Transcript – Charlotte Cook Morse, ’64

Narrator: Charlotte Cook Morse
Interviewer: Dorsey Baker
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Track 1

Dorsey Baker: [00:00] -- Oral history interview of Charlotte Cook Morse, conducted by Dorsey Baker. Today’s November 10th, 1985. Charlotte, thanks for agreeing to do this, especially after a (inaudible) exhausting schedule the last couple of days. The first part of this interview is just some of your biographical information. Could you just briefly describe your family background?

Charlotte Cook Morse: Well, I grew up in Loudon County, Virginia. My parents moved when I was six to a farm. My father worked as a [weekend farmer?]. He was in Washington with the Department of Agriculture and commuted from Leesburg to Washington during the week. My mother (inaudible), had gone to Rollins College, and then to Columbia, in the ’30s, [01:00] to do economics work in – graduate work in economics. She later said she didn’t know that women didn’t do that.

DB: (laughter)

CCM: There were women accountants, but there weren’t any women at Columbia, I think, other than her, at the time, doing an actual MA. She, in the end, didn’t take a degree, and went to Washington to work, which is where she met my father, who was from West Texas originally. [Family?] that hales from Georgia and Virginia. My grandparents were farmers on that side of the family. He went from Texas Tech to Michigan State, and eventually [got?] a couple of other jobs, I guess, [during the early part of the Depression?]. He ended up in Washington, working with agriculture until the Second World War [02:00] came along. I was born just too late –

DB: (laughter)

CCM: – to count, so my father joined the Navy.

DB: Oh dear.

(laughter)

CCM: We moved around. I was also born in Washington DC, because there were no hospitals in Arlington County, Virginia at the time, and I spent my childhood feeling very bad about not being a native-born Virginian, because the state song, "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" – our new lieutenant governor has tried to have dropped, –

DB: Oh dear.

CCM: – for obvious reasons.

DB: Yes. (laughter)

CCM: I don't think anybody sings it any more. I haven't heard it in years. I haven't heard it since I lived back in Virginia, but it was very important when I was a child, growing up in Loudon county, which was [a rural part of?] Virginia, to be from Virginia.

DB: [03:00] And you weren't.

CCM: And I really wasn't. To be born in Washington DC is not to be from Virginia, though I've been encouraged by one of my close, constant friends, who's a poet, teaches now at American University, and lives in Loudon County, who was also – he comes from generations of Virginians – born in Washington DC. And he very carefully never puts on his books that he's a native-born Virginian.

(laughter)

DB: Oh, that's great.

CCM: So I went to local public schools. My parents worked very hard to (inaudible) high school built in time for my arrival, which they succeed in doing. So I went to public school through high school, and didn't when understand when I took the SATs that they were important. None of us

knew enough to know that they were [04:00] important. We just went over to Foxcroft School and took them with the Foxcroft girls.

(laughter)

DB: OK.

CCM: And I was very lucky. I went through high school with a very good class of people, including one *summa cum laude* Rhodes scholar at (inaudible), who was the only other person who went to school in my class.

DB: How or why did you – I'm interested in [what brought you to?] Pembroke. Why did you...

CCM: When I was 14, my parents decided that we'd do our summer trip to New England for two weeks, and my mother, who had been an assistant to the president of Rollins when she was a student, had traveled quite a lot in New England doing fundraising, and knew a good deal about New England schools. She had a very low opinion of Brown. The only reason we stopped in Providence is that I'd gotten a little bit interested, since the daughter of one of my high school teachers was at Pem– had gone to Pembroke, [05:00] and I didn't ever know her well, but when I was in third grade and she was in the seventh grade, I thought she was really neat. (laughter)

DB: A role model, as it was? (laughter)

CCM: Yes, in a funny kind of way, because I really never did know her. She went off to St. Catherine's, in Richmond, to prep school, [and was?] not around very much. But we stopped and looked at Brown, and it was a sort of pleasant summer's evening, (inaudible). We ran into [John Price?] walking his dog on the Brown campus, and my mother, as is her [wont?], being a Southerner, fell into conversation with him. He invited us to come in and see University Hall, which had fairly recently been redone. And coming from Virginia, we (inaudible) the brick architecture, and (inaudible) Brown as sort of pleasant and comfortable. Two days later, or a day later, I saw Radcliffe, but I almost got run over four times crossing the [06:00] street, being from the country.

(laughter)

CCM: This didn't look very appetizing, (laughter) so I ended up applying to Pembroke early decision, and got in, and that took care of that. And then fortunately, I won a Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow Scholarship, which paid for half of Brown and made Brown cost the equivalent of going to William and Mary, which was my fallback.

DB: So finances were – came into the picture, then as well as now. I may know the answer to this question, but was there any resistance in your family to sending a daughter to college?

CCM: No. It was expected, before I can think, that my sister and I would go to college. It never occurred to anybody that we [07:00] wouldn't. I suppose my parents observed that [we were?] working toward it or something, but they'd already figured that out by the time either of us can remember, so we simply don't remember a time that is wasn't assumed.

DB: Were there any expectations about what you would do with the education that you remember explicitly, or even implicitly? A lot of times things like that kind of hinted at...

CCM: I mean, there were some fairly explicit concerns that one should be able to support oneself. Both my sister and I took typing in high school, because although that was certainly not mother [hoped?] we would end up doing, she also thought that it was a useful and sailable skill, and that one should at all times be prepared to take care of oneself. That was part of being an adult.

DB: Sounds like a very self-reliant lady who wanted her daughters to be the same. [08:00] Moving on then, I guess, to your experience at Pembroke, what would you say was the most important influence on you at Pembroke?

CCM: I'm not really sure. Certainly one important person was (inaudible), who taught the Introduction to French Literature course, the one that starts with Corneille and Racine, and runs to the present. I had taken four years of Latin in high school, because that's what Loudon County high school offered that was good. I had done no modern languages, so I started French at Brown in a semi-intensive course, got an A in it, and at that time, though I think not immediately thereafter, they allowed people with an A to go straight into the literature courses, [09:00] which was very lucky because I didn't like [messing about with languages?]. It was clear to me that if you wanted to speak French, you needed to go to France and have to do it, and you weren't

going to learn to speak and write French messing around in American university courses. What I really liked was reading, and I hadn't understood... I'd gone off to Brown thinking I would major in international relations, and had hit the calculus course, for which I was really not terribly well-prepared, but most of all, it because very clear very quickly that though I could do it if I put my mind to it, I wasn't especially talented at it, as far as I could see. And the competition in that class at Brown was very (inaudible). Brown was –

DB: In calculus?

CCM: Yes. Brown was one of the places where women went if they wanted to do science, [10:00] and there were people –

DB: Very interesting.

CCM: – choosing Brown first choice, if they had a strong interest in mathematics or in some of the other sciences.

DB: So then it was something you kind of wanted to have under your belt, but weren't all that excited about?

CCM: No, it just... It took too much time. It wasn't that interesting. It was sort of entertaining after a mindless kind of fashion. I suppose you could sit and work on calculus problems for hours, but I found the problems increasingly hard to understand, so I couldn't figure out what the shape was I supposed to be writing an equation for. And I must say that the people who studied for the final exam did very well. Some of them brought D averages, got Bs on the exam, going in with D averages. I went in with an A or B average and walked out with a C, having very nearly failed [11:00] the exam.

