

Marjorie Phillips Wood Burroughs, class of 1911

Interviewer: Barbara Raab, class of 1981

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**Marjorie Phillips Wood Burroughs:** In college, back in 1907 when I started, I was Marjorie Philips Wood, and I lived just over the state line in Taunton, Massachusetts, but in those days it took a long time to get from Taunton, Massachusetts. We had electric cars, and they ran right by my house in Taunton, so it was easy for me to go out and take the car. But it took an hour to get to Providence and that was considered too much. To get over early in the morning for chapel, and so I lived in what was then the dormitory, the old Slater Memorial Homestead down on Benefit Street so we had to climb a steep hill everyday to get up to Pembroke Hall where all our activities took place. I think there were only two buildings at that time, Pembroke Hall and Sayles Gymnasium.

**Barbara Raab:** How many other girls were living in the dormitory where you lived?  
[1:10]

**Burroughs:** I would say perhaps, uh, fifteen. A small group. And they were of all classes—freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors. And I remember when I was a freshman, there were perhaps four other freshmen. My roommate was a sophomore and she happened to be also a girl from Taunton, Massachusetts, where I was born and brought up. And, uh, we were quite a lively crowd, and we were very noisy, and the seniors and juniors objected strongly to our carryings-on, because we disturbed their studying and ours, and it was really too bad. And finally they put us on the college discipline. Dean King was very disgusted with us [laughter]. Gave us quite a lecture.

**Raab:** What sorts of things did you used to do that used to annoy them?

**Burroughs:** Well, I think that we made up plays and, uh, carried out parts in the plays and uh did a lot of athletic things too. There wasn't much discipline as far as we were concerned. And we just ran rampant, and it was just too bad. I can...I can see now why the seniors and juniors objected to us.

**Raab:** You didn't do much studying, you preferred to play?

**Burroughs:** Well we did our studying at other times I think. We were quite conscientious about our studies, but I know we were noisy evenings. And...But then by spring of the year they really got after us, and quieted us down. And we behaved the rest of the year because we were really under what they called college discipline.

**Raab:** What did that mean?

**Burroughs:** I don't quite know. I think if we had gone on, and not been obedient, why we might have been expelled, even. They were quite severe in those days about our behaviors.

**Raab:** Did Dean King come down to the dormitory and speak to you girls?

**Burroughs:** Yes, and she used to come very often and have supper at the dormitory. And, well of course we were all on our good behavior. But she was a really strict disciplinarian. And she used to get up in chapel and really preach sermons to us, and uh, all that I can remember of the sermons was that she was very particular about our dress, and how we appeared. And of course in those days we didn't go out on the street without a hat and gloves, and we by no means went over on the men's campus without being fully equipped as far as dress went. And uh, in chapel she would get up and say if we were going to put on shirtwaist as we called them in those days, put on a blouse, always be sure that it was a fresh one, her stock phrase was when in doubt, don't.

**Raab:** [laughter] Was it because of Dean King that everything was so formal like that?

**Burroughs:** No, I think those were more, much more formal days. But, she was the epitome of formality, I might say. Everything had to be just so.

**Raab:** I heard from some other graduates that I went to speak to that many of the students were afraid of her [laughter].

**Burroughs:** Well, I think she might inspire awe. She was a beautiful looking woman.

**Raab:** What did she look like? I've seen some pictures, but it's hard to see.

**Burroughs:** You see the pictures. Well, uh, she was tall and slender, and she had lovely curly hair—very wavy. And quite classy features. A very nice nose, and eyes, and uh, a very good looking woman, but she did inspire awe, I think.

**Raab:** Did you get to know her well, or was she pretty removed?

**Burroughs:** Yes, I did. Toward the last. And I could, uh, appreciate her much more than I did when I was a freshman [laughter].

**Raab:** Yes, I'm sure [6:12]. You mentioned going over to the Brown campus, and other people that I talked to said they never remember being allowed to go over there, for the first couple of years.

