

Transcript – Ancelin (Vogt, Lynch) Wolfe, class of 1968

Narrator: Ancelin (Vogt, Lynch) Wolfe

Interviewer: Katy Klutznick

Interview Date: April 12, 1988

Interview Time:

Location: Lynch's home

Length: 2 audio files; 41:36

Track 1

Katy Klutznick: Okay, this is Katy Klutznick, interviewing Ancelin Vogt Lynch at her home on April 12. Tape 1. Okay. Why don't you start by telling me a little bit about your family, maybe about your parents' occupations, things like that?

Ancelin (Vogt, Lynch) Wolfe: Okay. My parents were both intellectuals. My mother had done graduate work in classics at Radcliffe. My father did graduate work in physics at Harvard. They had met at the University at Buffalo. They both worked all their lives. My mother developed the French in the elementary school curriculum for Lexington's public school system, and my father worked at various jobs. He, when I was very small, worked for the Corning Glass Works as a traveling salesman, a kind of Mr. Wizard figure, who took new products out [01:00] on the road and explained the physics behind them. After that, he worked for Raytheon as a troubleshooter. He taught at Wentworth Institute in Boston for a couple of years and finished his career as, again, a kind of Mr. Wizard figure at Harvard University. He was in charge of setting up all the physics labs.

KK: And you were more interested in English. So your father's background in physics didn't really influence you in that – in any way?

AVLW: No. I really wasn't interested in sciences. And he didn't, for whatever reason, have the ability to make it come alive for me. He was also interested, though, in reading. And when I was quite young, when we were still in Corning, New York, which is where I was born, he was involved in a number of cultural activities. He directed plays, he acted in them, he played in the

community symphony orchestra. My mother did [02:00] a number of similar things, as well. She acted. I think she directed, as well. And she and my dad used to play duets. She played the piano and my father played the violin. My mother had studied to be a concert pianist, but she didn't get very far. I think the money ran out.

KK: Did you ever go and watch them? Or would they do it at home?

AVLW: They played duets at home. It was wonderful. I would go to sleep at night, hearing this lovely music, Schubert and all sorts of other people – Brahms. It was just wonderful.

KK: That's great. And that – Was this in Lexington? Or had you already moved?

AVLW: That was mostly in Corning. So that would've been until I was about seven. After we moved, my mother seemed to reestablish roots in Massachusetts, but my father never really did make friends or reestablish. He, he – I don't know. I think the move was very hard on him.

KK: So what made you decide to go to – to choose Brown, to go to Brown?

AVLW: [03:00] Well, I wanted a very good school. I graduated top of my class, and I wanted someplace that wasn't too far away from home, so I could still get home to visit my family. But I didn't really want to be right on top of them. And I had applied to Radcliffe, and McGill, and also to Pembroke. And Radcliffe turned me down, and McGill and Pembroke accepted me. And Pembroke, further, gave me a scholarship, which I hadn't finished applying for. So I thought, well, they probably want me. That sounds like a good idea to go where I'm wanted.

KK: Yeah. But were you – Radcliffe was your first choice.

AVLW: I think that's probably fair to say, that Radcliffe was my first choice.

KK: But it didn't – did it bother you that you were going to Pembroke, or were you still happy about that?

AVLW: Oh, I was pleased about Pembroke. I was disappoint— I mean, you can be two things at once. I was pleased about Pembroke and that they wanted me, and thought I was a good enough scholar [04:00] to give me some money. But at the same time, I was disappointed about Radcliffe. I had thought, with my father and my mother being graduates that it would make sense, and I thought I was capable of doing that level of work.

KK: What did they give you a scholarship for? Was it a general academic scholarship, or was it —?

AVLW: It was a general academic scholarship, as far as I remember.

KK: And what was the application process like?

AVLW: Well, fill out a couple pages' worth of forms, as I remember, and write some kind of a personal essay. Beyond that, I don't remember a great deal. After that, you could have an interview, if you wanted to. I think that was generally the process. And we came down, and I did have an interview, and it seemed to go very well. The application for scholarship was a separate process, I imagine much as it still is today.

KK: So did you look forward to it for your freshman year? Were you —?

AVLW: [05:00] Oh, yes. I was delighted. It was time to leave home, and I thought Providence was going to be a place I would like. And as it turned out, I have liked it very well, and have basically been in Providence, or Rhode Island, ever since I went to Pembroke in 1964.

