was at Pembroke because I flunked my exams for Radcliffe. And I flunked my exams [06:00] for Radcliffe because I didn't study for them.

JFR: And that put you at Pembroke?

CPC: Uh-huh.

JFR: So how was – how did it feel to – when you got to Pembroke?

CPC: It didn't seem to me at the time to matter all that much which college I went to, as long as it was a – what I thought of as a good one. Now it happened that I did think of Radcliffe as a good college, because I'd been to visit someone there, and they had good food. [laughter] And there was only one other school I was really interested in at the time, and that was because it had a good attitude towards women, as far at least as the brochures went. I mean, the people you meet [07:00] don't necessarily live up to the brochures, and vice versa. You have to start with some point of orientation, and you can get something out of a brochure.

JFR: Did you think Pembroke lived up to its brochure?

CPC: In that, I had no choice. It was a 10 days horror that I had flunked the exam, and I thought having been a good student, after all, my academic record was pretty good, along with my family

wanting me to go to school, and my having an objective, at least. This was to change very much with the Depression. And after all, I went to Brown [08:00] in 1929.

JFR: Yeah, that's quite a year to start.

CPC: And so we saw it happen, and we felt it. And this was one thing that you couldn't run away from. Some of us had to move off-campus, I wasn't the only one. We felt awfully isolated after we moved out of the dorm. And we missed our friends.

JFR: About how many of you guys moved out?

CPC: What?

JFR: About how many of you guys moved on?

CPC: I've never been back.

JFR: Anybody – once you left the dorms, you lived together?

CPC: Oh, one of the professors, instructors, he was an instructor, and his wife, I mean they were having their troubles, [09:00] too, was taking in a couple of students, renting rooms. You know, as a student – you know how – well, I don't know if they still have them, maybe they knocked them all down and put up new buildings, but there used to be a lot of old fashioned houses, say around – I loved on John Street was where I was living after I moved from Miller. And –

JFR: Was that your freshman year when you moved?

CPC: Yeah. There was one girl who was in the graduate school already who was living on the ground floor, and I lived – I had to climb two flights of stairs to get to my room. And I had to find somebody who'd do [10:00] my room once a week. And the boys next door went to Brown,

and they had somebody, so I arranged for her to come over to my place, too. And she did that for 35 cents an hour.

JFR: So while you were living there, was it hard to stay in contact with the rest of the people over in Pembroke? I mean, how was the social scene?

CPC: Well, there were a lot of things – some of us were far more experienced budgeters than others. And this was, I think, one place where we all had to go our own way. But if I needed books, [11:00] I could always have them. In other words, I didn't have many luxuries, but books are a – school books are a luxury, I think. I used to – some of the girls – nobody used to do their own laundry, I always sent mine home, in one of those things. They used to have them then, I don't know if they have them now. If you were going to college, this was the kind of thing you could pick up at the post office. I don't think they have these gadgets anymore. It was a canvas case, and inside was a heavy carton, and you just put your stuff in it, send it home, next week it came back. [laughter] And life was different, it was a different pace. Very few girls had automobiles. [12:00] Not many girls were taking sciences. This was one of the first things – my first serious contest with faculty brass, because I – you have to remember that I did have a goal, I was going to go to medical school. And I knew the requirements for Johns Hopkins. And of course, this was another reason, at that time I was interested in Stanford, they took women. Harvard didn't take women for medical school. There were a lot of medical schools that did not take women. Or you could go to England and go to Oxford, Oxford would take women.

JFR: So was it hard at Pembroke to get the requirements that you needed?

CPC: Well when I got there, what I wanted to do was take as little science as possible, and as many quote “cultural things,” a cultural base to set my science on. And this was practical. They didn't like it. I should be taking all this biology. Well, why can't I take it in medical school? Why can't I do the languages, and why can't I take the philosophy class now? Once you get into medical school, you're not going to have time for that. And there's been this kind of fight I've been in all my life.

JFR: [inaudible] – [14:00]

CPC: A question of values and priorities. It is pure and simple economics, that you have one dollar, and is it going to pay bus fare, is it going to buy a notebook? And you've got to pay the bus fare, you forget the notebook, you know, that kind of stringent budget. Now some people can do it on a stringent budget, and a lot of children I think are in this, children, although they aren't at Brown anymore, not with those entrance requirements, the young people at Brown now, not quite as wet behind the ears as a lot of us were when we went to school. It's a different world, and it moves faster, and we're in the space [15:00] age, and there are computers, and there are naughty little boys who get into grownups computers with their own little toys, and the most we had to worry about as adults were children listening in when they shouldn't. And see what else were children to do then? Be seen and not heard.

JFR: Was there a counseling system at Pembroke that you were – people you were talking to about what courses you wanted to take?

CPC: We used to talk about boys, and we used to talk about our teachers. And our work, sometimes we worked together. I didn't ordinarily, but I knew people who did. And if I was having trouble [16:00] with something, I tried to get a tutor.

JFR: Which courses did you end up taking, the science ones or the –

CPC: What I wound up doing, my concentration was a compound major, I split the major, Latin and English. If you go back far enough historically, well when my father was in medical school, for instance, the students used to talk Latin. This was the language they used in studying medicine. So it was no big deal to me to concentrate in Latin. And I couldn't understand why anyone would oppose that. I mean, Latin and English were, to me, the basic languages I would need to a rounded approach to a serious career [17:00] in medicine. I wasn't looking for dollars. I was looking for a career. Now there's a difference.

JFR: Did you have problems with that double major? With people wanting you to take a science?