**Burroughs:** Well I took an advanced German course with Camillo von Klenze. And he was, a typical pressure I would say. And he approved of the men very much more than the girls. But strange to say, in his class, I think there were perhaps nine girls and one boy. So he didn't like that very well. I think I went over there two succeeding years and took advanced German. And he was very learned and I admired his intellect, but he was

quite severe [clears throat]. He'd get very much out of patience sometimes with us [clears throat]. If we couldn't answer questions that were really quite advanced and beyond anything we'd ever dealt with, and sometimes after much questioning and no replies from any of us, he'd dismiss the whole class. Turn us out of the room. He'd say you can go back to your campus, and that was the end for the day.

**Raab:** He would get angry?

**Burroughs:** He would get really, very tried with us, because we didn't know all the answers.

**Raab:** Do you think he was that way with the men also?

**Burroughs:** I don't know. I never talked with any of the boys who took his classes. I think they rather avoided him [Laughter]. It looks so with nine girls and one man in his class.

**Raab:** Were most of the classes, most of the professors, like that?

**Burroughs:** No, some were [laughter] much more easy-going. Let me think...there was Professor Johnson, I think his name was Albert Johnson. He taught French. And uh, he was quite a playboy. He attended all the dances, and loved dancing with all the girls [Laughter].

**Raab:** How did the girls like him?

**Burroughs:** Oh, they appreciated him very much [Laughter]. They liked him. And uh, he was quite easy-going, but he was a good French teacher, and I think I had two years with him... And he really, he really... was a good teacher.

**Raab:** Did you major in German?

**Burroughs:** Yes, uh, German and uh, well I had quite a lot of English, but German was my principle.

**Raab:** What other sorts of courses did you take [9:17]?

**Burroughs:** Well of course, it was compulsory to take English and English Composition the freshman year. And mathematics; we had algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. But they were compulsory. And uh, let me think, what other courses were there? Latin—I had three years of Latin. I had four years, four in high school, then I had three more in college. So that was sort of my second specialty. And then, in sophomore year, we had courses in economics, and then ... later on philosophy ... quite a lot of English.

**Raab:** So you had a broad range of courses?

**Burroughs:** Yes, I think the class that I enjoyed most, had the most fun in, was Professor Thomas Crosby. Have you come across his name?

**Raab:** No.

**Burroughs:** Well, he taught grammatics, and plays, and we read a lot of plays. And then, one year, I took his course in plays. English plays. And then another year, I took his course in public speaking, and I had never had so much fun in my life [Laughter]. Because when we would get up to speak, and uh, well we all laughed at one another because we were very, very amateurs, and his remarks were caustic. And good-natured in a way, but very cutting. And I remember the first time that he got me up there to make some motions to illustrate my speech. He said “Miss Wood, that was the worst motions I ever saw anyone make!” Course, I was crushed, but the whole class roared [Laughter]. We laughed at one another. And um, let me see, there was a friend of mine in the class—Stella Gerber. Afterwards she became Stella Gerber Hall. And uh...she was supposed to get up and make an extemporaneous speech, which was a great trial of course. And she began by saying that she got up in the morning, and rushed to get dressed to get down in time for breakfast, and then she rushed to get her breakfast eaten to get over to class, and I guess he got sort of tired of all that repetition, and he made a very sarcastic remark to her. And she was crying. But we got used to it after a while, and we did have a merry time. And upstairs in Pembroke Hall, I don’t know whether there are now settles. There were these big seats outside the door, and the people out in the hall, the other girls, would climb on the settlement, and peek over the transom to join in the merriment as much as they could. So it was a very jolly kind of class. I had a friend who was from Kentucky, and she had one of these Southern accents. And the poor girl, he just well, really bullied her, to try to get rid of her accent. She never got rid of it [Laughter]. She tried, but to no avail.

**Raab:** I guess a class on public speaking was unusual since most of the other classes the girls didn’t get to do too much talking.

**Burroughs:** That’s right. It was a class that everyone wanted to be in [Laughter]. You were in for a high time. But I think it did help with our speech, I think he was a good teach, but uh, it was uproarious at times. My future sister-in-law sat beside me and we were always regaled in laughter. She had a great sense of humor. And what she didn’t think of I did. We had a wonderful time in that class.