KK: Wow. Do you remember your first day at Brown?

AVLW: I don't remember it that clearly. I know that I met other people living on the hall floor with me. I had a single room and several of the other people I met that first day did, too. And I remember we all went down to dinner together, four or five of us, and most of us stayed pretty

good friends, right throughout the four years. I'm still in touch with a couple of people that I think I met that first day.

KK: Wow. You found that you liked the people that you lived with freshman year?

AVLW: Yes.

KK: You made close friends?

AVLW: Mm-hmm. Even though our interests [06:00] were quite different, I would say the friendships remained very strong.

KK: So how did you feel about life at Brown? I mean, not just freshman year, four years. Did you – what was your overall reaction?

AVLW: Well, it was a very good place to be for me, I think, because it was, in a way, a fairly small pond. And if you had talent and ability in any given area, you could be a fairly large frog in that small pond. So as someone who had some abilities, but wasn't the most confident person in the world, I thought, just by its size, it was manageable. And in that sense, it was supportive. I don't think that there was much support from the deanery, or from many of the faculty. I personally didn't experience that. And the women's government seemed to be not that effective. Women did not play that much of a role within the life of the university, per se. [07:00] On the other hand, I see that a lot more clearly as I look back on it. I wasn't that conscious of it while I was there. I was involved in theater, and in writing poetry, and a number of good friendships. But I wasn't involved in even trying to be in student government. That was not where my interests lay.

KK: But were other women, do you think? Or it really wasn't – ?

AVLW: Well, they were involved in the student government for the Women's College, but not in any of the Brown side of the campus. I can remember having lunch once in four years at the

Ratty, and that was a big deal because that was the men's place to eat, and very few women, it seemed to me, got to that side of the campus, were invited over there. It seemed to me the men's government was far more powerful and was dealing with more meaningful issues, and more budget decisions, and what happened on campus reflected much more their endeavors [08:00] than it did the – it seemed to me, the Pembroke government.

KK: Did any of the government of Brown also affect decisions made for Pembroke? Did the men's government have anything to do with Pembroke?

AVLW: Well, they were, I think, wrestling with things like – well, at the end, of course, they were involved with educational reform. Ira Magaziner was class of '69, and Elliot Maxwell, who was his co-author of the so-called new curriculum was my class, class of '68. So they seemed to be involved with issues like that, that had an effect on everyone. And planning Spring Weekend, I don't remember women having any role in that at all. And the events would occur, and they would sort of come out of nowhere, but clearly the male side of the campus had had a hand in deciding who they wanted to hear and how it would be set up. My recollection is they ran most of the clubs on campus, the sort of special interest [09:00] clubs, such as International Relations or that kind of thing. They were very much male-dominated. The *Brown Daily Herald* was very much male-dominated.

KK: Did Pembroke have its own paper, though?

AVLW: We had the *Pembroke Record*.

KK: Okay, yeah. That's what I thought. I didn't know if that was for both. That was just kind of a –

AVLW: Well, I think some Brown men may have read it. I don't really know what the distribution was. But seemed very much separate and unequal. In terms of career planning services, I remember thinking that those were very unequal. There was very little for women and very little support or encouragement for you to kind of poke a nose in there. I think many of us

felt, within ourselves, the expectation was that we would graduate and get married. And I think that the deanery seemed to reflect that. What was made available was not very visible and was not extensive. So there wasn't much encouragement. As I look back, too, [10:00] and see the number of fellowships for graduate study there are now, they may have existed then, but they weren't open to women.

KK: Did you, did you – Were you interested at all in a career, or where you – did you more fall into the category of someone who wanted to get out and get married?

AVLW: Well, I had thought I wanted to have a career in theater, but I abandoned that partway through college because I thought that it would be a very rootless existence. And I really wanted to have a sense of being in a place and making a home. I also realized I wasn't the greatest thing that ever trod the boards. I was good, but not wonderful. And I had had the unfortunate occurrence of my mother being killed in a car accident when I was a sophomore. And I think that deflected me from moving forward as surely as I might have, otherwise. I think I felt a real loss, and it took me a long time to get over it. So partly, my [11:00] change of focus on building a home, and presumably doing that with a man, I think the focus came, in part, due to that loss.