CPC: This was one place I was lucky, that there was usually a teacher... I mean, we didn't have counselors or anything like that. There weren't many people to turn to. And a lot of our peers were well settled in what they were doing, they didn't bother about that, you know? It was getting the homework done, and who was the next date, or something. And dating can be very busy in theory, still when you're that age, and later. But the way it was for us, there was the economic thing of [18:00] the growing depression, and all of the sudden having to make hard changes that we had not anticipated, and for some of us, you know, this was out of the blue, what's a depression, what's no money? You know, what were they talking about? And getting in the minimum requirements for medical school, I wasn't – didn't have that kind of awareness, since I was satisfied enough with my goal, or that an excellent alternative, although I took that direction later, would be to concentrate in languages, for which I seemed to have some natural talent. [19:00] Now I don't know whether – I don't believe that's a female talent. I think it's that some people are good with languages and some aren't. This has been another thing in my lifetime, is it because I am a woman that you are saying yes or you are saying no? And I think that's a very important thing that all women have to deal with in some way. I believe in equal pay for equal work. Now that's a very simple thing. But most of – the bulk of the statistics give us 60 cents versus every male dollar. Somehow, that doesn't seem fair. [20:00]

JFR: Did you have problems where you were at Pembroke about well, women shouldn't be doctors, or any discouragement?

CPC: Nobody discouraged me from thinking of studying medicine. I was to come to it myself when I had to move off-campus. My father was not a young man, I was to find out later how difficult a time he had been having. This we didn't know until ultimately his estate was settled. But there had been losses, [21:00] and other losses he had had with – when in his own country, a change of government lost most of everything he had over there.

JFR: What country is this?



CPC: Portugal – well, he was born in the Azores, Portugal was his country, and he had been a diplomat [inaudible] for a while, and he was educated in Europe, and did graduate work in Germany and France, and England, where else did you go if you were going to do graduate work? And...

JFR: Do you think that being at Pembroke or Brown developed a sense of appropriate direction for wanting to go in for your career, [inaudible]?

CPC: I don't think they did very well with it. I don't think [22:00] our counseling was all that great when I was there. I think the people were nice, Ms. [Eva] Mooar was nice. But some of the counseling we got came to it sort of in a left-handed way or a suggestion from a teacher. And anything like that was very helpful to me. And it was the closest I ever came to career counseling. And my father was too busy, and this was beyond my mother. And my mother had already had the question put to her. I mean, you know, I'm telescoping a little, because when I found out about something, had nothing to do with my dealing with the result at a different point in time. But my mother had wanted to study music. [23:00] Now both my sister and my closest first cousin had very decent careers in music, both eventually got their doctorates in the subject. And my mother had wanted to be a singer. And her father put it up to her, that if she wanted to study voice, she could, but then she shouldn't plan on getting married.

JFR: [inaudible] had the same kind of decision to make?

CPC: In a way, but I certainly had no idea – no – I thought it was, at the time, injudicious, let us say, to have any serious relationship with any man [24:00] until I had my own degree, that I would not add to the study of medicine the commitment of marriage also. That seemed to me too much to take on. But I was, at least in what I was using for mine, serious about the career and how it should be done. And it was a cultural approach, it was not an economic approach that I had to these things. And my economic approach was zilch, because I had almost none to bring. And I've since talked to people of my own age, and they weren't all women, who if it was a mistake, made the same mistake. And made mistakes that were too expensive economically. [25:00] Because while we are not to blame for inflation, and we do the things right, and we try to

be careful, and we read *Consumer Reports* and, you know, and we budget very carefully, and we count our pennies, and we count our dollars too, if you spend \$1 for this, you don't spend it for that, that's all. That's a fact of life, too, that's kind of hard to slow, particularly when you're tempted. And particularly also when other people get away with it. I picked up, this is my desk here, because I can reach it very handily from this chair. *The Wall Street Journal*, which does this kind of thing very well, an expose, how some – I don't know what kind of people these are, [26:00] but some bunch of hoodlums or, you know, any other appropriate epithet to play your own semantics your way, they just made off with several million dollars in some kind of a scam. And they're reporting as [inaudible] like reading a detective story. But these are real people who did these crooked stuff and got away with it. And it's well written, I sent it to my son I said, you know, these are the kind of people you have to watch out for, because I think people who are oriented to some sort of principles, [27:00] and excuse the very old-fashioned word honesty, do not quickly think in terms of a scam all the time. We don't think everybody is a crook. We're wary by now, and careful, but we still aren't going to cheat as far as our own things are concerned. We don't cheat Uncle Sam, and we don't want to be cheated. And we're not going to shoplift, and yet we live in places where people are thieving all the time, and the big – and [28:00] one thing that goes on now that I'd hardly heard of when I was in Pembroke, was drugs. As far as drinking goes, we were not a tee totaling family, and we had come through Prohibition, and if you didn't carry your liquor, you didn't drink. I remember vividly, one of my father's chauffeurs got a ticket for drunk driving, and it was summertime, we were out at our summer place, and somebody called up and told my father, and he walked down in the chauffeur's quarters, and he told him to go. There wasn't any dealing, he said go, [29:00] and Rogers went.

JFR: How about on campus? [inaudible]?

CPC: You speak so softly, I don't –

JFR: I'm sorry. On campus at Pembroke, was there any drinking there?

CPC: I think maybe you'd better come and sit beside me, because I can't hear you, and ordinarily I'm not deaf.

JFR: OK. Did you – were there people drinking on campus at Pembroke? What was the social life like?