**Raab:** I was thinking about... you said that you took classes in just about every, every sort of discipline, and I wonder what you think about the purpose of having such a broad education. What do you think the school was trying to prepare the girls for?

**Burroughs:** Well, in that day it was lousy for the teaching profession. You didn’t go into much else. And I fully expected to end as a teacher, but I didn’t I went into library work [15:05]. And I wasn’t anxious to become a teacher, because I dreaded the discipline, I didn’t think I could manage it.

**Raab:** How did you come into doing library work?

**Burroughs:** Well, I had an old friend in Taunton who knew the head of the Harvard College Library, who was then William Coolidge Lane, and she got me the opportunity to have an interview with him, and uh, see if I was qualified or interested in library work. And, of course, that meant college library being Harvard and Cambridge. So... when I had the interview, he turned me over to the head of the catalogue department. He said there was a vacancy there, and I could interview with Mr. Currier, the head. Mr. Currier was a Harvard graduate and he had gone into the library on graduating from Harvard. And... he... said there was a vacancy, and that my qualifications — the languages I knew, and uh, the courses I had taken—he thought were a good preparation. So, he offered me a job. I have sort of forgotten, but I think I got something like sixty-five dollars a month.

**Raab:** Were you living at home?

**Burroughs:** No, I boarded in Cambridge for about four years. Then I left, and went home, and commuted by train. [Pause] And I was there for over twenty-five years.

**Raab:** So that was exciting to you then?

**Burroughs:** What was that?

**Raab:** So even though it was sort of by chance that you got this job, it held your interest?

**Burroughs:** Yes, oh I loved it. Yes, I did. I really enjoyed it very much. And I took courses after I got there in Spanish and Italian which I had never had had. [Clears throat] And I happened to have the, uh, well... course... what do I want to say? The subjects that required the knowledge of different languages... foreign languages. The books came through... I did mostly historical subjects, and the books that came in through these subjects were in all kinds of languages, so the more languages you had, the better you could do. And I thoroughly enjoyed it.

**Raab:** Do you think the other things that you learned in college, do they apply to what you were doing there?

**Burroughs:** Yes, I think they all helped.

**Raab:** So you don't think you could've done that without having gone to college?

**Burroughs:** To college? No. No, not possibly.

**Raab:** Something I wanted to ask you about... if I'm not mistaken you were on the basketball team?

**Burroughs:** Oh, that was the happiest time of all in college. We were playing the games. We had a lot of inter-class games. Mostly that. But we did play, I remember going down to Radcliffe, and getting badly beaten [Laughter], and also, uh, the University of Rhode Island, as it is now, I think then it was Rhode Island College. But our coaching, I don't think was really very good [Laughter]. We played. I think the score was something at Radcliffe like 29-11.

**Raab:** Who was the coach of the team?

**Burroughs:** I think her name... was her name Bates?

**Raab:** Miss Bates? She was a gym teacher, wasn't she?

**Burroughs:** Yes, yes.

**Raab:** So was, tell me some more about being on the basketball team. It looked like a lot of fun.

**Burroughs:** Yes it was. We had one very, uh, fine player. A tall girl. A colored girl, Nellie Nicholson. She was such a good player. And then my friend from Taunton who I had gone through all of primary, grammar, and high school with, Lyla Crapo. She was on the team. And Mildred Hatch. And uh, my... what we called then, fraternity sisters, Alice Hildreth, I think she was setter. She was very tall. Nearly six feet, if not quite six feet. And we did have good times. How did you know I was on the basketball team? [20:40]

**Raab:** Well I saw a picture, in the Brun Mael.

**Burroughs:** Oh, in the Brun Mael, yes.

**Raab:** Well how did you wind up on the basketball team? Had you been athletic before you came to college?

**Burroughs:** Well a little. I played tennis. And I belonged to a gymnasium class outside of school, and I was always interested and I had two brothers and my father used to say I was the best boy he had [laughter].