KK: Did you find that going through a crisis like that – was there any support system or any type of counseling?

AVLW: If there was, I didn't find it. When I came back in the middle of the week, while she was in a coma, I talked to one of the Pembroke deans, and I don't remember whether it was Dean Tonks or Dean Pierrel, but I – she said, "How is your mother doing?" She was trying to be supportive and sympathetic, and I said, "Well, if she pulls through, she'll be a vegetable, and so we're hoping she'll die." And I got a very stern lecture from the dean of what a horrible thing that was to say, and I shouldn't think that way. And that was the farthest from being supportive of anything I could really imagine. I don't remember any kind of formal support when I got back to campus after [12:00] the funeral. I did go to the infirmary and mention that I had had this loss, and was having some difficulty sleeping, and asked for some tranquilizers. I don't remember –

they gave me something, which seemed to help, and I don't remember getting it refilled at all. It was just – I needed something to get me past the hard spot.

KK: When was it – I read in the yearbook that you were secretary for Sock and Buskin. When did you do that?

AVLW: I would imagine that was probably sophomore and junior year, but I'm not really sure.

KK: And what is that? What is it about?

AVLW: Well, Sock and Buskin was then, as it is now, one of the major undergraduate theater groups, and the board working with the faculty in theater arts decide what the season will be, what plays will be produced, and who will be – they work through who will be directing the plays, as well. They [13:00] don't do anything in terms of the casting, but they work on the technical side, working on costumes, or props, or whatever, making sure that the productions happen.

KK: Did you do any directing, or –?

AVLW: I did not do any directing. I did a lot of acting. For Sock and Buskin, mostly I got cast in Shakespearean parts: Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, Tanya in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and – oh I'm not going to remember. I did some work with Production Workshop, as well.

KK: Were either of those with Brown, as well, or were they all just Pembroke?

AVLW: Oh, no. They were mixed. The theater groups were very well integrated, which was nice.

KK: So did that – was that helpful to your social life?

AVLW: Yes. Yeah. It certainly was. I met the person I dated most of freshman year through a play that Production Workshop put on.

KK: What was the social life like at the time?

AVLW: [14:00] Very much regulated. There were only parietal hours on Sunday afternoons. From 2:00 to 5:00 you could have a gentlemen caller in your room if you kept the door open and all four feet on the floor, and that was policed. I can't remember what the curfews were, but they may have been, during the week, 10:00 or 11:00 at night, when you had to be back in the dorm, or you'd be locked out and get all sorts of reprimands. And weekends, I think, were – Saturday night, I know, was 12:30. I don't remember. Friday night may have been, too. But it was very much regulated. There was a great sense that you were not trusted to really be in charge of your life. And there was certainly the sense that the Brown men were dating all the Wheaton women and not dating the Pembroke women, which was a source of frustration.

KK: Uh-huh. Did you feel – as a Pembroke woman, did you feel at all, [15:00] like, inferior to the men, to the Brown men, in classes or in social situations?

AVLW: Well, I think I see that more looking back, from the vantage point I have now. I certainly didn't feel inferior academically. In fact, I think the Pembroke women were, by and large, a great deal brighter than the Brown men, or they were more motivated, at least. There were two or three times as many Brown men as there were Pembroke women, so you were bound to get a lot more clinkers in the Brown class than you had in the Pembroke class. [laughs]

KK: [laughs] Probably.

AVLW: As I say, I wasn't involved or worried about student government issues or the newspaper. So I didn't hit – what I see now would've been trouble spots with the men really dominating. And in theater, you really – it was pretty much equal. At least that was my feeling. There were some professors in theater arts who were very [16:00] chauvinist and really liked a pretty girl, but that's perennial in theater. That's not specific to Brown or any other institution.

KK: Yeah, [laughs] unfortunately. Do you have any memories of classes that you particularly liked or hated, or any professors?