DB: Oh dear.

CCM: I think I got a D on the exam, but it was the last hour of the last day of exam period in January. We didn't study (laughter) [up to that one?].

DB: So the French literature course – for the professor, or for the material, or for both?

CCM: It was for both. I think it was the first time... I'd had horrible English in high school, and it was the first time I understood what it was that you did when you read and studied literature. It was much more interesting than anything I had ever done. I also took, my sophomore year, a creative writing course with [Edward Koenig?]. He was very uncomfortable with women students. He wasn't mean to them. He just was uncomfortable. He didn't know what to say. I'm not sure he had much to say to men either.

DB: (laughter)

CCM: He was a very strange fellow altogether, but very impressive. And he looked in those days, I always thought, rather like an [12:00] eagle. His hair was kind of golden red, and he had those birdlike eyelids, and a beaky kind of big nose, and very big face, and a strange voice. And he never could get that class to talk, so we had to be in this awful dead silence.

DB: (laughter) Oh dear.

CCM: The best students in the class were – one of them was the brightest guy at Brown, who went off to do interviews with (inaudible), and was [the best jazz pianist?]. That was [Carlton Fishman?]. But Koenig finally said to me, he said, "I think you would make a better scholar than writer." (laughter)

DB: Sounds like a good prediction.

CCM: By which time I decided he was probably right. And so I shifted – during the course of that year – I really shifted gears, and discovered [13:00] what I was interested in, and ended up doing French and English.

DB: Literature?

CCM: Mm-hmm.

DB: Yeah?

CCM: And working, eventually, with Barbara [Wollski?] and [Concord?] Brown.

DB: Barbara was here then?

CCM: Yes. She was quite new. I'm not sure how long she had been there. She... I assume she was tenured. I think she was just barely an associate professor then, but maybe it was just on the borderline. This wasn't quite clear, but the response... It was very interesting, because there were almost know women on the faculty. It was accidental that I even got working with her, because I had already decided that I wanted was the Renaissance, and I was sent to her by (inaudible) Brown. I'd never had a course from her. I told her what I wanted to do, something or other, and she sent me off with a list of books, and I went off to (inaudible). We never talked all that much. [14:00] She gave me a list of books and I'd run off and read books, or do whatever, but whenever I – when I ran into male members of the faculty, and they would say, "Who's your honors advisor?" and I would tell them, "Wollski," they would sort of step back a step and regroup, and start talking seriously. They weren't serious until they knew that that's who I was working with.

DB: (inaudible)

CCM: Well, you know, probably not.

DB: In their questions of you?

CCM: [15:00] No, they probably – they probably weren't... I mean, honors students are honors students. (laughter) So they're smart students.

DB: But somebody working with Wollski –

CCM: But somebody working with Wollski... And I don't even know why she said yes, because she didn't know me. Beats me. But it was just very interesting that there was this response, because there certainly was no – it was long before there were any brownie points for hiring women. There weren't very many. She still, given her age, (inaudible). It was just very interesting that people Brown took her very seriously, particularly since, once I got to Stanford, one of the professors there had taught with her at Wellesley, where she apparently had not been particularly successful. We took that to be a comment on [16:00] Wellesley.

DB: (laughter) Sounds like –

CCM: And on the person at Stanford. And not a kind comment on either Wellesley or that professor at Stanford.

DB: Yeah. Well, that's very interesting. Slightly different note, too. Can you – Does something come to mind right off the top of your head as perhaps your best memory while at Brown?

CCM: I don't think so. I had quite a good time at Brown. I was quite aware of being – I was pleased to [be at Brown?] (inaudible). I mean, there were some people in the class that – those were the days when people wanted to go to Radcliffe and settled at Pembroke. [There were a number of those in the class?].

DB: And since you almost got ran over four times... (laughter)

CCM: I hadn't really wanted to go to Radcliffe. I did wonder once in a while whether I had actually been too hasty in deciding that [17:00] Radcliffe was unacceptable, but I was never unhappy that I was at Brown.

DB: Any worst memory of Brown?

CCM: There were some [funny and awful?] memories at Brown. (laughter) I had gone to Europe with National Association of Student Councils in '59, between junior and senior year of high school, and I had met there, on my trip, this fellow from (inaudible). He was very attractive, and a little mad. In fact, he was a little madder than I knew. And he turned up at Harvard, rooming with one of the Americans who had been at the American school in Paris, and that group of kids, when they came to the States, all kept in touch, and they had (inaudible). Their families were still in Europe, but they kept in very close touch, and one of [18:00] his roommates, close friends, was a friend of mine at Pembroke. (inaudible) came out and went up and met, and eventually – I thought he was very attractive, and he always was actually much less interested, as far we could tell, but never mind. (inaudible). I finally, sophomore year, invited him to Brown, and he came, but only because my roommate and another friend had been in Cambridge that day and had seen him, and he was drunk, which they sort of knew. But they knew that I thought he was coming to Providence, so they sort of gathered him up and were taking the train back to Providence, and he came with them. As he got off – he'd never been in Providence – he got off the train, he started

heading up the hill, and people stopped and asked for directions, and he gave them directions, which were of course wrong.

DB: Oh dear.

(laughter)

CCM: Other small things – [19:00] The behavior was a little bizarre. He was supposed to be staying with Michael [Perriott?], a man who is now, I believe, a lawyer in Iowa. But Michael was a very [odd man?] as an undergraduate. He was definitely (inaudible). So they delivered this fellow to Perriott, and he came. And Elaine tried to warn me that things were not really quite right. I think Perriott's response had not been very reassuring either. But we were all going to meet a little bit later and have some dinner at one of the places on (inaudible) Street. So Perriott [duly?] came over and (inaudible) joined him. Michael had on his sunglasses, though it was dark/This was December. (laughter) Michael was already trying to disassociate himself from this, and we had [20:00] a rather strange meal with kind of incoherent conversation. This fellow had a severe antipathy to fraternities, which (inaudible) and I didn't think fraternities were particularly valuable, but they weren't particularly nasty, the way they functioned on the Brown campus. (inaudible).But it was a closed party night on the Brown campus, because it was Christmas weekend or something like that, and the houses were particularly (inaudible), and he decided he wanted to go to a fraternity party. There was one fraternity where I knew several people, because they had been dating other friends, and I thought, "Well, if we walk in, that's one to walk in on," which we did, and very politely. [21:00] It was explained that this was a closed party weekend, and there were lots of other places to go. This fellow was [wanting to?] fight. We managed to – we got him out and back into the courtyard, and headed into a different direction, but he remembered that he left his coat.

DB: Oh no.

CCM: And he went back in by himself, because I wasn't very interested in going with him at this point, and he emerged in the midst of a melee (laughter) slightly later, and this student came up, who turned out to be on the Brown swim team, and the two of us stood there watching the progress of this event. I can't remember [whether?] the fraternity called the campus police, but at

any rate, this man was hauled off by the campus police (laughter) and interrogated. You know the little campus – I think it's – whatever the fraternity (inaudible) is.

DB: [West Y?]. Or (inaudible).