**Raab:** What did he mean by that?

**Burroughs:** Well, I was a tomboy, and uh, uh, the boys weren't as interested in sports, and uh, my brothers. So, I liked games better than they did. One brother played football, but uh, I think it was just because some of his best friends were on the team. He liked to be with them. So I always loved athletics, and now I don't even look at them. I'm not a bit interested [laughter].

**Raab:** So you played sports while you were growing up all the time?

**Burroughs:** Yes.

**Raab:** Did you, you said you were a tomboy, most parents don't like it when their daughters were tomboys.

**Burroughs:** Well mine didn't mind...as long as I was happy and well, that was what mattered.

**Raab:** Were you the oldest child?

**Burroughs:** I was the youngest. I had two older brothers.

**Raab:** Oh, older brothers. So when you were growing up, and playing all kinds of games and things like that, you played with your father, or?

**Burroughs:** Yes, yes, quite a lot. But the two boys, as I said, weren't too interested in games. They... one was interested in the cadets. They used to have cadets in high school, I guess you didn't remember that.

**Raab:** No, I don't know what that is.

**Burroughs:** That was a great thing to be in the cadets. All the boys was.

**Raab:** What was the cadets?

**Burroughs:** Well, uh, a military badger. All I can see are ROTC in college. Sort of on that order. Wear a uniform, carry a sword... I don't know whether they have cadets in high school now.

**Raab:** I've never heard of that.

**Burroughs:** Haven't you?

**Raab:** No...so when you got to college and you got to play basketball, that must've been a nice opportunity.

**Burroughs:** Yes.

**Raab:** What position were you?

**Burroughs:** What?

**Raab:** What position did you play?

**Burroughs:** Forward.

**Raab:** I saw the picture, you look like you were pretty tall compared to the... rest of the team.

**Burroughs:** Well let me see, Alice Hildreth I know was nearly six feet, but, uh, and Nellie Nicholson. But the others were I guess average, and I was average. Five feet two-or-three.

**Raab:** Were you a good player?

**Burroughs:** Fair, yeah. I made baskets quite often [laughter]. And I loved it, so. And then we had another division that was bowling. Oh we loved that.

**Raab:** Was there, I think...I might be wrong, but I think, wasn't there a bowling alley in uh Sayles Gymnasium.

**Burroughs:** Sayles Gymnasium.

**Raab:** Was that required, bowling?

**Burroughs:** No, no that was just for our own good times. But I can't remember that we had games or competitions. But maybe we did. I never took part in anything of that nature, but I used to go over and bowl after classes sometimes. A whole lot of would gather there, have a very good time, bowling. And then of course we had to attend gymnasium. That, that was painful for some of the... girls. I liked it, because I had had some before at, uh, in, Taunton, before I went to college. So I, could twirl the Indian clubs and the dumbbells [Laughter] and all that.

**Raab:** Did you have to climb ropes?

**Burroughs:** A little, yes. It wasn't too strenuous, but some of the girls had never had any, and uh, it came hard on them. They would cut gym classes, but they had to make it up before they could graduate [25:39].

**Raab:** What other sorts of things did you have to do? You had to take certain classes, and you had to go to gym?

**Burroughs:** Yes, and we had to go to chapel. We were allowed so many cuts in chapel. Three a term, or something like that. I have forgotten whether chapel came everyday or not. Of course it wouldn't be on Sunday, but I think most of the days of the week we were supposed to attend chapel. And it was at nine o'clock in the morning.

[high-pitched sound] [26:17]

**Burroughs:** Oh, yes.



**Raab:** I'm just going to turn this over, okay, it's going to run out of film.

**Burroughs:** I guess I've talked a lot.

**Raab:** Actually we have a little bit more time, there's another side. We have to flip it, but we have a little more time on this side. I'm interested in why you went, I know not a lot of girls went to college in 1907, and I'm curious about how you happened to go.

**Burroughs:** Well, I can't remember when I didn't want to go. I always did. And uh, my father and mother rather encouraged it, because I good remarks in high school, and I studied hard, you know. And they wanted me to be able to make a living. Look after myself. They said you never know when you've got to, and you must be prepared. And, uh, so they encouraged my idea of going to college.