AVLW: Well, I have some very good memories of the English classes. I was an English and American lit major. I had been thinking, since we did this interview before, Gregory Polletta was one person who taught a wonderful course in – I think it was Victorian Poetry, or maybe it was Late Nineteenth / Early Twentieth Century, but I remember, he wasn't at Brown very long, but he was marvelous. George Monteiro, who's still here at Brown was very, very good. And I'm still friendly with him. John Shroeder and Elmer Blistein, of course, were [17:00] mainstays in the English department. I didn't feel that close to them, but I enjoyed their courses. Ed Honig, who recently retired, taught a very interesting course in writing poetry, and he and I disagreed about how to express grief. He had lost a wife and I had lost my mother, and we were both working on death. And at that point, he seemed very fixed on – there was only my way of expressing it. And we used to argue over that, which – it was too bad he felt so strongly. On the other hand, I obviously didn't feel cowed by it because I argued with him and I kept writing. And I bumped into him about five years ago at a reception and he apologized. He said he never had given me enough credit for what I was writing – or enough support, and he wished he'd done it differently. And I said, "Well, you didn't give me enough support, but it didn't stop me from writing."

KK: Yeah, at least it didn't faze you.

AVLW: But I think people who are so involved as he was [18:00] with his own work are absolutely entitled to having strong opinions. In part, I think that's how you learn, is by bouncing off someone who has strong opinions, and is passionate about what he or she is teaching. So I don't fault him for that, but it was a nice acknowledgment that my writing was good and he remembered it after all those years.

KK: In reading the *Pembroke Records*, there was a lot going on at the time with, I mean, everything: race issues, the pill – there were – I have – different people who played at Spring

Weekend: The Doors, Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, people that we still listen to now. Do you remember any of that? Or was there a lot of action on campus? There were supposedly a lot of riots and – (inaudible) Vietnam and Martin Luther King.

AVLW: My memory is that that really came after 1968, [19:00] for the most part. I remember that NROTC being on campus was a big issue, and there were several confrontations over that, and demonstrations. There were some students who were involved in the peace marches, some of the early peace marches. I don't think there was as much activism on the campus concerning race issues. That all came just a year or two later, after I left, '70, '71, as I recall. It was a fairly quiet time. I remember going on a peace march in Sheep's Meadow in New York when I was a sophomore or junior, I guess. And I was involved in a couple of other things, trying to raise money for some students at Southern Methodist University, in Texas, where there had been a racial incident, and the police allegedly had destroyed a lot of the students' property. [20:00] And I worked with the chaplain's office at Brown to try to raise some money. Didn't raise very much, but we had a lot of interesting conversations with students.

In terms of the pill, I have only vague memories of any university action on that. I had already gotten the pill when I was a junior from a private physician, and that seemed a big deal. I mean, sex was absolutely not condoned, and it was hard to know how many women were engaging in sexual activity. It felt like relatively few were, and you certainly didn't talk about it openly.

KK: Even with close friends?

AVLW: Not in any detail. You might know that somebody was really serious about the person they were going with, and hadn't gotten in by curfew, or had found a way to be away for a whole weekend or something. But [21:00] that was kept quite quiet. Certainly, the issue of abortion was very quiet, indeed, and I had one friend who had to go to Puerto Rico to get an abortion. She was lucky. She was dating a wealthy Brown student who could send her. She didn't have to find a back-alley butcher. And I don't know anyone who did, but then that was not the kind of thing you would know.

KK: Yeah. Yeah. Did you feel that you were – did you have enough people that you could talk openly with at the time, just friends and things like that?

AVLW: About what?

KK: Just anything. Did you feel close to people, or –?

AVLW: I had some very close friends, but I think all of us were sort of stumbling along, trying to feel our way. No one really knew what direction we were heading in, at least in terms of personal relationships. And I don't remember [22:00] that many of the friends I knew having a very clear goal of what they wanted to do with their lives. I don't remember very many of them saying, "Well, I'm applying for graduate school at X," and going off and doing it.

KK: Did women go to graduate school at the time, or [was it?] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

AVLW: I don't know what the percentages were. As I look back, a fair number of my friends have, indeed, done graduate work. But as a senior, I don't remember that being a major element of our senior year as a class.

KK: Was it a stressful time when you were a senior, about to leave, or was it easy because you knew that you were going to get married?

AVLW: I think it was probably pretty easy for me since, as you say, I knew I was going to get married. I think that's just my radio phone picking up someone else's – wait a sec. Excuse me, cat.

KK: Okay. All right. [laughs] We're back.

AVLW: It was the radio phone with someone else's [23:00] phone call.

