

Transcript – Judith Weiss Cohen, Class of 1944

Narrator: Judith Weiss Cohen

Interviewer: Carol Fenimore

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Track 1

Carol Fennimore: Okay. Today is the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, 1986. My name is Carol Fennimore, and I'm interviewing Mrs. Judith Weiss Cohen, class of '44. Correct?

Judith Weiss Cohen: Yes.

CF: Okay. Do you come from this area?

JWC: I've lived here since I was about 10 years old, try to remember. About 10 years old. Maybe as old as 13.

CF: And did you come, did you come from a large family?

JWC: Three children, I was the oldest.

CF: And was education a very big part of your family?

JWC: My father went to work when he was nine years old, he dropped out of school when he was 13 and worked full-time. He worked his way up in the textile industry, he graduated from high school, and he had three small children, and a very demanding job, it was not [01:00] high school equivalency, it was complete high school courses. My mother dropped out of high school because nobody told her, as an immigrant child, or her family, that she should graduate from high school. And she was just put in a business course that ended after two years. She has

regretted that her entire life. Very brilliant, and she should have gone on to school. They were very much interested in education, and when I said I wanted – I don't know who said it first, that I should go to Pembroke, whether I said it or they said it. My father had very little money, their friends could not understand how they could even consider having me go to college, or wanting a girl, why would a girl go to college? Secondly, why would a girl with no money go to college? So, it was very high priority. And they backed me all the way.

CF: So, it was always [02:00] implied, once you decided that you were going to college, that you would attend Pembroke. Did you consider other universities?

JWC: Well I did – I wanted to go away to college, and I knew very little about the other colleges. I mean, Vassar, Wellesley, I don't remember the other ones, they were all lumped together, I didn't know any – I just, I didn't even know about the coed schools. I mean, just the women's colleges that I heard of. And we talked about it a great deal, and we decided that even if I got a full scholarship, it would have to be a full scholarship for tuition and a full scholarship for room and board, that it would still cost probably more than it would cost to go to Pembroke. I didn't (inaudible) clothes.

CF: Transportation to visit –

JWC: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) underwear, all sorts of things that – not that I even had underwear, but I mean, you need all sorts of things when you're living in a dormitory. And it was \$10 to apply to each one of those colleges. And we decided that it wasn't worth spending [03:00] the money to apply, in case I didn't – because I could only go if I got a full scholarship.

CF: So, you received full financial aid then?

JWC: No, no.

CF: Did you get a scholarship?

JWC: It was \$400 when I started. I had earned 100, my father had saved 100, he was able to borrow 100, and I didn't know until August, when I got a \$100 scholarship that I could go. And I wasn't going to go any place else. URI at that time was strictly home economics.

CF: For women?

JWC: For women.

CF: For women.

JWC: I was not a scientist at all, I think some people did take science courses. Rhode Island College was probably less demanding than my high school. So I had decided that if I couldn't go to Pembroke I would stay out and work a year, and then, so it was Pembroke or nothing, you know.

CF: So, of course, you didn't live on [04:00] the campus then.

JWC: No, no. But by my last semester I had more scholarship money and I had earned more money, my father was earning a little bit more, so my last semester I lived at college, which I loved, up in Metcalf.

CF: So, what can you tell me from your first year at Brown? Did you go in knowing what courses you wanted to take? What course of study did you wish to take, or did you take a sampling that first year?

JWC: No, I wanted to be a writer, and I just planned all along to major in English. I had decided I wasn't going to take any sciences, that's my regret of my life. You could choose, instead of, as a science, you could choose psychology, and psychology didn't have a lab. So, I didn't take a lab. I didn't, so I had psychology. So I really regret never having taken a lab course, I think that would have been a good discipline for me. And, you know, to have some more understanding of science. I didn't take math, [05:00] you could choose philosophy or math.

CF: You took the philosophy?

JWC: That has, that costs me money right now, because I could make more money if I had 15 credits of math and statistics, and I didn't have college math, so you know, that was eight credits right there. By the time I found this out, I was well in my fifties and commuting. I did take, I took one statistics course as a correspondence course, and did all the assignments on the bus, riding back and forth. But I couldn't take any more, it was just too hard. So that's a regret I've always had. And I hated the philosophy courses terribly. It was about the worst – it was the worst course I ever took in college. So that was a mistake.

CF: So, there was no advising as to – I thought there was a core curriculum. No?

JWC: No. Well there was, but [06:00] I guess that's the way – it had a different way. You could choose your way out of it. So, I took, you know, a lot of English, I took political science, and economics, and art history, music. I didn't take much history, didn't take any sociology. I only took four courses a year. So I did like the psychology course very much, I got a lot out of it. I just, you know, I just wish I had taken another science course. That's about the courses. The advising was very minimal, and you really were steered away, not necessarily in the advising, but women were steered away from math and science.