CPC: We had Prohibition. So, it was quite a trick to do any drinking at all. These were the days of the speakeasy. And we had repeal while I was in school, but it was sort of daring to get a cocktail together if you could. And some of the chemistry students used to [30:00] get a good grade of alkie and put orange juice or something in it. And this sort of thing, of course, was a revelation to me, because we didn't – I didn't come from a high spirits family, it was – we used wines for [inaudible]. Wines for birthdays and to drink toasts, and good health on big occasions. But this stuff, what is it? [laughter] So, you know, it's all the discoveries seem to be – come a little earlier, most young people now, came a little later for some of us. But the patterns are there, and you can just [inaudible] now. And whether with all this movement, there is more stress, [31:00] it's an open question. I don't know, I think there is. Because there are – well there again, I hadn't actually read enough statistics, because I think now when you talk of populations the size we have now, and some of our data collection systems I don't think are really good to start with. I think any system that talks about two and two tenths of a child in a family has some kind of weakness that needs correction. There is no thing as two tenths of a child, unless it's a very, very flawed person. Flawed in the sense of being physically disabled, maybe being –

- End of Track 1 -

Track 2

CPC: At age 75, there were statistics that say I should be dead, or I must die before I'm 76. Now I don't think anybody doing numbers should do that for me.

JFR: Yeah, well [overlapping dialogue; inaudible].

CPC: [laughter]

JFR: But what would you say was the most stressful about Pembroke? Was it the economics or just the pressure of what your career was going to be?

CPC: I think it was the Depression.

JFR: Yeah, makes sense.

CPC: That's the way it seemed to me, but mine was one of the families that was hard hit.

JFR: Was – did that make you –

CPC: My father's complete investment portfolio was zeroed. It was later to recover a little, but at the time, [01:00] and it was one of those things that all three of us were in college at the same time.

JFR: Yeah, that makes it hard.

CPC: My sister had decided to go to the Yale School of Music that year, she had spent a year at Wellesley and decided to drop out and study music privately, which she did. And then she had – this was, you know, this was the pattern then. You went to one of two or three of well-known music teachers in Boston, and then you gave a recital, which was your debut as an artist, and then if you didn't get concert engagements, you had to start doing some kind of teaching or something. It was, you had to earn, or wanted to earn your living, or part of your living. [02:00] And my brother was off to the Midwest to study medicine after the same sort of stumbling start my sister made in music, he made it in engineering.

JFR: Did all this info –

CPC: And I stumbled the other way, I eloped commencement weekend [laughter] and got married to a Brown man. And I even had gotten a job to go to all by myself in New York. And it sounded ideal for me from what I had had – I changed my courses around my junior year and

began taking languages. And this was a job working in French and German for a radio station that was [03:00] broadcasting to South America. And I had Portuguese already, and some Spanish. So I was made for the job in that sense. And then when I went back, no company.

JFR: No company, in New York?

CPC: No, you know, whoever hired me, you know, had said come back in two weeks or something. I turned up, it's gone. The job's gone, somebody bought them out, was – [inaudible]. No me. [laughter] I did – I tried some things, I was so bad at it, it was pathetic.

JFR: Now when was – this was after you graduated from Pembroke, or was this while you were there?

CPC: Oh, this was after graduation, after I'd gotten married. Actually, my husband was in class of '34, I had gone back to graduate school. [04:00]

JFR: And where was that?

CPC: At Brown.

JFR: At Brown.

CPC: And I was – that's when I was taking Spanish, and oh lord, I started fifth year Spanish, and I'd never looked at a Spanish book. And I thought I was never going to learn any Spanish. And the professor was very kind and very patient, and he told me not to get too discouraged, just keep on with it, and it'll come a little easier. He was right, but – and during the first weeks of the struggle, it was so hard to get into it, I didn't believe I would ever do it, but I did. So that's the way you learn, Jennifer. And you have your learning experience wherever you go. You can't not learn unless you're terribly sick. [05:00]

JFR: When did you decide to switch into the languages?

CPC: When did I decide what?

JFR: To concentrate more on languages, and not –

CPC: About my third year.

JFR: And what influenced that decision?

CPC: Well, my English teacher suggested it. And his thought was well, if I learn Spanish, maybe I could get a job teaching in Puerto Rico. Well, I knew somebody– I had a dear friend in Cuba, I thought oh gee, if I'm teaching in Puerto Rico, [laughter] Cuba was just across a little water from – and I'd see this old friend again. They were in diplomatic service too, her father was one of the – was a consul. And so, when [06:00] the dad or somebody is in any kind of service that has traveling that goes with it, the kids have to get used to changing schools. And so you share in the experiences of your friends, too. You learn from your friends, and you'd either like to do something like that, or oh no, that's not for me, it's OK for her, or for him, but not for me. And this is the way you grow up, and that's as much of yourself as you're ever going to find. You try things, and do they work? And can you do it? Can you – and how well? This is where hobbies come from, too. I like to do more things than I can ever get to, now.

JFR: And so, have you kept up with languages? [07:00] Is that still something that's a focus?

CPC: Well, I do not have – if I've got to choose between a hobby and some form of social service where I know I can work within the service, and the need is so terrible, this is – I'm aware of this because of cutbacks we have had have been essential. Somebody's life depends on the medication, if that's zeroed, you know, what's that person going to do? How are you going to revise that budget so that person can get it? Or is there a grant available? I mean, you know, then you begin to look at your – turning up stones and looking in directories, what agency [08:00] might help here? What kind of help is available? Does the person qualify?

JFR: So are these the kind of jobs you were looking for then, social work [inaudible]?

CPC: If I were going to do anything, this is assuming I could underwrite it, and the only way I could underwrite it at this point would be with robotic help, I think. Some sort of machine. It's form or farm?

JFR: [Farm?].