KK: [laughs] Okay. If you were walking through the Green on a nice day, what kinds of scenes would you see? Would there be a lot of interaction between men and women? And what kinds of things were people wearing? [laughs]

AVLW: Wow, that takes you back. I would say the men were probably wearing chinos, some blue jeans, but not many. And if they were, they were very neat. And probably jackets, some with sweaters, some with ties. Obviously, this is a spring or a fall day. Women, by and large, were wearing skirts, some of them quite short. By the time of my senior year, it was the era of miniskirt. But when I was a freshman, we were required to wear skirts to dinner, and I think we had to wear skirts to classes, too.

KK: So it was kind of formal?

AVLW: Yes, much more formal than it is today.

KK: [24:00] Did people still sort of hang out on the Green? Or because everyone was kind of dressed nicer –?

AVLW: Yes, people did hang out on the Green in warm weather, and you could usually count on bumping into someone. Mailboxes were in each dorm. At least a large number of them were. Maybe that was just the women's dorms. So I got my mail over on the Pembroke campus. So the mailroom wasn't pivotal. But there was always something going on in the Blue Room. You could usually crash in there and find somebody that you knew.

KK: Did you ever participate in May Day or Ivy Day or Sophomore Masque?

AVLW: I think those were before my time. I never even heard of them, except reading stuff that the Pembroke Center has. [laughs]

KK: Yeah. I would think May Day would be something that would be from before. Did you have any feelings about when they changed the name [25:00] from Brown to Pembroke for the

women, when they separated it from – I mean, you weren't there when that happened, obviously. It was a long time before. But does that affect you in any way? Would you have thought they should've been together? Did you like the fact that they were two separate schools?

AVLW: Well, when I went there, I chose it partly because it was a coordinate college. You had the advantage of having men in your classes, and yet you had some separate women's roles to play. And I thought that would give women more of a chance to be active. As it turns out, it didn't work that way, at least while I was there. I have sort of mixed feelings about the merger, later on in '71. I didn't have strong feelings against it, but I wasn't for it, either. And I thought, well, maybe the women who are there and are feeling so strongly should have the deciding voice. I'm not sure that was the right judgment on my part.

KK: Why didn't you [26:00] support it?

AVLW: Well, I think Pembroke, in some ways, did lose its identity. I mean, it doesn't exist anymore. And I as I said before, I think the women, by and large, were much brighter than the men. I don't know that the merging has had any impact on how bright the students are. But you kind of lost track of how special Pembroke women were. On the other hand, I think women have been much more involved in all of the campus activities than they were before. So that's a benefit.

KK: So how soon after you graduated did you get married?

AVLW: Well, I was marrying somebody in the class of '69, and he had an extra semester of classes that he needed to take, because he was in NROTC, and also, he was majoring in International Relations. So that combined to give him a ninth semester. So I [27:00] waited. And since he was ROTC, he couldn't get married before he graduated. So he graduated in January of 1970, and we got married in January of 1970. So I worked for a little over a year in the Serials Reading Room at the Rockefeller Library and took a couple of courses. That was one of the nice benefits of being a Brown employee, is you could audit or take a course even for credit if you wanted to. So I took a course with Reginald Archambault, Philosophy of Education. And I took

Bill Jordy's course in American Architecture, which, at that point in time, was just one semester. And both of them were wonderful courses. We got married in Manning Chapel. Father O'Shea –

KK: Really?

AVLW: – performed the ceremony. I couldn't stand the Catholic ceremony, so he performed a Congregational ceremony. And then Bob [28:00] joined – was in the Navy and received his commission, actually, the day we were married. And so a week later, we reported to his first duty station, which was Norfolk, Virginia. And he was in the Navy for four and a quarter years, and I was very glad when he got out, and we could start being complete human beings again.

KK: And did you – I mean, it was really normal for people to marry right after they graduated like that?

AVLW: It was very typical, very typical.

KK: So nobody was shocked?

AVLW: Oh, no.

KK: That was the thing?

AVLW: No, I was actually one of the last people in my circle to get married, because most people got married that summer, the summer we graduated. I went to seven weddings the summer we graduated.

KK: [laughter] Did you have – Did his family or your family come to the wedding?

AVLW: Oh, yes. Yes. His mother actually helped me plan the wedding, since I didn't have a mother to [29:00] help me with that. We had a very good time doing that.

KK: So you liked his family?

AVLW: I did.

KK: And then what else did you do while he was in service or after?