CF: Right. There was no emphasis on you should take math and science because you'll have this

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JWC: No, absolutely not.

CF: – later on in jobs.

JWC: Very few of my friends took – my friends did the same [kind of?] thing I did. [07:00] I had close friends.

CF: So, let's see. So you didn't live on campus. Did you enjoy being a city girl?

JWC: Well, I decided, I just made a decision that since I couldn't live on campus, I was going to live as if I were on campus. And I sought out people from out of town, I decided I wasn't going to be friends just with my high school friends, that I would make new friends, I would, you know, try to take part in as many activities as I could, so that I could live as close to the dormitory life as possible.

CF: What type of extracurricular activities did you enjoy?

JWC: Well, I was on the *Pembroke Record*, which was the newspaper, I think I got up to be assistant editor, I was assistant editor of *Brun Mael*, the yearbook. What else did I do? I was class – chairman of the class [08:00] ring committee, Ivy Chain, all those kinds of things. But I was working all the way. And my first two years, the work was really just earning-money-work. Did you ever hear of the NY? The National Youth Organization?

CF: No.

JWC: Well, it was the New Deal's version of the Youth Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, which I was involved in later on as an administrator. And it was, you know, started by Roosevelt, and it was a program where the federal government paid your salary at places, at colleges, the college found you the work. The first six months, I worked in the sub-basement of the John Hay Library doing card cataloging. (laughter) And oh, [09:00] I was still also working at the department store where I had worked the summer, you know, worked – was earning the money to get ready for school. I worked there Saturdays in the summer. And then, I got a job, which was really my extracurricular activity, I dropped the *Record*, the *Pembroke Record*, I didn't become editor. I got a job working for the Brown News Bureau. And also, for the *Providence Journal*, yeah, for I would say two years, they were – they had a lot more local news than they have now. And I got a story about Pembroke in the *Journal* every day for two years. Some days, very little tiny stories, you know, somebody was elected, something. And I also, and I did press releases for the Brown News Bureau, and I also was a stringer on three newspapers, the *Hartford*

*Currant*, the *Newark Daily Newsletter*, remember the other one. And would write [10:00] stories about students from those areas at Pembroke. So, that was, you know, it was a wonderful part-time work, because it was doing just what I wanted to do. So I didn't do as much in the formal extracurricular activities after that, after I got that.

CF: Now during the war years, didn't some of the papers kind of consolidated to –

JWC: Yes.

CF: – for example, *Pembroke Record* joined with the *Brown Daily Herald*.

JWC: *Pembroke*, they joined with the *Brown Herald*, and the agreement the Pembroke women didn't want to give up their identity. It was a big fight about it, and they – the compromise was that Pembroke became the editor. So I had a little gang at that time, because one of my, you know, really close friends, we had both been assistant editors together, she became the editor. So that was – I was (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

CF: You know it's interesting that they relinquished their power to a woman, a female editor.

JWC: Yeah, right. It was. [11:00]

CF: So, but at that time you weren't associated with the newspapers?

JWC: With the paper, no, because I had the other jobs and I didn't have time. And in a way, it would have been a conflict.

CF: Did you work for the *Providence Journal* during the summers as well?

JWC: Well, by then I wasn't going, I was going to school summers.

CF: Okay, right. Were you on the – well I guess it was called the accelerated program?

JWC: Yes. Yeah, I went two summers. So I actually graduated in October '43.

CF: Oh, so you were a fall graduate of '43. Okay. And you started in 1940?

JWC: Forty. So I graduated before I was 20, I was 19. (laughter)

CF: How did you feel at that time, you graduating at the young age of 20?

JWC: Well, I – it didn't – I felt just as mature as anybody else. At that point, I probably wasn't, but I felt I was.

CF: And how do you feel about that now? Do you miss any (inaudible) do you feel that's –

JWC: No, I got a lot accomplished in a short period of years. [12:00]

CF: Do you have any particular memories about, for examples, the deans?

JWC: Oh, I loved Dean Morriss. She was wonderful. She was very good to me. She was, she talked to me, and we had a very nice relationship. I had a lot to do with her, since I was the – working for the News Bureau, and for the *Journal*, I would see her a lot. And she was very, very encouraging. I remember something that she told me, she said no matter what I did, you know, she had a very high position for a woman, and she said she always regretted not being married. Which I've often thought of. But she encouraged me a lot in my career goals. And she had me set up a conference, the armed forces wanted to do some recruiting on campus and she let me set up that conference, she wrote me a beautiful letter. Yeah, we had –

CF: Wow. When was this? What year was this that you set up the conference?