CPC: I do things like that because I'm curious. Or want to. [09:00] And at the same time, I'm appalled at the risks. Any kind of cash crop you have is subject to theft. I didn't know anybody would stick – I'm 75, I didn't think anybody would bother to steal avocados. But in Florida, stealing avocados is a big business.

JFR: Have you ever done any work on farms, or [inaudible]?

CPC: Never.

JFR: So that's why you want to do it.

CPC: This is – well, you know, that's a good reason to do it. I've had little gardens, and I've done very small experiments that one person could do, kept records, observed this plant, [10:00] something beginning to sport. And is it sporting, is it really sporting? And is it breeding true? And yes it is, oh gee, now what do I do? Well, you can try to get a plant [inaudible]. That is very hard to do. So I never patented my plants. I did give them away.

JFR: When did you start getting interested in plants?

CPC: Reading about Mendel, genetics.

JFR: Was it way back in school?

CPC: That was in school, that was in school. I mean, this was what I got from school actually, was some background in science, because all I'd had in high school, outside of some [11:00] math, was chemistry. And mind you, since then I've taken teaching training, and that I throw it away, because the science is moving very fast, and unless you're keeping in touch with your subject, you're not a good teacher. And the subject I was interested in was computer science. And I did have – I mean, you know, if the tests were worth anything, I have an aptitude for it. I have an aptitude for problem solving, and my talent isn't practical. My talent is for theory. [12:00] And it's not easy to package and market and sell.

JFR: That's true.

CPC: And you have to be something that somebody wants when they want it. And I've tried to get jobs that are not – this is recently, in recent years, because I was doing research for a doctor for a while, for some years. I – and then he retired, and that was the end of it. Or actually, he had two retirement times, and this was the first time, and that was it, and it was time for me to be trying something else. And [13:00] trying to do it in the middle of gang wars, I live in a place now where if I hear a noise, I don't think it's a car backfiring, it's a gun. And 9 times out of 10, that's what it is.

JFR: And how did you end up in California, [inaudible]?

CPC: How did we come out here? We hitchhiked.

JFR: When was that?

CPC: We hitchhiked – well, we were married in '34, and as I keep reminding you, there was the Depression, and my job had blown, and Tom had been able to get temporary work, but nothing he had settled in. And we got the idea of hitchhiking out here, and maybe [14:00] writing about it as we went along. And there used to be a magazine called *Liberty* which has long since died, a [McFadden?] publication, and he – they were interested, and so we started out hitchhiking. But we were trying to do some kind of quid pro quo thing. If, for instance, a hotel would put us up,



when we got on the air, we would say thank you. And some people like that kind of public relations, and some don't. But my [15:00] mother-in-law's work, to some extent, she was a home economics expert, and did and was to, after we left, write cookbooks, a lot of them. And they – all of her books did well. Well not all of them were bestsellers, but none of Mother's books ever flopped. But, so, you know, we had these tangential relationships with – actually, the [forces?] and job hunting, part of the power structure. Whom do these people hire? What do they want? Are you going to write advertising copy? Are you going to do Girl Friday stuff? I did Girl Friday stuff for my [16:00] mother-in-law. I went all over New York. I bought her clothes, clothes for public appearances, this gets into costuming. Research, of course. I created a bookkeeping system for her, an index system, this kind of thing. I answered her social correspondence, I ghosted some of her scripts for magazines, I did not write her radio part. I mean, you know. [laughter]

JFR: So were you working with her then when you were hitchhiking and broadcasting?

CPC: No, no. This was Tom and me and *Liberty* magazine. And when we got about to Ohio, we had a letter from *Liberty* saying they wanted – at this time, well they're doing it now in a different way, [17:00] there were a lot of homeless people and people going back and forth, and people out of work, and nowhere to go for it. That's how we got WPA, the New Deal. And we hadn't thought of going – we wanted to be independent, we didn't want a government job. You know, no. And we get to Ohio, and they don't want us anymore. They want us to go from one camp to another and write a bunch of sob stories. And that wasn't what we had in mind.

JFR: So what'd you do?

CPC: Bumble. Got across somehow. I mean, that's a long story that [18:00] is in a way off the subject. A lot of it was hard. And some of it was scary. Because – and some of it was nice, because mostly people were nice. And because enough people were nice, we couldn't always tell when people were going to be mean. But our experience was the further west we go, the fewer nice people we met, and the more mean ones we met, until we finally got to the West Coast, where at least we had friends. And at that time, you had – they were stopping you at state

boundary lines. You had to have a letter or something to get you across the border, [19:00] in your own country. And we thought well, we couldn't – we're going to find a job somewhere in California, and – [knock on door] uh-oh, [inaudible]. I don't know who it is. It sounds like somebody –

[break in audio]

CPC: Where were we?

JFR: Almost into California.

CPC: Oh, I had gotten to California. Well the friend we had out here was a classmate, he was ahead of us at Brown. And he had worked for my mother-in-law for a while, and he and Jo had split. And back in those days, splitting wasn't as usual as it is now. But [20:00] Jo split from Bill, and she was – took up with George, and George was an engineer who was lucky to get a job in a gas station pumping gas. I mean, that kind of thing. And people could – feeling rather bitter about it, do I need a college diploma to go pump gas? And Jo rented a big house and took in people who were – wanted to go to Brown who [wanted?] to stay on campus. There were off-campus places, and not many that were approved that were more economical than the dorms. Now there may have been better places than the dorms that were available for students, [21:00] but I never saw any. But – and well, we had some girls from well-to-do families, but they camped out with us in our places. My first year, I was in East House. And I'm still in touch with my roommate.

JFR: Great.

CPC: And still in touch with some of my classmates, there are still some of us left. [laughter]

JFR: Are there many out here in California, too?