**Raab:** So they didn't expect you to just grow up and get married and be supported all your life.

**Burroughs:** No, they didn't seem to care whether I got married or not [Laughter]. They just wanted me to have a good life, and be able to take care of myself.

**Raab:** Do you think that was unusual when you were growing up? Did most girls you knew want to go to college?

**Burroughs:** Yes, quite a number that I was in high school with ended up at different colleges. Mount Holyoke, and...that was rather a favorite.

**Raab:** I knew that was a big favorite — Mount Holyoke — did you think about going there?

**Burroughs:** Yes, I would've liked to go there because I had close friends that went. But... I think my parents wanted me nearer home. And so... just then, uh, about then, Pembroke began to sort of loom on the horizon, and, it was very close to home [28:33].

**Raab:** So is that why you went there?

**Burroughs:** Yes.

**Raab:** Was that your parents' choice, or your choice to go there?

**Burroughs:** Well, I don't know, I remember having an interview with Dean King, and, uh, our next door neighbor Miss. Chase, Zilfa Chase, taught in the Brockton High School. She taught Latin and Greek, and she had known me from childhood, and, uh, she had a very close association with Professor Bronson, Walter Bronson's wife. I think, uh, she had been a student of Miss Chase's in the Brockton High School, so she got an interview for me with Mrs. Bronson. I came over to Providence on the electric car that used to run by my house, and I had a very nice interview with this Mrs. Bronson. I think th...her

husband was uh, yes, I know he was Walter Cochrane Bronson, and he was uh, an English Professor and my senior year I took a course with him. Well it was through this, um, Mrs. Bronson that I had a chance to come over and talk with Dean King, and, she I think then said that I would be admitted. So, that was how I happened to go there through this neighbor, Miss Chase.

**Raab:** Now I'll switch it, one second. [30:18]

-- End of Side One --

**Raab:** Do you remember your very first day when you came to school?

**Burroughs:** I don't think I remember the first day. Uh, perhaps I remember my father and mother and I coming over to see the dormitory and see what the accommodations were like, and meeting the uh, the girl that was supposed to become my roommate. Uh, let me see, her name was Elsie Anderson, and I think she came from Brockton. And then at the last, she wasn't admitted, she missed out I think on mathematics, and so what she did, she asked to be allowed to live in the dormitory with the college students and take a course at Hope Street High in order to get the credit she needed to get into Pembroke. And the next year, she was admitted, but that put her a year behind where she had expected to be, and so she graduated in 1912. She was a nice girl, I was sorry when she didn't turn out to be my roommate, but they gave her I think a single room there in the dormitory. And I roomed with a sophomore who I as I said, Marion Dean. She came from Taunton, like myself. And we got along very well, had a happy year.

**Raab:** What were the accommodations like in the dormitory?

**Burroughs:** [laughter] Quite primitive I'd say. It was a big old-fashioned house, well you know what it is now. It's the...

**Raab:** It's at RISD?

**Burroughs:** It's the uh, nursing home, down on Benefit Street.

**Raab:** What number, Oh!

**Burroughs:** 66 Benefit.

**Raab:** Oh, I remember now.

**Burroughs:** What's it called? I can't say it at the moment, but I know it...

**Raab:** Is it toward the end of Benefit Street, almost on Wickenden Street.

**Burroughs:** Yes, out toward...

**Raab:** Toward the river?

**Burroughs:** Toward Pawtucket. Going in the direction of Pawtucket. It's, it's at the, almost the beginning of Benefit Street. You see 66 isn't very high.

**Raab:** I see. So it was a big building, and it was...

**Burroughs:** Yes, it was, well I can't say what it was or isn't. It became a Dyson [?] house after. And then, uh, a nursing home.

BR: Did it have a dining room there, did you eat there?

**Burroughs:** Yes, oh yes. And I can remember to this day the Sunday morning breakfast. Those were special. We always had popovers. And we had I think a colored cook and two waitresses. And sometimes toward the end of the term, I think the money would sort of be scarce, and the food wasn't too good, but most of the time we had good food... It was very pleasant.