JWC: Forty-three.

CF: And was this recruiting the women [13:00] in the college, or the men?

JWC: The women. And I eventually did join the armed forces, probably in that – it was an inspiration.

CF: It's interesting. So, did she provide the contact for –

JWC: For the conference.

CF: – whoever wished to have the conference, they got from her to contact you?

JWC: Yes. Yes. So that was, you know, that was something for a student to do. So we had, we just had a wonderful relationship. I didn't know, I guess I knew Dean Willis a little bit when I came back for graduate school. But I wouldn't have, you know, she wasn't there in college. I did not like Bessie Rudd. Can we talk – is that the kind of thing you want to hear?

CF: Sure. Now is this the physical education teacher?

JWC: Yes, yes. Yes. (laughter)

CF: Can you tell me some particular experiences?

JWC: Well –

CF: Just the physical education didn't take your fancy?

JWC: Well, it was for the benefit of people who were gifted physically. It was not for your average, everyday klutz. And the funny thing is [14:00] that I have turned into a jock, I go to Boston early every morning so I can exercise, and I hike, and I swim, and I do all kinds of things. But –

CF: But at that time, you weren't really –

JWC: She brought out the worst instead of the best. I always remember, for one thing, lying on the floor in the gym, Lyman gym – not Lyman, the other, the Pembroke gym, Sayles gym. No mats, I mean that would never be dreamt of. Lying on the floor, I was very, very thin. And she would lift up my leg, I'd be in agony, my bones hurt lying on that floor. And she – this woman would come over and lift my leg up in the air, and say, "Relax." And I mean, I could no more relax than, you know, move. She also told me that I was the worst tennis player that she had had in her entirety of teaching. When I saw her afterwards, I told her I was enlisting in [15:00] the WACs. And she said I would never get in. I was not physically fit. (laughter) And out of 50 people who took the physical exam the day I took it, only 3 of us got in.

CF: Wow.

JWC: So she did this to a lot of people, she just totally made you feel if you weren't, you know, really gifted at playing a game, the thing they played all the time which I despise is field hockey. And my favorite story is, I still don't know what they play field hockey with, because whatever it is, a puck or a ball, I never got close enough to it to see it.

CF: So this would be playing on Pembroke Field?

JWC: Yes, yes.

CF: So, that's quite interesting.

JWC: I liked Dean Mooar, in the admissions office. We weren't as close as I was with Dean Morriss, but I have, you know, a very nice recollection [16:00] of her.

CF: And of course, she would know your situation entirely, since it was, you didn't know until the last minute really whether you were going or not –

JWC: I'm sure she knew about that.

CF: Yeah, sure. Any particular anecdotes about Margaret Shove? It seems that you knew her quite well.

JWC: Yeah, I can't remember anecdotes. I can probably, someday I'll go through my papers and, you know, I'll give – I'll donate some things to the archives. The thing I can't find, and I know I have someplace, is all the clippings that I used to turn into the *Journal*, because I had to turn them in and they paid me by the inch. So, they're somewhere in this house, or this house.

CF: This is the inch that they published, not the inches that you –

JWC: Yeah, that was the inch that they published, you got paid by. As I said, I remember about that conference, I remember her telling me about her feeling about being married. [17:00] I came across something, I was doing a history of my class in slides, and I was looking through some things, and I came across a beautiful speech that she gave when we were freshmen, freshman week, and talking about the Depression, and the poverty. I didn't remember it at that time, and it didn't sink in. I mean, so that I would remember it later. But it must have been one of the reasons why I thought so much of her.

CF: How did – what does gracious living mean to you?

JWC: Gracious living? It's sitting around, drinking tea, and holding a teacup properly in the lounges, so the dormitories. But, you know, when you say it in that context, that's what I think of.

CF: That's what you think of? [18:00] And how did the war affect your school? I mean besides the fact that was accelerated, but do you have any memories of probably special conservation measures they took at the school?