CPC: There are some of us. And, you know, they come and they go. People are more inclined to have time budgets now, and some of us, all of a sudden usually, slow down a great deal. And somebody [22:00] has a stroke or something, and then it's a while before you see them again. And very often, things are different. Not always, but sometimes. And it's a part of reality. It's just as much a quantum reality as Nick Herbert's book. What do you do, Jennifer?

JFR: Oh, I shouldn't put this on the tape, but I'll – I can talk to you after we're done taping this.

CPC: All right. [laughter]

JFR: [inaudible].

CPC: Oh yes, right. Well what else do you want – you want to know about me and Pembroke.

JFR: How was the relationship –

CPC: I know – well, for instance, over the holiday, [23:00] this is one of the ways I celebrate Christmas is talk to old friends, any that are left, because the people in California I was closest to have all died. Everybody's dead. Well Anna isn't, so I call Anna up back in Warwick. And she was widowed a couple of years ago, I guess. And it was a strong marriage, and the end of a strong marriage is very hard on whoever is left behind. She's eased into it now. But [24:00] what we do is quote Cicero, [inaudible]. We don't think getting old is so great.

JFR: Yeah.

CPC: Because it hasn't been for us.

JFR: In the same ways, or?

CPC: We've become disabled or it's hard to read, we can't move so fast, our eyes give out, or all of the sudden we've got cataracts, we've got to go get a cataract operation. You get into the

world of organ recitals, which is terribly dull. And there is no way to avoid it, because this is all that seems to matter to some people, the latest symptom, or they're trying to find out from you where to go, what kind of a doctor to ask, what should I ask for, you know? And [25:00] it's wonderful how knowledgeable some people can be about some things, and all [inaudible] others. What kind of a doctor do you need? Who should you go to? You need a specialist, well what kind? What do you ask for, you know? Do you want – you say, chocolate or vanilla, or maybe strawberry, or possibly Neapolitan. You don't know, or a lot of people don't know. Now I never would have landed with a plastic surgeon if the head of the physical therapy department I was being treated in hadn't suggested my going to this particular doctor. Because something else made just as much sense. It's not easy for people on Medicare to get good treatment, because there are some things that Medicare will never cover, [26:00] which it should have, I think. Because how can you say this is a better disease, that cancer is better than heart trouble, so they'll give a bigger and better budget to cancer, because that's a better disease? You know, I don't think any disease is better. And now we have the whole AIDS thing which is really a cause for serious concern, and for confusion too, be–

M1: OK, I just rotated the mattress, and –

[break in audio]

CPC: [inaudible]. I never expected to have any trouble with an electronic bed, and that's all I've had with this thing they brought me. It's a bed that breathes. It's a spooky thing to look at, [inaudible] where is it? [27:00] [laughter] And if I move on it – maybe it doesn't do this for anybody else, because I have no statistics on it. I move on it a certain way, and you know, you move in your sleep. You don't sleep like a stick, usually. It screams. [laughter] You know, it's bad enough for it to be a real scream, and somebody out there. But to have people out there screaming, and the bed screams seems like too much. So what I'm trying to do with the rest of my life is get up near my son in the state of Washington, and see what I can do. We both have lost causes we are pursuing.

JFR: What's your lost cause?

CPC: My lost cause is to do something worthwhile with my life.

JFR: What do you [28:00] consider worthwhile?

CPC: Something social. Something that's a little more than having closed one rotten convalescent home, or that kind of thing. Where something needs doing to get in it, and get involved.

JFR: It sounds like that's something that's always been important to you.

CPC: And of course, the thing that – it'll always get to me, these are the so-called thrown away children that are all up and down the coast, the little ones that nobody wants. And I've – there was, you know, sometimes something will catch your imagination, or it'll get to you somehow, and you cannot throw it away. It's already two or three years [29:00] since I read about it, but I am assuming if it was happening with one kid, that there were more kids. A little – an eight-year-old girl was turning tricks to support her five-year-old brother, because they didn't have any parents anymore. And parents have been known to desert their children. And so, and my son's lost cause is to get his boys back, his wife kidnapped them. And she's since had several husbands and this is hard on the kids. I mean, you know, it's oversimplifying, but I'm talking about somebody else's life, I don't hardly fear to go into it. And it's too usual, Jennifer. It's too usual [30:00] a story, I think. Do we have too many people?

JFR: It seems like it, doesn't it?

CPC: It certainly does. And if you're going to limit them, how are you to do this? How do you choose? You demonstrate to me that it's my patriotic duty to die, I'll do my duty. But at this point, when I have seen a great many people come here, then I am not sure, or any better citizens than say DeLorean, I don't want anyone to tell me you die and DeLorean lives. In other words, I'm questioning the values [31:00] of my society. And why should I – and if I were to leave my country that I was born in to find other values that would be better, where's the country? I don't

know of one that's better. I remember reading once in *Readers Digest* of an Arab city, or some kind of structured group, with a ruler, and they had a good ruler, and he took care of them all, all his subjects were his family. They're all educated –

- End of Track 2 -

Track 3

CPC: – getting so badly hurt. Not just the equal pay. It's reading statistics that one in three of us is going to be raped, seeing the appeals for people to work on the hotlines, and I could do some of this work, but I'm not doing it. I'm not doing it because I have to deal with Tom, for instance, who was coming this morning and came this afternoon, the man who brings the oxygen. I have to have an at home day. My doctor just called and changed tomorrow's appointment, he's got surgery, and we could – took four calls to make a decision about a date, and all he could do was put it off a couple weeks. [01:00] And yet I have – this is serious. It's not a trifle, I nearly lost my legs. And the beginning of my legs being saved for me was a pharmacy, where the pharmacist noticed something about my medication program and called it to my attention. That was the beginning. Now a lot of doctors don't want Medicare people, and they will not take them. So first you've got to find one that'll take you, and then you've got to find one would you be willing to send your dog to. [laughter] It's a double-barreled [02:00] program. And the older we get, the fussier we get, Jennifer. [inaudible] oh this thing is still on, you didn't want to tape –

JFR: Yes, well.