CCM: [22:00] No, West. There was a little guardhouse in the entrance. So they hauled him in there and were interrogating, or whatever, and also calling the Providence Police. And it turns out, much later – the swimmer and I stood there and watched this until they hauled him off up there, and he even walked me back to Pembroke. We had a nice conversation.

[laughter[

CCM: I then – I discovered later that a couple of other friends had watched the interrogation, and were quite amazed – because the interrogation went on in the guardroom – because this fellow had given the campus police quite a hard time before all was said and done, and since these people were often in trouble with the campus police, they, I think, rather enjoyed that, but were quite astonished to discover that after the (inaudible) (laughter) he spent the night in the Providence (inaudible) –

DB: [23:00] Oh dear.

CCM: – and was collected – he had not – when we finally talked to his roommates, he had neither slept nor eaten in quite a number of days. He was seeing whether he could drive himself crazy with (inaudible).

DB: So it sounds like a bizarre experience. Since you mentioned (inaudible), what were things like between you and female students – Pembroke and Brown students?

CCM: Well...

DB: You've mentioned in the past day or so that there was often a big difference academically between... (laughter)

CCM: Pembrokers were generally much better academically, and scored high – had higher test scores and, [24:00] generally, higher grades.

DB: Did this affect...

CCM: It had some effect. There were certainly – The ratio was about – I think it three to one, or two and a half to one, men to women. So there weren't enough women at Pembroke anyway, for all the men at Brown. And certainly, some of the slower students at Brown felt quite intimidated by Pembroke women. By and large, there were (inaudible) people around. There were a lot (inaudible) innocent. (inaudible), but one of my hall mates freshman year asked her boyfriend where the noses go when you kiss.

DB: (laughter)

CCM: So an indication –

DB: "Right here."

(laughter)

CCM: (inaudible) [25:00] But there were mixers back and forth, which were awful. They haven't changed. There still are places that sponsor the mixers, or something [on that order?], and they –

DB: I think so.

CCM: – as near as I can make out, [as ghastly as they were?]. It's a social experience.

DB: Was there any other way for people to interact?

CCM: There was a lot of integrated activity during orientation week, and a certain amount of (inaudible) Brown freshmen were instructed by their upper-class sponsors, or whatever, that they were supposed to come over and try to raid Pembroke. I mean, they never got into the buildings, but they were supposed to come over and make some kind [26:00] of ruckus. We arrived in a hurricane, and as a result, some of the activities were messed up or rearranged, but there were certain things going on during that week. (inaudible). All the classes were mixed so that you met people [in your class?]. I'm not quite sure we did or didn't get organized. Sometimes one person met somebody, and set other people up, or – but there was certainly a great deal of dating back [then?], plus the option of deciding that you were going to go away for a weekend. It was nice

not to have to, but there was quite a bit of weekend traveling. [27:00] [No more than other schools?].

DB: What kind of career advice, if any, did you receive at Brown?

CCM: I'm not sure. The person who was actually supposed be the [career placing officer?], or something like that, was dreadful and utterly useless.

DB: Was that specifically a Pembroke College staff?

CCM: Yes. It was well-intentioned, but (inaudible). [Rosey?] Pierrel, who came sometime after my freshman year, and I'm not quite certain how fast... I think Nancy [Lewis?] died my freshman year. She was there when I arrived, and she met some of the complications that year, but I think she may have died that year. Pierrel was Dean for at least two years, and maybe – I just can't remember whether in fact she was [28:00] in place by the beginning of my sophomore year. But Pierrel was a very awkward woman in many, many ways, but the one things she [was intent?] upon was training up a bunch of people who made their contributions to the world as something other than ladies in pink flowered hats, which is how [we?] referred to (inaudible).

DB: Uh-huh, OK. (laughter)

CCM: And there was a very clear demarcation in the class, as we decided who was going to grow up to be a lady with a pink flowered hat, (laughter) and who was going to grow up to be real, in some more independent way. And in fact, we ended up liking some of the ladies who didn't really do very much of anything except volunteer [and housework?], but [29:00] most of us had other things in our lives. And Pierrel certainly reinforced that. She had strings of convocation speakers in, and dredged up a number of old Pembrokers, and geologists, and other (inaudible), but she certainly looked to professional women and had some intention of making it clear that women should expect to do something with their education, that their lives would be long and be unlikely to be (inaudible). And that was a time when at Smith and Holyoke and Wellesley, places like that, particularly (inaudible), you were supposed to be getting married the time you finished college. And at Pembroke, [30:00] if you were getting married, you bloody well better be doing something else as well, or you were just written yourself off [*sic*].

(laughter)

DB: To be discounted somehow... So you mentioned some memories of Dean Pierrel. Are there other memories that you had, and did you have any direct contact with her?

CCM: We had some (inaudible), and I think I volunteered to do this interview because I think it was, in some ways, quite unfortunate that when Brown and Pembroke College merged, that Pembroke was really entirely submerged as an institution, some of it overlapping in functions. It probably needed to be consolidated. [31:00] But they needed to be consolidated, I gather, for some reasons that [weren't really savory?], like that the Pembroke aDBissions office was operating on completely different standards than the Brown aDBissions office, or I've heard. Don't know whether that's true. And when I was an undergraduate, keep in mind, everybody at Brown, including, or most of the professors on campus, said, "There are no qualified black students to come here." There was one Oriental student in my class, my roommate. There were no black students. [Doris Richardson?] was the most notable black student at Pembroke in my time. She was a year ahead of me, I think, and she was the only black student in her class. I think there was one other black student there. That's all.

DB: So this –

CCM: And there were very few Orientals.

DB: This was Pembroke and Brown aDBissions?

CCM: Yes. There were very few black students at [32:00] Brown. There were some Oriental graduate students. My roommate had been told by her parents that she was not to date Caucasians.

DB: Hmm, OK.

CCM: (laughter) So, she was pursued by some of these Orientals, but she didn't like them. They were all in math and engineering, and didn't speak English well enough, or something, something, something. So she had a hard time socially.

DB: So was there something that Dean Pierrel –

CCM: No, Pierrel didn't bring anything, in many ways. I mean, she brought this notion of professional women, but other than that she was pretty disastrous, I thought. She was a good – reputedly – teacher, but awkward, and a not-very-gifted (inaudible) speaker, [33:00] though I've since heard... Pardon me, (inaudible) was very good, and by contrast she wasn't that good, but I've since heard people that make her [look not so bad?].

DB: (laughter) There are people who are so much worse that she's –

CCM: Yeah. She was all right. Her real problem was that she followed Lewis, who was gracious, elegant, [sane?], I think, in some ways, very well-liked by the students, was tremendous... Now, some of that may have been because by the time I arrived, it would have been known, I think, that she was dying, and that's not a time when people's hostilities are (laughter) prominently displayed, but she had... I was the last class to be taught how to pour tea, and we'd have little practice sessions with (inaudible).

DB: And that was very much connected with Dean Lewis?