JWC: Well, we had a lot of things that we did. We had an organization called P.A.W.S. [Pembroke Auxiliary War Service] and I remember, I wrote a big story about it for the *Providence Journal*. It was in the rotogravure section. I was, I could, I wasn't an officer, because I was working back then. But, you know, everybody, we did all sorts of things. I took all my mother's silver wedding gifts that she never used, and I gave them away for scrap metal. I worked every – the last semester, or maybe year, I went to the Rhode Island Hospital every Sunday morning and served lunch in the wards. Because they were short of nurses. [19:00] I couldn't do any nursing, that's not my kind of thing. But I could do that, and did it every Sunday, got up early, and went over there. Everybody I knew, we all did things like that. The war had a tremendous effect on me. Starting before, you know, starting even before '40, because I started knowing people who had come over from Hitler Germany, you know, refugees. People didn't talk much about what had happened to them but you were, you know, you wondered what happened to them. So that was sort of...a pall was over us. What would happen? Especially being Jewish, you wondered, you know, what would happen to us? So, it did have a tremendous effect. Then it had an effect on people we knew, the men I knew...I was very pessimistic. December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, I wasn't surprised. [20:00] I expected us to be at war. But I had a date with somebody who was a young man, who was sneaking up to Canada to fly planes for the British on vacation. Something like that. And he was very upset. I mean he, you know, for him that was a very final day. I mean, he knew something was going to happen, the way I did. But December 7<sup>th</sup> was much more of a final day to him, that it meant that he would be going off into the Army. Then of course, we started getting the soldiers on campus, and that's how I met my husband. He was in the meteorology program. He came in, let's see...he graduated in November, he came in about March of '43. So that, you know, it just was the overriding concern [21:00] of our lives really, the war.

CF: How did you meet your husband, if you don't mind me asking? Meteorologist...English?

JWC: Yeah. It was a blind date. It was a blind date, somebody – his roommate was going out with someone I knew, and it was a long, funny story that I don't want to get involved in, but suggested that we meet each other. And we went out, we had a good time, and then what we did is meet at the John Hay Library. He could only go out Saturday nights, so we'd go out Saturday

nights. But he went to the library every Tuesday and Thursday from 7:00 to 9:00. So I made sure I was in the library every Tuesday and Thursday from 7:00 to 9:00. That was – I was living in a dorm, and then he'd walk me back to the dormitory, we'd study together and he'd walk me back to the dormitory.

CF: Did you find having a house mother kind of different than being able to go home?

JWC: What a funny story [22:00] about a house mother, people were very naïve in those days. The first, I don't know if it was the first date we had, or the second Saturday night, but we just couldn't tear ourselves apart at twelve o'clock, so I said well, let's go to my house, I'll stay over, I'll go home. You know, perfectly innocent. And so we went to the house mother, I can probably find something, but I can't remember her name. And I said, I'd like to go stay overnight at my house instead of coming home tonight. So she said, "Who?" Well, will you be all right? Are you alone?" And she saw this young man standing there, so I said, "Oh no, no." So she said, "Will this young man be with you?" And I said, "Yes," so she said, "It's all right then." (laughter) So, he took me home. So that's what house mothers were like. (laughter) He didn't really [23:00] expect anything to happen.

CF: Yeah. So, when you graduated...would you like to move on to graduation?

JWC: Yeah, however you want to do it.

CF: Okay. So, after you graduated, you graduated in October.

JW: Yes.

CF: And then did you enlist right away?

JWC: No, I went to New York the next day. And I stayed to look for a job, I wanted a job at a New York newspaper. And of course, I couldn't get one. *New York Times* and *Post* and so forth, couldn't get one of those jobs. And I ended up getting a job on a newspaper that was being

printed for servicewomen. And it was a weekly newspaper, and I was the editor of it, and I wrote stories and so forth. And I worked at that for about four months, lived in New York, and worked on the paper. And then I decided that if I was doing that kind of work in armed forces, myself, I'd like [24:00] to be in – be where everybody else was. And so I joined the WACs, and they were recruiting at that time, they were saying pick what you wanted, and I picked public relations. Which took a while, I didn't get into it right away. But then I worked in an Army newspaper in New York, so.

CF: So you remained in New York then, once you –

JWC: Well I went to basic training in Georgia for six weeks, and I was stationed in, I could pick where I was – you could pick where you were stationed, and pick your job. The job, I had to do a lot of applying and pushing and so forth. First they put me in an ordinance office, but I eventually got the job and the location. So I was there about two years. And then I came back on the GI Bill. By that time, we had gotten engaged, (inaudible) overseas. And he wasn't due back yet. So on the GI Bill, I came back and started my master's, getting my master's degree. I never thought of graduate school. I mean, graduating from [25:00] Pembroke. That was another thing that wasn't talked about. Which I – very few of my close friends, none of my close friends, and very few people I knew went on to graduate school. For one thing, probably nobody could afford it. But I thought this was too good an opportunity to pass up, to be able to go free. So, I got a master's degree, and he had to finish, he hadn't finished his undergraduate degree. So we went to school together, we lived in Brown Town.

CF: I've heard of that.

JWC: That's where the Jewish Community Center is now, on Elm Grove Avenue, and that was Army barracks that they made into apartments. We lived there, and we'd go to school –

CF: Was the stadium there, or were you living across from –

JWC: No, the stadium was there, but this was across from the stadium, yeah. The funny thing is that I later had a job at the Jewish Community Center, this is just a couple of years ago. And one day I was sitting and working and suddenly said, this office is exactly where my [26:00] apartment was. And I was (inaudible). (laughter)

CF: So you lived in Brown Town.