CPC: Ask me some questions, because –

JFR: [inaudible] all right. Well we have some questions about, let's see, how about, do you remember the [dean?] at Pembroke, and what you remember –

CPC: Of course I remember Dean Morriss, she was the one who didn't want me to take the split major.

JFR: Oh, she was. So you talked to her about that?

CPC: A little. Mostly it was the professors, and she – [laughter] of course she had a nickname, you know? What would you call Margaret Shove Morriss? “Peggy Push.” That was just [inaudible]. [laughter] [03:00] She wasn’t pushing against the split major after Professor [Klaus?] spoke up for me. And that was the end of it. I went on that way. When there was an economic problem, people were awfully nice about it. You know, on the faculty level. This didn’t change the reality of, you know, you begin to work – if you’ve never cut anything out before, that’s the way you’re going to have to begin to learn. And that means postage stamps and everything.

JFR: Were there – did it cut down on extracurricular activities, did people spend more time just studying? Or –

CPC: Yeah, you didn’t go to the games unless somebody paid your way, [04:00] and since a lot of the boys were strapped too, sometimes you did Dutch, you went Dutch to things. A lot of boys didn’t like that. Probably because they – I guess they felt put down, they felt, you know, you take a girl out on a date, you want to pay for her.

JFR: How’d the girls feel about it?

CPC: Well to me, it seemed fair. Especially when there wasn’t any doubt at all in my mind that these young men weren’t blowing their money foolishly, but they just didn’t have an awful lot, and I knew [05:00] what some things cost, I didn’t need others. And you know, when we had our senior proms and things, if invited someone from out of town, if you imported your date, you paid for his room. And, you know, reversed what was the more usual role then. I don’t think now it is so much. Especially in business, and I think that in business, a woman should pick up her own tab, or she is – better know what the price tag she’s going to pay is going to be.

JFR: What was the relationship like between Pembroke and Brown, [06:00] [to these?]?

CPC: Well, in my day, when you went in as a freshman, you didn't have much to do with the men's school. At least I didn't, most of your classes were not mixed. When you began to get into the sciences, the classes began to get mixed again. And of course, when you, as you're [going up to seminars?], then that's different. And then again, and when you get into graduate school already, that's a different scene, too. But you meet boys or somebody introduces them, you meet them in class, or somebody's brother comes to town, or somebody gets a blind date and it clicks, or sometimes it doesn't, and sometimes there's going to be [07:00] a big deal coming on, like a house dance, somebody hasn't got a date, and they're going to get a date for her, or you're going to see that she goes home and goes and visits somebody for the weekend, or what. Mostly, I think, young people do feel those things pretty keenly, unless they are so immersed in their books, are working so very hard that they just schlep it out. I remember some girls who didn't seem to have any social life, or relate to anyone at all. They were just there to go to class and learn their thing, and that's what they were doing. But this is all [08:00] a long time ago.

JFR: Was there a problem with [inaudible] to compete with the men, [inaudible].

CPC: I didn't feel competitive with the men. And there – this was partly, I think, because of my father's attitude. He was a doctor, but there again, you get into the cultural thing. I never heard my father say a word against women going into medicine. But some of the sons of his colleagues talked to me about being a doctor, and I really shouldn't [09:00] do that. Well it was along with my father, you know, Doctor so-and-so's son went against my father when my father is in favor of that. But my father also used to refer patients to women doctors. A lot of other doctors did not do that.

JFR: [inaudible].

CPC: And so, I had this – some background in professional parity of a sort.

JFR: How about the men at Brown, were they more like your father, or more like your father's colleagues?



CPC: No, I didn't get that, more like my father, or more like what?

JFR: Or more like your – your father's colleagues sons, the ones who were telling you that you probably shouldn't be a doctor?

CPC: I thought they were wrong.

JFR: And –

CPC: And that my father was right. [10:00]

JFR: And how about [inaudible]?

CPC: Well some of them went to change with time, you know? And some of them, of course, never did. But what my father said made sense. And that, I understood, it made sense I was for it. If it seemed irrational to me, I didn't like it. Now irrational or unfair, it I think people should at least get a fair shake. But then, you know, see I was educated to bargain in good faith, and I know darn well the person on the other side of the desk isn't always bargaining in good faith with me. [11:00] And this is why sometimes you want legal aid and stuff. And where there is a language problem, or a semantics problem, because often the law is ambiguous, and you don't know what kind of a decision you're going to get until [inaudible]. Whatever, but you still need professional help. And sometimes it just boils down to a game of Russian roulette, you won't know until it's over how it's going to come out. But I think I am interested in too much of my world to just toss it away. And I'm a recluse by [12:00] accident, not because I want to be. It's a reclusive life now, because I simply don't – can't get out, and the bus service has been cut back again, and I can cope with bus schedules, but I can't cope with hoodlums and gangs. And I am not armed, I haven't taken karate, anything else lately, and I haven't gotten a gun permit, although I was advised over 15 years ago by a sheriff in West [13:00] Los Angeles, "Clarice, get yourself a gun." This was when Hollywood– we had a Hollywood slasher then, or something. And – but he was serious about it. This was a friendly cop, [inaudible]. I still haven't, but I – some people don't know that.