CCM: [34:00] Well, it was part of her era still. She was from Kentucky, I believe, and a mathematician, kind of odd for all those reasons in her way, but she (inaudible) very graciously. She certainly fitted in with a kind of tradition (inaudible) women's education, I think, and with, perhaps, a touch of the Southern lady as well. What became for Pierrel a very difficult matter (inaudible), and the restrictions on (inaudible). It had not, I think, been so much of a problem for Nancy Duke Lewis, because everybody knew where she stood. Everybody understood that Nancy Duke Lewis is a lady, and ladies didn't do certain things. Now, perhaps she gave forgave some people. She certainly didn't the kind of [35:00] almost Gestapo-like atmosphere that Pierrel encouraged, not altogether successfully. (inaudible) by the housemothers. (laughter)

DB: So the housemothers did not necessarily agree with Dean Pierrel?

CCM: Sally [McPhee?], the old WAVE – she was a WAVE in the Second World War, and she very much liked the WACs and the WAVES – that I sometimes had seen as a very independent and perhaps somewhat slightly masculine woman... Well, that might not even be very fair. Beats me. But Sally McPhee was quite well liked. She was kind of a gruff lady, and generally kind of [kind?] to students in a rough way. She made it very clear that if you made a glaring mistake,

like you stayed out when you were checked out and you never came in and returned your card and said you were in for [36:00] the night, she had not much recourse but to notice that you weren't there. If, however, you didn't do what you did wrong in a way that she had to see, she refused to see it. That meant that [you had to be real stupid to get caught?]. Now, there was another rule that you were supposed to be able to (inaudible). You were supposed to be able to walk in under your (inaudible), and we lived one year right down by the back entrance on the mezzanine, [on the?] back entrance of Andrews Hall, and there were some singles that had been converted to doubles. My class over-accepted and was too big when we went through. [37:00] And we were last to pick in the sophomore room draft, so we got terrible rooms. You could only tell whether the sun was shining by going to the window, staring up past the tree and the brick wall to see whether the sun was shining on [Bill McLaughlin's?] roof across the street.

DB: Oh my goodness.

(laughter)

CCM: But we were right next to the back door, and almost every weekend, there was one woman who was – her boyfriend would make some kind of signal inside, or maybe it was just the pre-arranged closing time, or close to. They would bring this woman back completely passed out, dead cold, and pass her illegally through the mezzanine door. You were supposed to have to climb the stairs, but she was in no shape to do that, and (inaudible) from somewhere downstairs would come and take her from her boyfriend, and take her up the elevator, and deposit her someplace. [38:00] (laughter) So that, I'm sure, had also gone on Nancy Duke Lewis, that while these things were – it was illegal to be out overnight. It was particularly illegal to be out overnight in Providence. You had to [finally?] be a certain number of miles away to be considered "away," which usually was interpreted to mean over the Massachusetts state line, and you were supposed to check out when you [were out after seven o'clock?], and required to (inaudible). And you were supposed to (inaudible). There were nights when Sally McPhee just turned the other way as people came in with their clothes on backwards, or came in and threw up in the front hall. (laughter) [39:00] She really was very kind in some ways. But Pierrel was, I think, not altogether comfortable with the parietal rules. I don't know, but she perceived herself as to be acting *in loco parentis* – that awful phrase – and she thought she was obliged to enforce

these rules. And having absolutely no sense of how to do it, and not much sense of how to deal with people either, she enforced them in a [really fairly horrible?] manner, and distinguished herself by throwing eight women out of school the first term that she was Dean, which was more than I think Nancy Duke Lewis had ever thrown out in a term.

DB: Oh my goodness. And these were violations of parietal rules, for the most part?

CCM: Or staying out... We knew that there were other people who – The girls who lived in Metcalf were the real beatniks and [40:00] (inaudible), or whatever, and they stayed out all the time, and they never signed out. They threw rocks at the back windows. They knew the hours the guard came by, and would just (inaudible). And there was only one guard, and somewhere up in his command post, where the door opened, by the time he could, in his lumbering fashion, get around to the door to make sure it was closed, whoever had come in through it was long gone and had gone out through... (laughter) So Pierrel's next move, after throwing all those women out, was to be very irritated with the men's colleges for not throwing the men out at the same time, which was –

DB: Including Brown?

CCM: Including Brown. But Brown men were never punished.

DB: [41:00] Did they have similar sign-in and sign-out kinds of rules?

CCM: No. Men could come and go all night long.

DB: As they pleased?

CCM: Sometimes not altogether safe, but they weren't protected in the same way, I think, because a lot of parents didn't think that boys needed that kind of protection, and a lot of parents thought girls did. I was dubious. I had been (inaudible) with the Department of Agriculture with these 18 year-olds that the Department had recruited from the hills of Maryland and Pennsylvania and West Virginia, these innocent kids that came in and (inaudible) from these boarding houses. (inaudible). These kids couldn't make it at 18, (inaudible).

(laughter)

CCM: But Pierrel succeeded [42:00] in getting the Brown deans to agree that they would throw men out when women were thrown out, and indeed, when... I can't remember how many Brown men were thrown out, but some of them were thrown out for bits and pieces of semesters. There was nothing ever as dramatic as the [Little Susie?] case at Yale, which happened during that era. That was when a large group of young men in Calhoun College were found to be... Well, they were found to be harboring a 13-year-old runaway, the daughter of a Hamden dentist, who was fellating somewhere between [1,300 and 2,100?] (inaudible).

DB: Oh dear.

CCM: (laughter)

DB: That's dramatic.

CCM: Yes. Those people were expelled from Yale, but they were all let back in the following fall. Susie had lied about her age, and things like that. They weren't supposed to have [43:00] women in the rooms, but – at least not all the times that Little Susie was there.

(laughter)

CCM: There was nothing as dramatic as that, and at least one batch of people who were thrown out were thrown out after a [cast party?], and it was traditional for the cast party to last all night or most of the night. I don't even know how they got caught, whether they'd signed out or what happened, but for whatever reason, they got caught, and they probably weren't even (inaudible). Now, everybody –

DB: For merely staying up all night.

CCM: Now, everybody thought that was really (inaudible). And increasingly, there were people who were a little perturbed by that. I wasn't much affected by it one way or the other. And certainly, if you were [44:00] – if you went to other schools, you were very unlikely to get caught, or if you used your head... There were [lots?] of people who just carried on and didn't (inaudible).

DB: (laughter) Yeah, sure. But anyway, so there was a kind of growing dissatisfaction?

CCM: Well, with some people. Some people found it perturbing. Some people just never had a sign-out card. They [removed?] their sign-out cards and nobody ever checked to see. Some of them just never, ever signed out, which would've been suspicious, had anybody really been trying to keep track of the dorms. But as I say, McPhee wasn't going to do it, and didn't encourage other housemothers (inaudible). But my junior – junior year? It must've been my junior [45:00] year. I was visited by a couple of art students and a younger friend of theirs, who had hatched this plan of running for student government. And I can't remember what all the platform issues were. The one that ended up getting me involved, or catching my involvement, and was certainly part of our plan from the beginning, had to do with writing the rules down, because, although Pierrel had thrown quite a large number of people out of school, there was no rule anywhere that explained that the penalty for staying out overnight was likely to be expulsion. Now, it's impossible to change a rule if you can't the rule written down. And most of us thought, since we had some occasion [46:00] to know from the faculty, that Pierrel was not throwing people out who cheated on exams.

DB: Ah, OK.