**Raab:** It got sort of raucous in there you said?

**Burroughs:** Well of course, there weren't more than, how many girls? I can't say.

**Raab:** You said fifteen?

**Burroughs:** I think about the number.

**Raab:** What kinds of things would you do on the weekends? Were there, did you do studying, or was that a free time to fool around?

**Burroughs:** No, we had to keep to the books pretty rigidly. I'd go home some weekends, because I was near. But Mother used to say, "Well now you're at college, make the most of it and stay over if there's anything particular going on." We had what they called, uh, I guess it was Brownies, and they would put on skits and plays, and meet for a good time up in the chapel. That was the only place we had in Pembroke Hall for all our good times.

**Raab:** Were you in the Brownies?

**Burroughs:** I never, no I don't think I played any part in the Brownies. I was in several plays. The Komians. You've run across that name.

**Raab:** Yeah.

**Burroughs:** And another Taunton girl that was in my class. Alice Coleman, who married Harold Shedd, another high school classmate. But, she became head of the Komians. And I know on several occasions I went out and tried for a part. Sometimes I made it, and that was a lot of fun.

**Raab:** You did a lot of things. [5:45]

**Burroughs:** Mm hmm.

**Raab:** I know you, weren't you also Vice President of your class?

**Burroughs:** Yes, and my sister-in-law – who became my sister in law – was President.

**Raab:** What was her name?

**Burroughs:** Ruth Burroughs.

**Raab:** I noticed that and I saw the similarity in the names, and I didn't even put it all together [laughter].

**Burroughs:** Yes, she was my closest friend in college. Then I married her brother.

**Raab:** Did he go to Brown?

**Burroughs:** Yes. We were all there together.

**Raab:** Was he...

**Burroughs:** But he was, he didn't dance. He didn't like to dance. So Ruth and I thought he was a total loss [laughter].

**Raab:** Was he your steady beau when you were in college?

**Burroughs:** No, I think we were just good friends. I think all that came later. We always kept out, because Ruth was my most intimate friend. And I saw quite a lot of him, but it wasn't until later years that, I guess, we thought of marriage.

**Raab:** Do you like to dance?

**Burroughs:** Oh, I love to dance. And he never would dance. He said he couldn't. His feet wouldn't let him, he said. So Ruth and I thought he was a total loss.

**Raab:** Did you go to the college dances?

**Burroughs:** Yeah, they were mostly the, what we call fraternities, but they'd call the sororities now. But we always spoke of them as fraternities. And I belonged to the

oldest national, Kappa Alpha Theta. And each fraternity gave one dance a year. And so, we mostly would get invitations because we would give invitations to them, and then they would reciprocate. [7:48]

**Raab:** And who... would you bring some of the men from the Brown campus, or...

**Burroughs:** Well, if we knew anyone. There wasn't so much going back and forth between the boys and the girls. And we often didn't know, I'd sometimes get someone from Taunton I knew.

**Raab:** So there was much more socializing with the girls at the school. It was a very separate sort of place.

**Burroughs:** Yes, there wasn't much fraternizing in a way with the boys. I think that came later. Some of the girls would know boys on the campus, but a lot of us didn't.

**Raab:** It wasn't so important.

**Burroughs:** No, no.

**Raab:** What else did I want to ask you? Well I guess you must've also had some – formed some – very close friends from going to college, if you were all, it was a pretty small group of girls.

**Burroughs:** Well I've tried to remember. I think it was about two hundred of the girls, and now there are more girls than boys at Brown.

**Raab:** Mm, that's right. I think it's about equal. Maybe a few more.

**Burroughs:** I think this year was the first time, probably won't continue that way necessarily. But it was rather interesting to read that.

**Raab:** Yeah, what other kinds of activities did you participate in?

**Burroughs:** Let me see. I can't think. Once in a while, the dormitory would have a picnic. I can remember when Sarah Goodley Ross became head of the dormitory. I think she was there three of the years that I was in college. And, uh, she would get up a picnic and we'd go out to some country spot, and have supper. Take our food along. I think there's a picture in *History of Pembroke* of all of us out on this hillside having our supper. That didn't happen very often. That was a big occasion.