AVLW: Well, we moved 18 times the first 18 months he was in the Navy. So I didn't do a whole lot, other than pack, and unpack, and find the nearest grocery store.

KK: How did you feel about that?

AVLW: Very frustrated. It was not a very fulfilling way to spend time. The other Navy wives, for the most part, were interested in playing bridge, and watching soap operas, and having babies. And I didn't want to do any of those things. It was not a happy time. But after a year and a half, we got back to Rhode Island and I got a job with the State Historical Preservation Commission, writing nominations for buildings to the National Register of Historic Places. And that was very much a part-time consulting job, which [30:00] then turned into a full-time job.

KK: How did you get interested in that?

AVLW: From taking Professor Jordy's course. And I had borrowed some books from a man who did work for the Preservation Commission. I borrowed books to read for Jordy's course, and a year or so later, when I was back in town, this person called me up and said, "Would you like to try writing a National Register nomination?" And I said, "Sure. What is it?" So it was just happenstance. But I worked there for 11 years. And then about nine years into that, I tried to figure out what came next in terms of work, because I'd been doing very much the same thing for five or six years.

KK: Was that full-time?

AVLW: Yes. And so I tried to figure out what my skills were and where I might use them. And I took the Radcliffe Publishing Procedures course in the summer of 1982. That was great, [31:00] but then I started interviewing for jobs, and salary scales were miserable. And I had been making pretty good money as a state employee, and I just said, “I don’t know how to go backwards and do that.” I don’t think it means enough to me to start over, to live in Boston on \$13,000 a year, or New York on 8,000. It just didn’t make sense to me. So I kept looking around, and applied for jobs, and got very practiced at rewriting my resume and rewriting my letters of application, and saw a job advertised in the – I think it was the December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1982 *Sunday Journal* for the job I currently hold.

KK: So tell me about that.

AVLW: Well, it was Assistant Director for University Relations –

- End of Track 1-

Track 2

AVLW: [00:00] That job had some responsibilities in government relations and a lot of responsibility in special events on the campus, including the *Providence Journal* Public Affairs Conference. I also did some work with the President and Mrs. Swearer on some of their entertaining, and also work with the corporation emeriti and corporation spouses. And that soon became a fulltime job in government and community relations, which is what I do now.

KK: And by the time that you had started that job, had you already been divorced?

AVLW: Yes. I left my husband in the summer of 1979, and the divorce was final in September of ’80. And then I started – After I’d survived that major change, I then was ready to make other changes, such as trying to find a new job. [01:00] And then once I found the job, I also bought a house. So I hadn’t planned it that way, but it seemed as if I could only manage one major change at a time, and they were all sort of coming due in sequence.

KK: Was it really difficult to make that – the change of leaving your husband, being – it seems that you were – you know, you had a family to depend on, all the way until you had him to depend on, so it was never, you know, you alone.

AVLW: That's right. And so it made it very difficult to leave. It was very scary to be really responsible for myself completely, for the first time in my life. I had done that before, but it was always for very limited periods of time: a summer working in New York or a couple of summers of doing summer theater up in Boothbay, Maine. But three months isn't the same thing as looking ahead to your whole life. So it was very scary and very – a very difficult time, [02:00] and yet very exhilarating. I learned a lot about how strong I really was and what I was capable of doing.

KK: So you've enjoyed working at Brown?

AVLW: Yes. It's really an interesting place to be. It's not at all – working at Brown is not at all like being a student at Brown. It's the same place, but it's very different, whether you're on the sort of receiving and studying end, or you're on the end that's worrying about the mayor of the city of Providence, and property taxes, and neighbors who are grumpy about students living off campus, and all of those sorts of things.

KK: Is it fun to watch the changes? I mean, you have an office that looks right into the Green, and you have to probably notice the students and their interactions. Is it a lot different?

AVLW: I think it's a lot more open. I see a lot more visible signs of friendships between [03:00] men and women, which I think is terrific. See people leaving for vacation, or coming back from vacation, and you see so many bear hugs. It's very open and very nice that way. I notice that, by and large, the students seem to be much more sophisticated than I remember us being. A lot of them have come from what seem to me to be very privileged backgrounds. They've done a lot of traveling. They've been exposed to a lot of things. And I don't make any judgment, about that other than that it's different than it felt in my day.

KK: People were – why? What were the students like more then?