CCM: In once case – [David Lawrence?] told us about the case – it was very clear, and he was in fact rather angry himself, and that those rules weren't being enforced. So we rightly though, I think, that this was silly. And partly, I think, because Ann – I think her last name was Hutchison – partly because Ann was an art student who was considered a bit off, you know? It was rather alarming to some members of the community when she ran for student government. And she had around to ask me to run with her [for Head of Judicial Council?], because to accomplish anything, one needed to hold both those offices, or there needed to be [47:00] like-minded people in the offices. And for her to get elected, she thought she needed to have somebody who was perceived as a little bit more Pembroke, in the conventional sense. So it was the only time that I ever ran for anything, and I didn't care whether anybody elected me or not, and therefore it was one of the few times I ever won an election.

(laughter)

CCM: But it was astonishing to all of us. The housemothers got into a complete swivet over this campaign. They were going around and behaving as if the end of the world was coming. Pierrel was severely disturbed.

DB: So, in fact, you can start –

Track 2

CCM: [00:00] (inaudible), and sweeter and more polite, and it's just hard to imagine. And I don't remember who the members of the judicial council were, but there was nobody on the judicial council who was particularly wild, as I recall. I think the spring before, Nancy [Blakehart?] had been on it. That was a bit much. I'm sure they were terribly perturbed when she was [elected?]. But Pierrel called us all into her office and screamed at us. She stood – we sat – it wasn't a terribly large office. We barely fitted in, because there were about, somewhere between eight and twelve of us. So we barely fitted into this office, and she stood behind her desk, literally screaming for something like 45 minutes, [01:00] with very little response from us. And I don't remember very much of what she said, except that she called us all whores, which was quite remarkable. I mean, she had clearly, as we would now say, lost it. I don't know whether she ever understood that, and as far as I can tell, all she did was to get her back up and (inaudible) and she absolutely refused to write down the rules. The judicial council subsequently disbanded itself on the grounds that it could not function, because she would not pay any attention, would not listen, and would not write down any of the rules. So as a kind of protest, the judicial council disbanded itself. This altercation was going on some time [before?] Christmas. It's the only time I can remember actually asking for extensions on papers [02:00] until after Christmas break. The faculty was extremely supportive. Barbara Wollski and [Trevor Reed?] got some inkling of what this was about, and were rather horrified by Pierrel's standards, and by what she was doing, and were more than willing to offer whatever support they could, and were very gracious about offering extensions. When I went home and talked to my parents, they were extremely upset. My father [drove back?] in January and made an appointment with (inaudible) to complain.

DB: My goodness.

CCM: He was not particularly satisfied by the response of (inaudible), which I had – (inaudible). My father, as a result, (inaudible), some boys at Brown. [03:00] He was outraged, and he also knew (inaudible), at least, and had met several of the other people, and he was horrified.

DB: People who were reasonable were not being –

CCM: No. My mother was too. I think, in fact, they decided together that he would be a more effective spokesman.

DB: So did things just kind of die down, or was there further...

CCM: Well, I think at that point, probably what went on is that everybody encouraged everybody to cheat as much as possible. That is to say, it became (inaudible) to make it clear to be people how you did what you wanted to do without getting caught.

DB: So those who didn't know the ways around the system were taught [04:00] ways around the system.

CCM: Yeah, I mean, I really don't know. The only thing that we could at that point do, really, in a [public sense?], was to disband in protest. Now, at about this point, or maybe slightly after that, Mary Bunty got up to try to change the rules at Radcliffe, and did not have that much support from the [Cliffies?]. We thought they were (inaudible). But Mary Bunty –

DB: She was the dean?

CCM: She was the president of Radcliffe. And she actually had gone out and was trying to drum up student support for some changes in rules at Radcliffe, all of which changes we would have been happy to have at Pembroke, thank you very much.

DB: And had they written down rules originally?

CCM: At what?

DB: At Radcliffe.

CCM: They had something. I can't remember how their rules were written, but they had some things. And Bunty was perhaps a bit ahead of the move, but was not interested in being responsible [05:00] for enforcing some of those, and was maybe even challenging the *in loco parentis* theory, in the name of which the perfectly dreadful (inaudible). It was very clear that this was marginal (inaudible). That was the theory. And for good reason, to know where people are supposed to be in the city at night. As a safety system, sure, but that's not what it was. (laughter) So Bunty was out there campaigning to get a change. What happened to Pierrel was, somewhere around '66 or '67, she was overruled by a committee established at Brown by (inaudible). But it was a committee that included [06:00] students from both the college at Pembroke, and the Deans at both campuses. I don't know whether Pierrel was on the committee, but at her protest, that committee ditched (inaudible).

DB: Had you graduated by then?

CCM: Mm-hmm. I graduated in '64. It happened before I got back to teach at Yale in '68, and I think it was probably about the third year I was in Calhoun. And when the news came over, some of the [students?] said, "Well, yes, it's about time." But there ways in which I think Pierrel lost ground for Pembroke. She was not a particularly popular Dean. She was not effective at (inaudible) to her. She had initially horrified people by being unable to use the silverware in the Dean's dining room correctly. This was (inaudible) [07:00] and a sign that she was not really fit to fill Nancy Duke Lewis's shoes. The only thing people approved of was – or they joked about her. (inaudible) She was very snotty, really.

DB: Well, that's fascinating too. (inaudible) a real transition, I think Pembroke has had (inaudible). Since we kind of got to your graduation, we can go onto after graduation.

(laughter)

DB: I know that you said you went to Stanford to graduate school, right?

CCM: Yes.

DB: [08:00] In English?

CCM: In English. I actually applied for a Fulbright, which I didn't get, to go to France. (inaudible), and I'm quite glad now that I didn't do that, or that I didn't get the Fulbright, because although it would've been nice to speak French better than I did, which was horribly, the prejudice against women in romance languages is very much stronger than in English. And professionally, I am very much better off being in English. That's one thing I really didn't know at the time about – and I had applied to Duke and Chapel Hill in French, and had gotten cold feet, really – [got really straight on?] into a graduate program in French. In fact, I had been turned down at Chapel Hill [quite rightly?]. [09:00] They had a very good department and strong candidates, and as it happened, a lot of people coming back that year from Fulbrights that they had agreed to honor, (inaudible). Somewhere late in that spring, I ended up deciding that I would get married, and at about the same time decided that perhaps I should go to graduate school in English. The person I was marrying had applied to law school and had made a choice, and his choice had been Stanford, so I then got out the books and looked at Stanford and Berkeley, and applied to both of them in English. And Barbara Wollski stepped out of the line at graduation to tell me that she had written letters for me. I'm sure that in addition to writing just a plain letter, she also either write to [all the people?] that she knew there – because although Stanford and Berkeley both claimed to have aDBissions open until [10:00] August, they had chosen their classes at the same time everybody else had, and they were full. And the reason I know that is that they had, that same spring, turned down (inaudible) at Smith, whose professors at Smith had been – after she got her rejection letter – had then called them and told Stanford to get serious, after which [time?] Stanford accepted her. But she had made the ghastly mistake of telling Stanford that she was getting married. I do not know to this day from whom I knew not to say that I was getting married. It may have been from (inaudible) Brown, who's a very fine fellow. He did not like blondes, including bleached blondes. He couldn't understand why anybody would want to be a dumb blonde. Anybody who had blonde hair was automatically dumb, and his pecking order went: brunette women [11:00], men, blonde women.