**Raab:** I've heard some stories from other people about, um, stunts and pranks, and sort of funny things they used to do. You told me about what life was like in the dormitory, I just was thinking about whether you might've been part of any tricks or goings-on?

**Burroughs:** No, I can't remember very much about that, except just this, well...hard time we gave the seniors and juniors when we were freshmen. I guess we sort of sobered down [laughter]. Attended to business and our studies. Courses weren't too easy, but I don't think they can compare with what the young people go through nowadays. I think it's harder, much, now...

**Raab:** I don't know. It seems to me that you all did a lot more studying than we had to do.

**Burroughs:** I really don't know.

**Raab:** I guess it's a very different place. It's hard to compare.

**Burroughs:** It really is. I know a friend of mine, a fraternity sister, went back one year, and attended a mathematical course. And, she had been very good in mathematics while she was in college. We quite looked up to her ability. But she said she had no conception of what they were talking about. It was all so different.

**Raab:** I think it's different...

**Burroughs:** Far in advance of what she had had [12:33]

**Raab:** Tell me about these fraternities. What were they? Were they just social organizations?

**Burroughs:** Well, um, they, uh, there were two or three that were national. All the colleges had chapters, and the rest were local. The oldest one, Alpha Beta, was a local. And... there was a great deal of hard feelings sometimes because, you know, because girls would be disappointed in not being asked perhaps to the one that they really wanted to be in. And, finally Dean King was, who was very opposed to them, put them out. That was I think in 1912, the year after I graduated.

**Raab:** Why didn't she like them?

**Burroughs:** Well, she felt they meant, uh, they... meant hardship for the girls that weren't asked. And not democratic, and... but they were a lot of fun.

**Raab:** What sorts of things did you do with the fraternity sisters?

**Burroughs:** Well, we had meetings. I've forgotten now whether they were monthly, or how often but we'd have fraternity suppers. And got together, and of course the girls in the group that you'd all belong to were your closest friends and you had very good times together.

**Raab:** How did you get into to one of the fraternities?

**Burroughs:** You mean, did you apply?

**Raab:** Yeah, how did you go about becoming a...

**Burroughs:** You had to be invited. They sent out notes, and uh said that you were asked to join.

**Raab:** Was this in your first year?

**Burroughs:** Yes, I didn't join my first year. I thought it was more expense than I should undergo with all the other expenses, which seem very little nowadays, of course.

**Raab:** You mean it cost money to join a fraternity?

**Burroughs:** Well, you had dues.

**Raab:** Oh.

**Burroughs:** Something like ten dollars a month maybe.

**Raab:** Yeah.

**Burroughs:** And that in those days was quite a sum.

**Raab:** Was it more prestigious to be in one of the national fraternities?

**Burroughs:** Yep.

**Raab:** Well you were certainly well liked, then, weren't you, because...[15:06]

**Burroughs:** Well I don't know about that, but I was asked to this fraternity, and I remember Mary Dean, my roommate, when I got invited to a social affair. That's the way they did it. They asked you to come to some party or something like that, and that's when they looked you over. And I remember Marion Dean said, "Oh accept that by all means, because uh that's the outstanding fraternity." It's the national, and it's the largest national. It was the first; I think it was founded back in 1870. I remember after I came to live here in Providence, after I was married, they celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was in 1970.

**Raab:** Oh so that's pretty old.

**Burroughs:** Mm, yes it was the first of the women's nationals.

**Raab:** You said before that there was, um, a black girl on the basketball team with you. Do you... was she in your class?

**Burroughs:** I think she was the class ahead as I recall—Nellie Nicholson.

**Raab:** Would you remember anything about, um, whether she was, you know, whether black girls at Pembroke...I know there weren't very many.

**Burroughs:** No, I remember only one other.

**Raab:** Who was that? Was that ...

**Burroughs:** Cora, Cora. What was her name? I think she was uh '99, around there.

**Raab:** There were...I know there were the Minkin sisters, but maybe they weren't...

**Burroughs:** They were later than I.

**Raab:** But I was just thinking about whether u black girls had to do different things, or didn't get to join fraternities, or you know, I had heard one story about... one time a black student wasn't allowed to go to one of the dances, wasn't allowed to go to the dances.