JFR: Yeah.

CPC: And I know the arguments against it, they say if you have a gun, it can be taken from you. I know that, too. But then [inaudible] weapons against somebody with a gun? No chance at all? I mean, you can't turn off the news completely. Well, some people won't. [14:00] Some people have to, because they get so scared. The jungle's a spooky place now, that's all. And it's more than some people can take. And there are a lot of feeble, elderly people, or just plain feeble people, comparatively, for whatever reason, maybe they just got over the flu, or they've got a bad hangover, it doesn't matter, if they're feeble, they're feeble, that are easy prey. And that's a lot more of a part of the scene than it used to be. And we had a depression, certainly, during my years at school, but this we didn't have. And sometimes, people used to drink too much, and there was all the bit with Prohibition, but [15:00] snorting coke, PCP, we never heard of stuff like that. That happened to other people, that didn't happen to us. We might be late, get back half an hour late or we'd have late permission. This was a big crisis. Well, the point is, there is a reason for the late permissions. It means that somebody cares, somebody's in charge, and when there's somebody in charge, there's somebody responsible. That's part of your guardian angel network. [16:00]

JFR: So, you needed late permits even when you lived on campus?

CPC: Well now, this was one thing that was different in the men's school than what it was in the women's school. And this kind of thing, I always jumped at, because I didn't see why there had to be one set of rules for them and another for us. Women had to go to chapel [inaudible]. But it was required, and we got some kind of demerit for missing, then why should we be candidates for this separate bank of dismissals that could pile up? Well the men didn't have any such thing. Didn't seem right.

JFR: Yeah. Did a lot of people feel that way?

CPC: There was another thing, I don't think they had [17:00] this problem, you know? But some of us felt pretty strongly about this at the time. It's one of the times in your life when you do have time to take a position if you want to. And if you like test it, or whatever all the behavioral words are, the cognitive psychologists want to use, you're living your life. And I think we can have too much psychobabble in our lives too, but the – you have a position, you take it. If you change that position, you know why. And you've been talked out of it, and you've been bullied out of it. If you were bullied, why were you bullied? You can examine your own behavior just as if you go to church, you're taught to examine your own conscience. [18:00] You don't have to go to anybody else to examine your own conscience.

JFR: So this other thing that people had a strong position [inaudible]?

CPC: Fraternities. We had no sororities at that – as far as I was concerned, I didn't want one. And here again, I did not want a sorority because I felt that sometimes, in making that kind of exclusion, you lost good people.

JFR: What kind of exclusion [inaudible]?

CPC: Simply economic. I mean, if it's a group that has a uniform, or – and you can't afford the uniform, even if it's a good [19:00] group and all that, you're not in that group. Not if everybody else is buying a uniform, and you can't, you know? It's just that simple sometimes. And I think that is – that creates a losing area. I'd rather take the losses and the risks some other way. Don't throw away talent. Not everybody is inborn with it. And not everybody has the same. This has been one of our wealths in this country, the quality of our work. And even the integrity of our people. And what have we gotten, a whole nation of robbers, a nation of thieves, a nation of thugs. Union Carbide [20:00] does what to the people in India? And what has it been doing to the people here? And a lot of people don't find out about it until it happens in India. Why do these – why are these hostages being taken sometimes? We are hated, because we are American. And we would rather be proud to be American, not ashamed. Are we a nation of children who have no responsibility? I mean, being grown up was – didn't used to be such a big deal. [laughter] You had a responsibility and you fulfilled it.

JFR: Well, I know we haven't covered everything, what's [21:00] – is there any one thing that you think is – in thinking about your years at Pembroke, that you would like to mention [inaudible]?

CPC: The special things at Brown, to me, often are – were extra kindnesses from someone or other on the faculty, or in the structure above me. As far as nice things among friends, whether it was girls or boys, I just assumed there'd be some of that. Somebody would do something nice for you, you'd do something nice for someone else, that's just part of life. If it someone was mean, well nyah. But, I had been educated to be serious about culture. And one way you support culture is not with money, but is to be [22:00] involved with it. To know about, and what is needed for research. I mean, if somebody needs a lot of sodium chloride, they don't need a lot of sodium hydroxide for supplies in doing an experiment. I'm taking the simplest things I can think of. But we have our libraries, and it's the John Hay Library, there's the Annmary Brown Library, there's a John Carter Brown Library, there were the maps, there were the things to go look at. There were the things in town, there were the convocations, there were the concerts we could go to. Some of us, I remember going once to something available for people at Pembroke, and this required a late permission because it was at night. [23:00] We went to hear Paderewski play piano at a concert downtown somewhere, and we either clubbed together and took a cab, or walked. We used to walk down those hills. Oh lordy, did we walk. [laughter]

JFR: They still do.

CPC: And there were places to go, there used to be a little park near the school. It wasn't any bigger than this room, there were a couple of benches and a little balcony, and you could look out and see the whole city.

JFR: Prospect Park?