DB: (laughter) Very interesting. OK. And somehow he managed to get you the information that you should not say –

CCM: And I think it was probably from just listening to the things that he said, that I understood you didn't say that, because that meant, in those days, before the pill – the pill was just coming

in. The only people who had it were people who claimed to have their periods every two weeks. That's a great way to get the really good birth control. (laughter) But it was not, at that point, widely available. Also, another problem in those days was that Brown [professors' wives?] ran Planned Parenthood, so no women at Pembroke would go to Planned Parenthood.

DB: Oh my god. Small town. Oh, that's incredible. That's very interesting.

CCM: [12:00] But I didn't tell Stanford that, that I was getting married, and Wollski clearly did whatever needed to be done. And I didn't realize how (inaudible) I was till I heard the story.

DB: Yeah. So you did...

CCM: So I was accepted at both Stanford and Berkeley, and went to Stanford, that being far more convenient. And it happened to be a fairly good English department (inaudible).

DB: (laughter)

CCM: As it happened to the planning. And I went. I'd actually thought about doing (inaudible) childhood, but I didn't have the right courses for it. And I would have needed to do some more work in psychology, probably, but I'd been doing some reading about (inaudible) at Harvard and had found that really very interesting. But what I was prepared to do was to go to graduate school in English, which is, [13:00] as it happened, what I did. And partly because I (inaudible) [not having any?] scholarship money the first year, and worked as a teaching assistant the next two years, (inaudible) fellowship (inaudible). And we never figured out why Yale hired so many women when they hired me, because that was another year or two before they got brownie points for hiring women. The only thing anybody could figure was that (inaudible) had gotten nervous because so many men on staff had (inaudible) their draft cards and had been declared to (inaudible). And the women – we thought they understood about the pill. They didn't. We found out at faculty lunch one day several years later that senior professors at Yale hadn't calculated that in at all. (laughter)

DB: Very interesting. [14:00] What year did you start teaching at Yale? Do you remember?

CCM: In '68. I knew that I had to finish coursework at Stanford, and my exams, and be ready to leave California at the same time that my former husband was ready to be also.

DB: You had exactly three years to do your degree? OK.

CCM: It was too fast. (inaudible). And then I got a fellowship to England, and (inaudible). He was avoiding the draft at that point, (laughter) and managed to get himself into a master's program at the London School of Economics, which turned out not to be very successful [when they changed the program?]. And he had also changed his mind about – or not changed his mind, but been more decisive about putting his interests in [15:00] (inaudible), and that's really – the LSE program was the other option. So he ended up being a working pupil for the (inaudible) School of (inaudible), and becoming an instructor in the course of a year. (laughter)

DB: What was the London program that you were on?

CCM: I was on a Leverhulme fellowship, which is British money, and these fellowships had been given – I don't know for how long – to Stanford, and one of the intelligent that the Dean there had done when the Leverhulme people came and offered them some scholarship money – they'd normally sponsor scientific stuff – engineering, or whatever work Stanford had done, or projects Stanford had cooperated in along scientific lines. But the Dean had explained to them that their science programs were well-supported, whereas their [humanities?] were not, and what [16:00] Stanford really needed was fellowships for a year of study [for dissertations?]. And those who were competitive, I guess competitive... They were "competitive fellowships," is the term. You had to be at the top of the class to get it, and so I applied for one and traveled [from Stanford?], and Leverhulme gave a living allowance, and I guess paid, or at least required, that we be affiliated postgraduates with the University College London, which meant that we could do some things that... In fact, had I met the right people, I could have done more work there than I did, but I did a paleography. I could've joined (inaudible), [17:00] because although it was [illegal?], (inaudible) were running the seminars, and had decided that they were (inaudible). The next year, one of my Stanford friends discovered this, and got to know all the people at King's. But we had a really very nice year in London.

DB: And Yale followed that, then?

CCM: And Yale followed that.

DB: How long were you at Yale?

CCM: Technically eight years. I actually spent the last year in Washington, and for good reason. In eight years, it was the first year I was an acting instructor, so when [the job was not?] hospitable, [18:00] shall we say, they were able to extend my assistant professorship by a year so that I could do a project and work with the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington as an intergovernmental personnel acting employee. [They had to pay Yale to pay me?].

DB: Very interesting. What kinds of –

CCM: (inaudible)

DB: What kinds of encouragement, on the one hand, or perhaps obstacles on the other, did you run into at Yale? Or maybe I should back up and ask you, did you go from Yale to Virginia (inaudible) University?

CCM: (inaudible)

DB: So thinking about that whole span, what were some of the things that were encouraging or discouraging?

CCM: I was a little bit fortunate, I think, that the class ahead of me at Stanford [19:00] did some of the work on women's rights. And I didn't realize... [I'd really?] not realized until after the fact that something (inaudible) was happening. I think I probably should've had one of the [DAA?] fellowships in the first year, but they found a technical way of judging my record slightly less good than the man who was next to me. There were three of us sitting at the top (inaudible), and they – Stanford had habitually – and I didn't know that – Stanford had habitually passed over women and taken men for fellowships. I didn't realize that until about two years after the fact, so [I did get that interview at the time?], which I actually accepted. (laughter)

DB: It's hard to imagine you doing that, Charlotte.

CCM: Well, it was plausible enough, [20:00] and I spent the time... When I got to Stanford, I had taken Barbara Wollski's [graduate Milton course?]. (inaudible).

DB: Encouragement or obstacles...

CCM: Oh, Wollski's Milton seminar was astonishing, and very, very beautiful. The man who's now a tenured (inaudible) at Georgetown was in the class, [21:00] and the woman who runs [the Chapmanville Press?] was in that class, and Sue, who's now the [historian?] with FBI, and me. And there were a couple of other people who were pretty good, and some others who probably got Bs, but... And then this weird man in our class who was a math major. Nobody ever understood why he walked into this class. Wollski didn't know who he was, and was, perhaps in some ways, like Pierrel, was not – she's very well-intentioned and has very serious and strong values, but perhaps not always a lot of sensitivity to people that she's (inaudible), and certainly not demure people like this boy, who used to walk around at concerts and things that had intermissions at Alumni Hall... He would get up – this tall, angular, sort of funny-haired man, and usually wearing a suit that didn't quite fit – he would get up and he would walk abstractedly, with his hands folded [22:00] in front of him, around the edges of this auditorium, and he was very seldom – and I can't remember whether he talked to himself or not. But he was definitely a very odd fellow. And he fetched up in this Milton seminar, and he didn't have the first idea how to do literature courses, as far as one could tell, and he somehow ended up with the first seminar paper to do. And he launched into this thing, and Wollski stopped him about five minutes in and threw him out of the class, and told him the work was so substandard, she wasn't going to have any of this. Anyway, whatever. We all thought she was really too hard on this fellow. We had never seen and had seldom heard anything quite so... (laughter) But I will say one thing. The rest of us worked our tails off.