AVLW: Well, I would say that there was more – it seems to me there was more economic diversity. I'm sure there was less geographic diversity. Brown now is a much more national and international place than it was when I was there. [04:00] When I was there, it was a very good school, but it was essentially regional. I mean, most of the students came from the Northeast or the East Coast. The Californian was someone who was fairly rare, as were blacks. There were a number in my class, and I knew some of them, but there wasn't the kind of mixture that you see. I saw today, as I was walking on campus, a young man, wearing what I took to be Indian clothes. And you would not have seen that in the late '60s.

KK: So it was more diverse economically, then, but people were more the same, in a way, it sounds like.

AVLW: I think so. I think so. Well, certainly geographically, there was much less diversity, and racially, as well.

KK: Have you done any volunteer work since –?

AVLW: I did a fair amount when I was married and [05:00] living in Warren. I worked with the local historical society. I was in charge of a committee that was involved with restoring a house the Historical Association bought. I worked with a group of people to produce a lecture series on the architecture of the town, the historic architecture. And I worked with three other people for about four years to write an English-Portuguese handbook on fixing up old houses. I was also president of the board of the Puppet Workshop for a number of years. And I've been active with Friends of Brown University Theatre, ever since I graduated. I'm the nominal president right now, although I'm not very active with that.

KK: What do they do?

AVLW: They produce – or make sure it happens – a production at commencement time, a theater production. And sometimes it's the alumni themselves [06:00] who produce it. Sometimes the alumni simply help with a student production. Or it can be a mixture.

KK: Are there ever any alumni in the productions?

AVLW: Yes.

KK: Have you ever done that?

AVLW: Yes.

KK: You have?

AVLW: It's fun. But with my job, I find that that – I can't possibly manage that. Our office runs commencement. And I just have so much work at that time of year. And I've found, year-round, I have so many night meetings in my schedule, I can't really plan that far in advance, that I can't do theater anymore. I can't count on getting to rehearsals. I don't really miss it. I loved it while I was doing it, but I don't seem to miss it.

KK: Are you still interested in theater? Do you go to the theater a lot?

AVLW: I don't go very much. Just lack of time, as much as anything else. I'm involved in volunteer activities because of my role at Brown now. I do a lot of meetings with community groups, representing [07:00] the university among the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce Board. I'm working on a citizen's advisory committee for the Providence Preservation Society. I'm on the board of the Thayer Street Business Association. So there's a lot of volunteering for – because of what my job is.

KK: So your time is pretty booked, it sounds like.

AVLW: Yeah, it is.

KK: So why don't we end with – I liked your journal group that you have.

AVLW: Ah, the Journal Collective. This is the Rhode Island Women's Journal Writing Collective. And it is 10 years old. It's a group of women who meet in each other's homes once a week, Monday nights, and read to each other from their private journals. And we publish, occasionally. The Brown bookstore has our publications, as does the John Hay Library. And we read in public, occasionally. We've read for the Modern Language Association in Washington, [08:00] the new – what is it? – Northeast Regional Women's Studies Association. We'll be reading at the University of Maine, in Orono, in early May. That has been a very interesting group to be part of. We are supportive of each other's life struggles, and issues, and also of each other's writing. And sometimes the balance changes between what may be more important, whether it's the issue you're wrestling with, or it's the way you're trying to write about it. It's a very engrossing and wonderful group to be part of.

KK: Have you ever read for Brown students?

AVLW: Yes. We've read at – in the Crystal Room last fall. And we've given other readings at Brown over the years. Usually Sarah Doyle and the Pembroke Center cosponsor the readings.

KK: Okay. Well, that interested me, just because you were an English major, so that kind of tied into what your interests had been. [09:00] And it's a way to – it wasn't an occupation. It's something that's separate, that's more of an interest that goes with – an interest that's sort of gone through –

AVLW: Right. The writing continues to be an interest, and I continue to write poetry. And one of these days, I'll send more out and get more rejection slips to add to the collection, [laughs] and then get published.

KK: Have you ever had any poetry published?

AVLW: I have, but not for a long time. And so it's time to knock my head against that wall again, until somebody lets me in.

KK: Well, do you have any interesting stories that you feel you need to add? Or is that it?

AVLW: I think that's it.

KK: I think that takes care of everything. Okay. Thanks.

AVLW: Thank you.

- End of Track 2 -