CPC: Yeah, Prospect Park. And you'd hear the sounds of the city, and see the sunset. It was a nice place to sit and think. Things like that. [24:00] Things that professors told us to look at. If

somebody told me to do something, I was very [biddable?]. If a teacher told me to do it, I did it. He says, go look at the, you know, the skylights on the doors, the hand lights, the architecture of the period here and there. So I went out, looking for fan lights, I don't know what – maybe they thought I was looking for a bootlegger, but I was looking for architecture. [laughter] And so it goes. And of course, problems, the kids getting in trouble sometimes, that really wasn't all that serious. But some people are very hard [25:00] on students. I've seen this kind of thing. I don't think you – well, who was the last one? This youngster, this was at a time when I was doing some volunteer work with a special school with emotionally disturbed children, just teaching. Whatever you could persuade them to learn. [inaudible]. They were emotionally disabled, otherwise. But, you know, where I used to live, there used to be high school age and college age [26:00] young people who were working there. Because a lot of kids take part-time jobs, and so, you know, you talk to them, and some of them are awfully nice young people. And there was this one youngster who was going to law school, and went to Loyola, and he gave somebody the answers to a test. Now this was a kid with a spotless record. [27:00] And who was, from what I could see of him, as nice a young man as you could ever hope to meet. Anyway, Mark was his name. Now Mark lived with his mother. I don't know whether she was a widow or divorced, but Mark was going to school and doing all right, very well adjusted and friendly and warm. And he does this to help out a friend. Well, they didn't bounce him out or make him lose his diploma. They made him watch some kind of a film, I forget now what that [28:00] was. But they did deal with it. They gave him a way out. He had to do his penance, and swear on a stack of Bibles that he never would again, and very likely Mark wouldn't have ever again. Or if he had, he would have been able to defend it. And you do this. You don't grind a nice kid down, or smash him to bits. Because if God had made us perfect, we wouldn't need it. [laughter]

JFR: Yeah. So you think that – how would it have been different if that happened at Brown?

CPC: This happened to me the other way around. I was – well, I was very lucky I had an ear then, somebody [29:00] to talk to. Because I was accused of copying from Dorothy Poole. We took our – what did they call, there used to be a name for them, tests that you used to – that were rather – quizzes that you would get about every five or six weeks, the professor would spring them on you, there would not be an announced test. We used the same textbook, we'd studied the

same book, why our answers would be very different, I don't know. But when I was called in because I had been copying from Dorothy Poole, I was disgusted and insulted. I had done my homework. Maybe I hadn't done it as [30:00] well as he would have liked me to do it, but I had done it. I had some notion of what was in the book. [inaudible] Dorothy's paper, what for? And in order for me to see her paper then, this he didn't know, but I did, I'd have had to put on my glasses. But to write on my own paper, I had to keep my glasses off. So, nothing came of it, you know? I suppose Dorothy was talked to also, but I – you know, Dorothy was just somebody I saw in class, hi Dorothy, you know, hello, goodbye, done. You're on your way to your next class. Particularly if you had to walk from here to there, it isn't just, you know, right around the corner. So, [31:00] I was accused by not proved. And just horrified by the experience. How could he even think so? And then further, how if I always [inaudible] my word to go on, how does he know me from Adam? So, now the problems are a little different at the school. Now, it seems to be who's got a gun, or who knows where you live. I mean, that's one of the thing that we talk about at some of our alumni meetings. Because one of our members had a meeting to [inaudible] –

- End of Track 3 -

Track 4

CPC: And the suspected student had a good academic record and had been doing well, and he'd had some kind of problem with his parents, and at the time of the problem, the teacher, who was a bachelor, and had bachelor's quarters, took him in for a while, let him stay there until he got this disturbance resolved, whatever it was. And at the time this happened, he had another boy there. Now, are we in a world where nobody can do a decent thing for anyone else without being suspected of doing something reprehensible also? [01:00] There was a thing in the newspaper, the *Daily News* as I re– my local newspaper, it's the only one that isn't too heavy for me to carry, and that I – someone's, some father is suing JCPenney. He is suing because mothers can go in with their little boys and buy them new clothes and help them try them on in a special room, but he cannot take his little girl in and help her with clothes, and he says he is not a voyeur and not a molester, and he resents it. I don't blame him. [02:00] I mean, this is the other side of the coin, it's there too. It isn't all clear cut. I mean, everybody wants it clear cut, but we don't get it that

way. I was reading an editorial in the paper that says what's happening now is that the consumer right now is the loser. You bet we are. Any time you've got a complacent consumer, the consumer is the loser. Well, where do all these cost overruns come from? How many junkets do we have to pay for? How many limousines? Nuts to that. That isn't what made this country.

JFR: Well is there anything else you'd like to add to that? [inaudible].

CPC: There you go again. [03:00] And all of you do this. And I don't know whether it's I'm getting deaf or you have pretty soft, nice voices, and you don't raise them, and everybody loves you with these sweet voices, and you wouldn't make a loud noise for anything. [laughter]

JFR: Oh, I don't know about that. Just, we're getting near the end is what I'm saying. Anything else you'd like to add?

CPC: That as far as Brown was concerned, it was good to have a place to go when I didn't get into the place that I had wanted to go. And I didn't realize it at the time, but my mother would never had let me go to Stanford in the world. And if my mother opposed it, my father wouldn't have gone against that. My father was progressive in the way I [04:00] have told you, in his treatment of his colleagues, you couldn't ask for more. Particularly in his historical period. Because my father was not a young man when I was born, he was 50 when I was new. But we have that forward looking – I always thought – I have a horrid word for it, I suppose. It isn't a popular word, but the correct way. This was correct, what my father taught me was correct, and I should do what is, I think of as correct. And correct means professional courtesy, it means professional ethics, and it means equal pay for [05:00] equal work.

JFR: OK, well –

CPC: If there are reasons to take less than scale, they should be well understood. Because sometimes, there are places that cannot pay a lot, but in terms of the use of a library or a particularly good teacher in a subject, they have that. If that is what you want, that is where you

go. Because there are different ways to make choices. And I'll always think that a smaller school is better than a big one, because people tend to get lost in big ones, and they have more murders.

JFR: I think I'm going to turn off the tape now, but thank you very much for your help in this. I really appreciate it.

CPC: Well thank you.

- END -