JWC: I lived in Brown Town.

CF: And then you graduated, what did you do?

JWC: I got my master's in political science, and I got pregnant, I was six months pregnant right when I got my master's degree, which was very unusual in those days. And then I had three children, and stayed at home until, I'm trying to think, I think my youngest child was six, I did some part-time work. And I think she was eight, I started working full-time in a community action program, the Blackstone Valley Community Action Program, writing grant applications, and writing a book about poverty in Pawtucket. And then, became assistant, associate director of a (inaudible). [27:00]

CF: The agency?

JWC: The Blackstone Valley Community Action Program. And that was in '66 to '73, and '73 I worked for three years at the Jewish Community Centers, director of their administrative departments. And then '76, I started working at the Census Bureau, a wonderful exciting job. Do you want this kind of thing?

CF: Sure, this is great, yeah.

JWC: Okay. I –

CF: This is in Boston, yeah?

JWC: In Boston.

CF: Right.

JWC: Information Services Specialist, and I started the program, and now more people working for me. And I have a library, people come in and do research, answer reference questions. And I run seminars and workshops and conferences all over the Northeast.

CF: What are the subjects of these?

JWC: Well today I gave a – ran a workshop on constructing a time series, which is one I've never done before. [28:00] We just created this, and we decided to run a series of workshops. I'll tell you, some of the things I'm doing, just in the next few weeks, a couple weeks ago, I was interviewed on television, on cable television in the New Bedford area. Statistics on women, how businesses can use census data, two separate programs on cable in that area. A week from Saturday, I'm speaking to the Northeast Regional Conference of Social Studies, talk about painting a portrait of America. How you can teach your children, your students about the changes that have taken place since they were born. All of these things, I think of the subjects as well. The following week, March 11<sup>th</sup>, I'm going to talk to the Rhode Island Educational Media Association, which is school librarians. And we talked a lot about what I should speak about, [29:00] and came up with a topic, which was 200 years of counting, which was going to be from 1790 to 1990. And I said I'd put in some Rhode Island statistics over the years, and then talk about how we're going to take the 1990 census, and we want to get schools involved.

CF: So you basically – do you work as kind of a public relations liaison from the public to the Census Bureau?

JWC: Yes, yes. That's one phase of it.

CF: Interesting role, it's great.

JWC: Yes, it's very exciting.

CF: And I can see where the statistics and the mathematics, I can see why –

JWC: Well, I found out, I – you see, they have a strange thing at the Census Bureau. Not in Washington, but in the field, in the regional offices. You can't go above a certain level unless you have these 15 credits of math and statistics, and you're called a survey statistician. And they supervise surveys and they never look at a statistic. They supervise lots of interviewers. But it's a requirement. [30:00] And I use statistics much more than they do. I needed the three-credit course. And as I said, for my own self I would have liked some math. I mean I would feel more – even today, if I talked, when we talk about getting into something like statistics, even a statistical method, even though I know it, I'm not as comfortable talking about it, because I feel there's this gap. But, I don't make mistakes that statisticians make. That's what I talked about today. I make a tremendous number of mistakes because they can't read. They don't read the name of the table, they don't read the footnotes, they don't read the definitions. And they – yeah, people come here all the time, they're going to do rational analysis. And they take numbers from 1972 that are a totally different kind of number from the number they use from 1975, and the number for [31:00] 1982 is from another source, and they don't know what they're doing. And that's why they give for being able to read and being able to explain them.

CF: How did you – let's see. How do you feel your career has developed? It seems like you've done a lot of different things.

JWC: Well actually, everything went together for this particular position. When I worked at the Community Action Program, I did administration, a lot of admin, supervising lots of people. And I did a lot of staff work where I wrote the grant applications, the speeches, and set up the public relations programs for the agency. But I never knew which part of it I liked better. Because I was doing these things all together.

- End of Track 1 -

## Track 2

JWC: – community center, and it was 99% administration. I realized I didn't like that. I didn't like having my whole work dependent on other people's work. So, what happened is I just filled out a job application for the federal government one day when I got unhappy. I had the application sitting in my desk for a year, and I filled it out, I hate to tell you this, it's a lot of luck in getting jobs. It got to the Civil Service Commission, somebody read it and analyzed it. I was offered about three jobs. But this particular one had just opened up, my boss was looking for the first person to run this program. And here was the public relations, I'd been on television, I'd been on radio, I'd done a lot of writing, you know, the academic background, everything. And I had used census data, which I didn't even know I was applying for the Census Bureau. [01:00] I just thought I was filling out a job – but I wrote a very detailed resume, this form that you fill out, the form 171, and I just wrote, I didn't just write the name of a job, I wrote what I did on the job. So I wrote about using census statistics to do a study about poverty in the Blackstone Valley. So, you know, all these things were just perfect for that job.