(laughter)

CCM: We were not going to be told that our work was [23:00] substandard in this public way. It was an extremely good course, and I assumed that's what graduate work was all about, and I spent much... And I had to do Anglo-Saxon (inaudible) and I don't remember what else I took, but I spent quite some time before I discovered at Stanford anything like that level of intellectual experience. So I treated my first year at Stanford as (inaudible) the next three days, I was going to quit. (laughter) You couldn't do better than – at least that well – without killing yourself. And it was the wrong thing to do. So my commitment was perhaps a little bit less strong starting out. I certainly didn't think that (inaudible) that was the option. One gets suckered into it after a while. [24:00] If you discover you like teaching, –

(laughter)

CCM: – it's a little harder to quit, but starting out, it was not... And by the end of that year, then, I found Chaucer, and he subsequently became my thesis [subject?]. That was interesting, and then by the next year, the group that I had gone through Stanford with had coalesced into a seminar, and included, finally – what I was really missing was Northeasterners. When the group then finally included the Smith *summa cum laude*, and the Radcliffe *summa cum laude*, who came the next year, and a couple of other people in the mix, the seminar group then got really very good, but it (inaudible) into a bunch of diffident, cynical, an neurotic Northeasterners. It just didn't have that edge on it, [25:00] you know? It was just a little dull.

DB: I have heard the same comment said about Claremont College in California.

CCM: So have I, even more vigorously, actually. It never got any better, according to my (inaudible).

(laughter)

CCM: He quit.

(laughter)

CCM: But Stanford was, in some ways, a very easy program to go through. The best people teaching there were very young, and many of them teaching their first graduate seminar, so one didn't benefit from that kind of broader knowledge that a person who's been working longer has. It was a lot of excitement, and energy, and so on. And we began to realize that these people had their noses to the grindstone, that if we thought the graduate school was bad...

DB: Wait till you get –

CCM: The next seven years was going to be worse. And it was. And it is.

DB: And you spent those next seven years at Yale?

CCM: Yeah. [26:00] So it was very interesting. Yalies always said that people had a better time at Brown.

DB: People who went there to teach?

CCM: No, no, no. Undergraduate students thought that Brown students were having a good time, that Yale was academically very good, and had its points, but that actually, if you really wanted to have fun as an undergraduate, along with doing the intellectual things... I think they thought they worked harder than the Brown students, and it was quite possibly true. They did work very hard. They just generally thought that Brown students had a better time.

DB: Very interesting. I'm gathering from your description that you probably have worked all through your marriage. Is that true?

CCM: That's true.

DB: [27:00] Did you think about children, or want them, or have them?

CCM: I don't have any. Well, I had... My marriage was in some ways a rather difficult one. It was described by one of my graduate school [colleagues?] as a storm, which is not a word I would've particularly chosen myself, but it did have its sort of moments of violent upheaval from time to time. And I simply had been too innocent to understand that I was marrying into quite a troubled family, and in one of its most troubled periods, which took a terrific toll – also, just before we married, my former husband fractured his skull, and 15 years later, [when we divorced and he remarried?], he had two (inaudible) sutures in one night, [28:00] which had eventually (inaudible) skull fracture. And it's very hard to tell how much of the tenseness was there before the accident and how much of it either caused by it or exacerbated by it. But it was – my mother-in-law ran off with the local minister, who left his wife and children. My father-in-law had a [number of?] lady friends, and (inaudible) was...

DB: Oh dear.

(laughter)

CCM: Another one of my friends assures the people in Richmond – who've never met these other folks – he says, "I have met the Morses, one and all, and each one's crazier than the one before."

(laughter)

CCM: Which is perhaps an exaggeration. They're in somewhat better shape now, than they were in that period, but... People had quite different experiences after graduate school in the group that I was in. [29:00] And the women who got jobs had so much to do with the jobs – and in both – and (inaudible).

DB: That's OK.

CCM: But the two of us who got jobs – and maybe that was some peculiar form of self-selection – had marriages that were in some ways difficult. Hers disintegrated before mine did, and I think was in much rougher shape for longer. In some ways, mine was also a successful marriage for quite a long time, at least (inaudible). And we're still [familiar?]. But, I mean, as soon as you've got your job, the next thing you must do is to [get the book out?], as well as do all the teaching, as well as take care of your family, and whatever, whatever. [30:00] So the pressures become really quite intense, and they're especially intense if one's goal or ambition or fate, or whatever, is to be working in the top [group?] of one's profession, whatever it is. And Stanford certainly was intending that that's what its students should be doing, but a lot of them don't. But of the four or five of us who ended up as (inaudible) – there were four in our most immediate group – all four of us, I think, have pretty much succeeded. That is, if you had a list of, at least, say, the top 20 or 25, we would be on almost everybody's list. So a generation or decade, maybe, or whatever, is (inaudible), so...

DB: Of the group of [31:00] four or five that you were talking about, how –

CCM: Two women, two men. The two women who did not get jobs, they both followed husbands to academic jobs, and then –

DB: Tried to find something close by?

CCM: And then couldn't... This is particularly sad for the woman – (inaudible) from Smith, who was in the LA area, and you would have thought that she would have gotten a job. I think probably the reason she didn't at the time, when there were still a few jobs left in California, was that she's very aggressive intellectually, and she's also very maternal. What the scared, stupid

men saw was intellectual aggression. That's what they saw, that's what they heard. There were no brownie points for hiring women. And she has never had a proper academic job. She's done some teaching at UC Riverside. She taught for a while at Purdue while her husband took up – had a leave and took up being a househusband. (inaudible)

(laughter)

CCM: She's published, and also writes poetry, and was in (inaudible), and does active things. They have two children. A friend who ended up at Delaware has managed to get up – not quite an English department job, but something in the honors college, or something that isn't really – it's not a bad deal that the two of tem have gotten good work. And her husband has been willing to make some moves, but there's not much movement going in the profession, so they might eventually move, really, much further for him, if they can get anything coordinated, or... He's been willing to consider (inaudible). They have two children. And in some ways, those are probably, even from the outset, the [33:00] two stronger, sturdier marriage, thought that wasn't always clear. The Delaware one was a (inaudible).

DB: So do you see a relationship between the pressures of a very early career and –

CCM: Yeah. Yale was a terrible... It was a terrible [fit to land a spouse in?]. Most of the women at Yale... There were, when I arrived there, 35 women on the [latter-ranking faculty?]. There were 750 in the new college and graduate school. Of those 35, a substantial number were in the English department, and of those 35, either two or three were tenured. There were 350 tenured professors.

DB: [34:00] All very easy to believe and discouraging statistics. But it does draw, I think, a good picture of what it was like.

CCM: Yeah, and the first year I taught at Yale, there were no women undergraduates.

DB: Oh, I forgot about that. (laughter)

CCM: And there were no toilets, except in the Yale Library, for women.

DB: Oh my goodness.

CCM: (laughter)

DB: Oh my goodness.

CCM: It was very strange. And I just –

DB: So how did you survive those seven years?

CCM: Well, I actually had a good time, but I didn't retreat, which is what most of the women did, for – in some cases because they ended up with quite horrific family responsibilities that – many of them did that from the very beginning. They felt very uncomfortable and very threatened by the male environment and the sexual attention. [You had a great deal of attention?] [35:00] from your male colleagues.

DB: And those were the days before sexual harassment proceedings, etc., etc.

CCM: Yes, but some of it... I mean, actually, these things are not difficult to manage, though I have been told recently, even by some of my active friends and colleagues, that it's probably being southern that made it easier for me.