**Burroughs:** Well, I don't know. I don't think Nellie Nicholson ever felt left out in anyway. I don't...a lot of the girls didn't go to the dances, so uh, there'd be no stigma there. And uh, I think Nellie was accepted everywhere. She was very well liked.

**Raab:** Have you met very many girls who go to Brown now?

**Burroughs:** Well I, I used to more than I do now. I'm sort of recluse now [laughter]. But uh, I have um, a niece, my husband's niece, who went. She was 1945, which was quite a ways back now. And then we have, well he is a grand-nephew who was 1975. Now a dentist.

**Raab:** So I was going to say, I guess you know it's very different. I was going to ask you what the... if you knew many people who went now, what the differences were between them and you because I know it's very different.

**Burroughs:** Very, very different. I realize it, but of course I don't have much contact now. I did have more, but uh, I don't get out very much.

**Raab:** I don't really have anymore specific questions, is there anything about what we haven't talked about, that might be interesting to say for posterity [laughter]?

**Burroughs:** Well, I don't know.

**Raab:** Do you have any kind of advice? Or anything you want... would want to say for girls who are at Brown now?



**Burroughs:** Well I wouldn't presume... I think they know very definitely most of what they want, and what the world is like. And it's quite a different world. And there are so many more opportunities in the way of careers that I wouldn't presume to give any advice, or say that I had any knowledge of their... needs and wants.

**Raab:** I was thinking, if you could do it all over again and you had all these opportunities open to you today, what do you... what direction do you think you might go.

**Burroughs:** Well, I would be so conservative that I don't think I would aim at many of the opportunities that there are. Because I think you have to be born into your age, and... you can't change, I don't think, very well. And there's an entirely new world. It seems to me that... I couldn't cope with what young people have to cope with nowadays.

**Raab:** Were there things back then that you had wanted to do either at school or after school that you couldn't do because girls just couldn't do those things?

**Burroughs:** No, I think I was quite satisfied with the world as it was, and the opportunities there were. I didn't care to go into teachings I said because I think our kids are disciplined, and I couldn't cope with it. And, so, I'd always been interested in reading and going to the public library and getting books, and doing a lot of time to reading, and so library work seemed to appeal to me, so that's why I went into it.

**Raab:** How do you think having gone to Pembroke has changed and affected your life throughout... since, since you went there.

**Burroughs:** Well, it... it gave me the friends that have been closest to me. Of course I met my husband there.

**Raab:** Even though he couldn't dance.

**Burroughs:** Yes [laughter]. By the time we got married I was sort of past the dancing state myself. So it didn't matter. We had a very happy married life. He's been gone, well it'll be three years in August.

**Raab:** When did you get married?

**Burroughs:** We were both middle-aged by the time we got married.

**Raab:** What's middle aged?

**Burroughs:** Oh, fifty-ish.

**Raab:** So you didn't get married until you were fifty? Was that... you were still working at the time?

**Burroughs:** Yeah.

**Raab:** Mm, are you sorry you got married so late?

**Burroughs:** No, I think today it worked out very well. I enjoyed my work at the Harvard College Library very much. But, I'm glad that I got married when I did because we had 38 years of very happy companionship. And I found new friends. You see, the people I knew in Cambridge, and Taunton, then I came back here and either found new friendships or went on with the old ones that I had known in college. So it worked out very well. We went to Kingston every summer. My husband owned a big farm down there. And he commuted to Providence daily, and he was in the uh...market business the, uh, Miller and George. I don't know if you ever heard of them, that's a firm downtown. And he owned the farm and worked on it holidays and weekends and enjoyed that part of life [24:11].

**Raab:** So you really had the best of both worlds?

**Burroughs:** Yes, really.

**Raab:** Okay, well I think that's about to run out.

**Burroughs:** We have some tea, I've got some water that I'll heat in a minute.

-- End of Interview --