CF: That's great. That's great.

JWC: If I, you know, if I had applied another year, I was just – it was just one first (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

CF: You didn't take such (inaudible) applications, certainly, yeah. That's great. So, when you look back since you graduated, what type of obstacles have you encountered?

JWC: What type of obstacles? I'm basically a very optimistic person, so we're going to have to think hard about obstacles. Well, I think –

CF: Well, you can tell me about your lucky breaks as well.

JWC: (laughter) Well I think in the beginning, [02:00] I think being a woman did make things harder. I think that the job, I mean I really did want to work on a New York newspaper.

CF: And so, did you run up against a lot of –

JWC: Well, what was happening there, that was not so much being a woman, because the men were all going overseas, and they were short people. But, I think there might have been money, because they had people who were really, they came in droves and they worked with the real mecca for journalism. You didn't think of working any place else, the way people try now and work someplace else and then get to Washington, or New York, or Boston. So there were just hundreds of people. Just thronging New York, hundreds of women looking for jobs. And they would work, people were going in and offering to work for nothing. I don't know whether the newspapers took them, but you, in a way, you were competing with that. I had to earn a living and support myself. [03:00] My friends, there were three of us who went, and we were all writers. And we all had the same kind of job, you know, like my servicewoman job. Not great –

CF: These are people from –

JWC: From Pembroke.

CF: From Pembroke? Mm-hmm.

JWC: Not great jobs, but a sort of foothold in it, and they thought I was making a terrible mistake to go to the Army, because they said by the time they get out, all the men will be back, and there won't be any jobs. Which happened. I mean, people did lose their jobs when the men came back from the war.

CF: Could you tell me a little bit about their, very briefly, what happened with them? Did they –

JWC: One of them went into advertising, and stayed in advertising. I just talked to her lately, and she stayed in advertising. She's just retired, she never had any children, she married but she didn't have children. So she has worked all those years since 1943. And so, she just retired. But she did very well. The other one, [04:00] her mother died suddenly, and she left New York and went home to take care of her father with no, you know, that was something she had to do. She had to go home and cook his three meals a day, and take care of the house. And she has devoted her life to volunteer organizations, and has done some very wonderful things as a volunteer. But I don't think she's done very much writing, if any since those days. But two of us stayed somewhat near it.

CF: Right, sure.

JWC: And I've done some freelance writing, besides the – I do, I write every day. I write something. But besides that, I've done some freelance writing, I've written a chapter in a book. I was published last year.

CF: No.

JWC: I'm still doing some other writing. I'm thinking about retiring so I can spend some time – more time [05:00] on writing. I haven't wanted to work on a newspaper in years and years and years. But I would like to do some writing.

CF: It seems that you've been able to balance getting married and having a family, and also, you know, developing a career (inaudible).

JWC: Well I think I have, the years before I worked I was very active in the League of Women Voters, I was president of the Pawtucket League, and active in the state League. So I did a lot of research, and writing, and public speaking. So that, probably only a couple of years that I stayed home and just did housework.

CF: So you never felt any particular pressure to go, or to pursue any one path?

JWC: No. And I wouldn't have gone to work if we didn't need the money to educate our children. I wanted to become League of Women Voters president for the state, I loved that org. But then we were awfully worried about whether we could afford to send three children to college. [06:00] And I just, it was a lot of pressure on my husband. If I'm going to spend time, I should spend time earning money. And fortunately I've been able to do things that I enjoy. So I, you know, it's not anything that I've regretted. It just sort of followed. But I was one of the first people I know to work full-time. I've done a lot of things first.

CF: Yes, you have. Let's see. Do you have any other memories in particular, perhaps of Brown or particular professors, or particularly influential men or women that you encountered during your (inaudible)?

JWC: I think Kappy, or I.J. Kapstein, who was an English professor, and he was a very good influence in writing, and a very warm person. I didn't always agree with him on his [07:00] recommendations on my writing. But, I think I learned a lot from him. I learned an awful lot from William Hastings, who was in the English department. His courses, his regular courses were terrible courses. Very, very, very boring lecturer. I took all honors, almost all honors courses. And I would say that until I took his honors course, I hadn't really thought. I mean everything was just a question of memorizing something, giving it back in an exam. I didn't have to – I found the psychology course hard the first semester. But then by the second semester I caught onto the jargon, could just, you know, answer the questions and learn what I was supposed to learn. But he had a very interesting way of teaching a course. It was an honors course, [08:00] there were six people, three of whom were graduate students. So that was, you know, a very high level course. And it counted for two courses. So it was a double course. And every week, three people wrote papers, and the other three people learned as much as the people writing the papers in criticizing their papers. So, I remember the first one I wrote, I wrote a standard thing, just rattled something off. And then there were these three people who had all done the same research I had done, and why did you say this, and why did you say that, and what is your reason? And I really had to use my mind. So, when – I think I once read – people used to say, that they couldn't see – you know, they hated his course, freshmen would take his standard

100 people courses. And I did hear him lecture once, and he was just dreadful. [09:00] But he certainly got us to learn. Yeah, that year. That was a wonderful experience.