DB: (laughter)

CCM: That southern women end up knowing more about dealing with men. Now, I don't think have a... First of all, southern belles certainly are supposed to be indirect and covert in getting what they want. I've never been successful with that.

(laughter)

CCM: I'm much more one of the boys on some level. I didn't want to hear the jokes. It used to make me very angry in high school when boys wanted to tell the dirty jokes, because I [36:00] couldn't [stand them?] saying anything that I couldn't hear as well.

DB: Oh, goodness. (laughs) So the others [pulled back into some kind of shell?]?

CCM: So the others just mostly pulled back into their shell and retreated the second year. The first year I was around, it was mostly just the Yale junior staff, which was a widely thriving

group of about 35 to 40 people, 10 of them hired in my year, and eight the next year, or something like that. Just an enormous bulge. The Yale faculty was never, I think, as large again as it was in ’68, ’69, or ’68 to ’70. The faculty always used that as their benchmark when they started talking about faculty cuts.

DB: (laughs) Right.

CCM: Everybody knows how to use statistics to their advantage. Or “Find your best base here.”

DB: (laughs) Exactly.

CCM: [37:00] But I don’t know. I discovered that sometimes what I needed to do was try not to see somebody too much for a few days, just to, you know... But it really wasn’t hard. I mean, nobody’s going to rape you. And most of the time... I only once, actually, got sort of caught by surprise, much later than [my first few years?], and that was because I had simply – I had never heard the rumor that this man (inaudible), and I thought he was asexual.

DB: Ah, OK. Wouldn’t have been someone you would’ve expected to approach you.

CCM: No, and he was not very subtle at all. I found that one disturbing, particularly because he was [38:00] just [chaired?] (inaudible) committee on women.

DB: Oh...

CCM: (laughter)

DB: OK. Interesting choice.

CCM: Certainly. He was. He had, and has, extremely difficult relations with women students, because he tends to, as he puts it, “fall in love” with them and then...

DB: That’s not good.

CCM: And then he has to (inaudible). I mean, there are some really very strange things that go on, but people who end up disciples are people who normally end up in really bad situations, have marched into (inaudible). Not always, though. I mean, there are instances... And there

certainly are instances of people abusing their power. And while there was a good deal of [39:00] sort of flirtatious behavior – I guess that's what it is – in many cases it's not really meant to be serious, and that's, I think, why a lot of women couldn't deal with it all. They could not distinguish what was not play, and not serious, or not serious unless you made certain kinds of responses. There might've been some invitation there, but you were certainly free –

DB: To not respond?

CCM: – to keep it at a certain level, without it pushing past that level. And I will say, for my colleagues, with this one exception, that no single member of my department ever behaved badly. There might've been a couple who [had an idea?], but it didn't ever...

DB: (laughter) OK, that's great.

CCM: [40:00] And, you know, it's... A lot of women just [are uncomfortable with this?]. They don't ever understand very much about certain kinds of interactions. (inaudible). And what I discovered... Oh, the second year I was there, the faculty at Yale was parceled out to colleges, to become fellows in the colleges, on an almost altogether random basis. And the chairman of the department thought it would be funny if my name was Morse and I was attached to Morse College, so I ended up attached to Morse College. They were looking for someone to teach a course in the college, which I was going to teach, too. It was just another reason I ended up there. [41:00] And it happened – I was very lucky. Some of these fellowships come and go in terms of how well they function, and how interesting they are, and one thing or another. And I was quite lucky. Many of my friends did not have particularly pleasant experiences, and really had little to do with their fellowships. But during most of the time that I was at Morse, Vince Scully, the art historian, was the Master. He is a maDBan. He's a walking nervous breakdown that never happens.

DB: (laughter)

CCM: It's fascinating to watch anybody who can walk a thin line that thinly sometimes. But Vince was very lively, and the fellowship itself had a lot of Europeans in it. It was made up of people who were [disgruntled?] with the fellowships they had been assigned to, and they volunteered to move to one of the [42:00] two new colleges. There were a lot of ancient Near

Eastern scholars. No senior English department people. (inaudible) from Slovak, Joan (inaudible) from political science, a couple of physicists, some doctors, (inaudible), and some just really generally interesting and pleasant people to be around. Quite a number of those people became fairly close friends, either close friends on campus or actually friends in (inaudible). So that gave – One of the [43:00] great virtues of that is that you got to now people outside your own field and outside your own small interests, and it becomes easy to find out what's going on in the university, too, because (inaudible) go everywhere. Networks, networks. And one didn't need, especially, a women's network, because there were other effective networks [that were?] women who chose, really, to be pleasant and (inaudible) was excluded from. Although, when I first went into the fellowship, they were very nervous. They had had one or two women members who, at best, would come and have a drink, eat dinner, and flee, whereas Morse was very poor. It didn't have any after dinner drinks budget like some other college fellowships did. But at Morse, what happened is not too many people showed up at once, and there was extra wine, so that people would [44:00] sit around drinking wine. Morse had [them?] twice a month, or every other week, or something like that, during term, with drinks before dinner, dinner in the fellow's lounge, and we just sat around.

DB: Just sitting around in conversation?

CCM: Just talking. And this was all through [the revolution?] as well. There were some splendid nights in the fellowship with people screaming at each other. (laughter)

DB: Early '70s?

CCM: Yes.

DB: Got it.

CCM: But the first night I was there, they were suddenly... They were accustomed to telling dirty jokes, and God knows what else, and they were very nervous about having a lady in their midst. By this time, I had spent enough time with the Morse family, that in addition to bad language I'd learned at Pembroke, I'd learned a whole lot more.

(laughter)

CCM: [45:00] Which is mostly a family of men – boys and brothers. So I thought, “All right, there’s only one way to put these people at ease, and that is to out-swear them,” which I proceeded to do. And I made it very clear in the course of a couple meetings that their language was not offending me. No, they very well may have censored some of their jokes, because I don’t remember them telling hideously offensive jokes, and [Asghar Ovo?], the historian of mathematics and Babylonianist [sic], tells very good jokes, and loves jokes, and is just distraught when people not good (inaudible), when they’re not good joke tellers. And [Hugh Stinson?], who teaches Chinese poetry and Chinese, half the time didn’t get the punch lines at all.

DB: (laughter) Oh dear.

CCM: I mean, he thinks the jokes are about something else. He always laughs when everybody else laughs, but it’s not clear that Hugh ever understood the joke in the first place. [46:00] And when you Hugh to retell a joke, then comes a kind of shaggy dog story, because he never gets the punch lines, (laughter) and he gets the backwards, and so there’s this whole other art form in the fellowship of listening to Hugh’s version of the joke, which, you know, is an acquired taste, really. But I made really very good friends in the fellowship, and felt very happy to have that, because I could complain about the English department, which is a very powerful department at Yale, and many of them were not especially fond of the English department, (inaudible). They didn’t care what I said. It was free, liberating. (inaudible).

DB: So you had that group for (inaudible)?

CCM: Yeah.

DB: [47:00] That’s great. Are there any other [comments?] or observations that...

CCM: A few things. One is that my respect for Brown as an institution, despite my problems with Pierrel, who I think does not and did not represent Brown very well, (inaudible). [I wasn’t paying much attention at that point, I think?].

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