CF: And this was a general, an honors course?

JWC: An honors course. And it was an honors undergraduate course about a –

CF: [Attended by graduate students?].

JWC: Honors graduate level course. You know, even if you were an undergraduate, it was honors.

CF: Did you find that they –

JWC: Graduate level.

CF: Did they encourage you to pursue any particular path at your school, or?

JWC: I never got –

CF: Or you never discussed that kind of thing with –

JWC: I never got friendly with the professors, I never stayed – I was always going off to work right after class. I didn't have the kind of relationship where people drop in and talk to their professors at great length. Talk about careers, I never did that. And you really weren't expected to have a career. You were expected to do something while you were waiting to get married. So that it wasn't something that you would talk about [10:00] a lot. And I wasn't really, I wasn't the kind of person that, I didn't go ask people's advice. I think I, you know, I'm not saying that I shouldn't have. I think maybe I, you know, maybe lost some opportunities. But I didn't have that kind of relationship with anybody on the faculty.

CF: How about the people you worked with at the *Providence Journal*? You probably have a totally different perspective.

JWC: Yeah, at the *Providence Journal*, I didn't have a lot of – an awful lot of personal contact. I worked for a wonderful person at the Brown News Bureau. His name was Frank Little. And he left Brown shortly after that. He was a very good influence on me. He was a, you know, he wanted to become a newspaper man, hadn't quite made it, got this job at Brown. And I did go to his – he and his wife would have me over a lot. And I wasn't, you know, in those days, you'd be afraid to be out at night, but you didn't know why you were afraid. So, you'd get off and I would stay up late, [11:00] stay at Brown, cover a speech or something, then go to Frank's house on Benefit Street, and then take the trolley home. I lived on Taft Avenue, over near the Brown Stadium. Over in back of the Brown Stadium.

CF: I know where that is.

JWC: So, he was a very good influence. And we talked a lot in a very adult way. But not in advice or what I was going to do, just we had adult conversations. I'm trying to remember what else. Oh, did you ever hear of Miss Wilder? I can't remember her first name.

CF: No.

JWC: She was a biology professor in 1940, and she had been there for several years, before then. I don't know whether she was the only – she was probably the only woman professor when I was there.

CF: When I hear people mention women professors, the only one I've heard of was the – she hasn't been named, I didn't recognize her by name, but I had sort of the biology (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

JWC: Biology professor. One of my jobs, [12:00] that neighborhood, the National Youth Organization, NYA jobs, was working for her and typing her exams and papers and anything she

had to type. And she got me a typewriter, and I sat in a lab, and here was a person who didn't even take freshman biology, sitting in a comparative anatomy lab, with people cutting up cats on each side of me. But I think, and we didn't talk much, but there was a role model, I mean there was a woman who was doing something that other women didn't do. So, I think that she did have an effect on me.

CF: Just out of curiosity, was she married, or?

JWC: No. And I don't, I'm saying no because I never heard that she was. I assume that she wasn't. None of the women, none of the deans, none of the (inaudible). [13:00] There was another English professor I had when I was a freshman, I can't think of his name now, but he went into the Army, and I think he died quite young. And I had him for writing groups, and he, I think, got a lot out of me in getting me to write some very, very good things. Blanchard.

CF: Blanchard.

JWC: Yeah. He was (inaudible). There was some – this is going to have to be postponed, I think I'm beginning to see that. There was a woman, Mary Louise Record, who was – what had happened is they had a Pembroke News Bureau, and a Brown News Bureau. Mary Louise Record was the director of the Pembroke News Bureau. And they decided to merge them [14:00] into one. And she was either retiring or going onto another job, I don't – she was married. And sort of her swan song was to select the Pembroke students who would work at the Brown News Bureau. And she was very cruel, and very hard. She demanded that we act – there were about, we started in say, eight people. Narrowed it down to four, and we had to act as if we were working at the Brown News Bureau every day for about two months, turning a story a day. Very, very rigorous kind of thing. I still had to work, I had to work at the outlet on Saturdays, I had to work in the John Hay cataloging. And I had a couple of – I had a part-time job in the educational measurement office, typing. Still had to do all these things and take my courses. And I don't [15:00] know how I got through the few months, but I did get them one of the two jobs. So, I couldn't stand her for years. I hated her but this was pretty good training. Yeah, it was terrible

for the people who didn't get it, because they had put all of that work in and didn't end up with the job. You know, nowadays, if you did something like that, you'd have to pay people.

CF: Yeah. I picked up that you used to work at the outlet store.

JWC: Yes.

CF: Did you have any feelings about it being – possibly being dismantled?

JWC: Oh, that was sad.

CF: I don't think it started yet.

JWC: Oh, it's – the store is totally closed, the building may be used for something, but the store is totally out of business. While I worked there for – I graduated in January, January '40.

CF: Okay.

JW: From high school.

CF: From high school.

JWC: [16:00] And I think I got the job there in March, and I worked until September. And then I worked, I guess the next summer, and I worked every Saturday. And that was one thing that I remember very unpleasantly, because you had to wear black, you would go out, and nobody questioned this. You just did things – they told you to wear black, the first week's pay, made \$13, went in to buy a new black dress. And young women did not wear black in those days. I had to wear that black dress to Pembroke classes Saturday morning, and then go to work. And that was a terrible scandal.

CF: Because it was – it was just socially unacceptable?

JWC: Yeah, yeah. And it was like, you know, no one ever discussed it or commented on it, but it was the feeling. Maids and people who worked at department stores wore black. And here I was, trying to be a real college [17:00] coed, glamorous, smooth, all the things we used to like to be, and then Saturday morning I put on my black dress, I was very happy when I didn't have any Saturday classes. But I worked as a cashier and, you know, it was a good experience.

CF: Is there anything else you'd like to say? Would you like to have a few minutes to think?

JWC: Well I love Pembroke. I mean it's just, you know, wonderful experience for me, my friends, the education. And I'm very, very warm feelings. What little I have, I always give them something every year. I try to, you know, when I have – before I worked full-time, I was involved in some of the alumni association activities. And it just was – it was just wonderful for me. I might mention one thing. [18:00] You know, some of the colleges were supposed to have quotas, take in a certain number of Jewish people, some wouldn't take any at all, I knew someone who applied to Wheaton and was told they weren't taking any more Jews. And they were wonderful to me. I think I always felt I wouldn't get a full scholarship when I started. They gave one full scholarship a year to a freshman. Someone Jewish had gotten it the year before, so then I knew I couldn't get a full scholarship. That they would never do that, they wouldn't do that again. And it was just, it was accepted, the way, you know, blacks accept the things that happen to them. They did give me the partial scholarship, they raised it every year, by the fourth year it was, you know, a very significant, it was probably most of the tuition. And there was never the slightest feeling of discrimination [19:00] either from faculty, students, the administration, I mean, I told you about Dean Morriss, and everybody just, it was just everyone was the same. And, you know, I wasn't the poorest person there, but I was near the bottom. I had close friends who were very wealthy, middle-class, all types of friends, Jewish, non-Jewish, people from big cities, people from Providence. And it just, you know, I just felt that they were wonderful to me. I can't say too much about it. It was a great experience. My sister, I got my – helped convince my younger sister to go. If things were better financially, she probably could have gone someplace else. My younger brother went, I met my husband there. My sister went –

CF: Your younger brother went to Brown?

JWC: Yeah. My sister met her husband [20:00] at Brown, I could not get my three children to go to Brown, it was too close to home. So, I kind of thought someday we'll all march down there, go together, but I didn't achieve that. But that doesn't change my feelings about Brown.

CF: That's wonderful, you have such a sense of community.

JWC: I really, really do. And one year they asked – I was named the chief marshal (inaudible). That was a great experience. The graduates applauding as us old people walked on, that was really very memorable. And told you I just did a slide show for my fortieth reunion in '84. I'm the class historian, because I'm always the one that sits down and writes something about the class. So, I did something different, I put together a slide show. Just dug out lots of old pictures. [21:00] Put together a slide show for our reunion. I'll give that to the archives. Get a chance to put it together.

CF: Great.

JWC: I have to write this down someplace. Or then, if I should die, I want everything that the children don't want, that's related to Brown, to go to the archives. Boxes and boxes. They're not well organized at all, but one of these days, no, someday they'll go there.

CF: Great, thank you very much. We greatly appreciate it.

JWC: Is this the kind of thing you've been doing? I mean is this the – no, I mean this is the kind of talk you wanted?

CF: This is great, this is great. Thank you very much.

JWC: Thank you. I like the opportunity.

CF: Good.

JWC: How did we do on time?

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