

Transcript – Clara Elizabeth Goodale Kenyon, '39

Narrator: Clara Elizabeth Goodale Kenyon

Interviewer: Barbara

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Track 1

Barbara: [00:00] On this tape, we're going to talk to Elizabeth Goodale Kenyon who's the class of 1939. And she is the niece of Nettie Goodale Murdock who was the class of 1895 which was the first class to enter the women's college at Brown University. And mostly, we're going to talk about Aunt Nettie, as she's commonly called by those who knew her anyway, and we'll probably also include Mrs. Kenyon's memories of her days at Pembroke.

I guess we should start by talking about why it is that you were even able to do this interview in the first place. You mentioned before that when you were at Pembroke, you lived with your Aunt Nettie and her husband. And I guess you've, over the years, absorbed a lot of her memories.

Clara Elizabeth Goodale Kenyon: I did indeed. My sister was the class of '37, Barbara Goodale Bacon, and [01:00] she and I lived with Aunt Nettie and Uncle John when we went to Pembroke. So, we heard many of these very familiar account of the Aunt Nettie's experiences when she started in at Pembroke. And the very first day of examinations and classes that Grace Hawk described so well in the history of Pembroke. It's all down there in black and white, just as Aunt Nettie had told it to us.

The one thing that she kept telling us when we were at school was that those first Pembrokers – we call them now but they didn't call them that then – they felt the greatest responsibility to do well. That was quite a burden to them. They felt that they must do well to make a go of this, and not to let President Andrews down when he had really stuck his neck out to [02:00] admit them and let them come and take the examinations.

Aunt Nettie told us so much about some of her professors that I got to know their names almost as well as the names of my own professors. Professor Jamieson in history and Dr. Manning in math and Professor Everett in Latin and Professor Bennett and Manatt in Greek. Professor Crowell in French. I felt as though I knew them. Of course, I didn't.

Aunt Nettie was a good Greek scholar and she took part in more than one Greek play during her college years. I think she was rather proud of that, too, as I look back on it. Aunt Nettie belonged to the Victorian age and she was a Victorian, and she behaved like a proper Victorian, that ladies should behave [03:00] that way. So, we heard about the proper dress and behavior that was expected of girls at that time which she thought was correct.

One thing that she told my sister and me that we took with a large grain of salt. She said that the girls sat in the front row in these classes where they were so outnumbered by the men. This would be her second or third or fourth year. They sat in the front row, but they never turned around. And she heard one of the fellows had a very nice, deep voice and she would've liked to have known what he looked like, but she couldn't turn around to find out. And, of course, it was my Uncle John. So, somewhere along the way, she did get a look at him to know who it was.

My aunt's main interests were intellectual [04:00] and cultural. Life, to her, was serious. She was not a socializer and small talk was not easy for her. But the friends she made in college, she treasured and kept all her life. Her college friends were her only friends, I think it would be safe to say. I came to know and admire many of them and felt affection for some of them. And this knowledge added a dimension to my own college experience. I got to know Emma Jean Manning who was a nice, shy little lady who was the sister of Professor Manning who taught math. And she had a scientific mind herself and spent her whole life as an editor for some science publishing company. And there was other – Grace Leonard who was the [05:00] librarian at the Athenaeum. And ever so many others.

Aunt Nettie entertained them if they came from out of town at commencement time and that sort of thing, but she was not the kind of person that would just say, "Well, come over to my house for supper." She just was a little too formal for that, always.

And I think you said that you would like to know what she did after college. You asked me that in your... After she graduated in 1895, she worked for her Master's and got that from Brown in 1899. But while she was doing that, she worked at the university library. And one of the influences in her life, beside her other professors, was [06:00] the librarian at that time,

Professor Harry L. Koopman. And she spoke of him often to my sister and me. And seemed to have the greatest respect for him.

She married John Murdock in 1901. He had got his degree from Brown in 1896 and then went to Harvard Law where he got his LLB in 1899. But when she married him, she stopped working. And that's what happened in those days. Women did not have careers. Uncle John became a United States District Attorney and, later on, an Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. But when we were in college, he had just retired.

She and her husband were great companions. [07:00] He was the most important thing in her life. But after him, the university was really her whole life. It was her principal interest. They lived near enough to the campus – they lived on Keene Street – they lived near enough so that they could attend lectures and concerts and just be close to the university always. And they liked cultural things. They went to the Boston Symphony and that sort of thing.

Aunt Nettie's outside interests were the Alumnae Association. She served on many committees and was president of the Alumnae Association in 1927 and worked hard for the construction of Alumnae Hall. I think that was dedicated in 1928. Is that right?

Barbara: I think that's right.

CEGK: She was on the Pembroke Advisory Committee which was the next best [08:00] thing to being on the corporation but women weren't allowed to be on the corporation then. She belonged to Alpha Beta which was a – as I knew it – it was a play-reading group. I think in Grace Hawk's book, she said that it was a fraternity, or what we could call a sorority, but it wasn't what I think of as a sorority. It wasn't that secretive, I don't believe. Anyway, this group read plays and she got pleasure in that. I think that they met about once a month. And once a year, they would meet at Aunt Nettie's house, and that was always quite an event.

Aunt Nettie played the piano. She loved music and there was one friend that she played duets with and I can't remember which friend that was. I'm sorry.

Barbara: Was that another friend from Pembroke?

CEGK: What is it?

Barbara: Was that another –

CEGK: I'm sure that was one of her Pembroke friends, yes.

She belonged to the Rhode Island Society for the Collegiate Education of Women. [09:00] And when I was in college, she was serving on a scholarship committee for that society and interviewed some of the students who wanted aid. And I can remember, more than once, coming in from class and finding the door shut very tightly in the study so that I wouldn't see who she was interviewing. I wouldn't know anything about it. I think this made an impression on her, this particular work, because, as is known, she left a generous bequest to the university for scholarship aid.

Aunt Nettie was also on the board of the Home for Aged Women and spent quite a bit of time on that. She read a great deal. In fact, she never stopped learning. Her favorite subjects were history or biography, that sort of thing. [10:00] And no fiction. I can't remember her reading any fiction. She loved poetry. She would read poetry.

She was interested in some of our courses when we were going, would read some of our books when we weren't using them. And my niece, her grand-niece, was the class of '61. When she was going to school, to Pembroke, she lived in a dormitory and Aunt Nettie was well along in years then. But she borrowed Mary Louise's physics textbook because it was something that had changed so much since she knew anything about it at all. So she worked away at that for a while, but found that because she couldn't go to laboratory part of it, it was just too frustrating. But it showed her great intellectual curiosity.

I think, [11:00] Barbara, you asked me what influences were on her life from her college experience and all. And I think probably the biggest one was President Andrews himself. There was just no question about that. Both my aunt and my uncle almost idolized him. They both had taken his course on moral philosophy. And she would have liked to have had the college named Andrews College in his honor. She came around to thinking that Pembroke College was all right, but she would've preferred Andrews. She thought, privately, that Pembroke was just a little affected.

B: Did you have the impression that President Andrews and the women who were at Pembroke in those early days – did they have [12:00] a lot of contact with each other? I guess she got to know him pretty well.

CEGK: I don't know how much they saw him after that initial time when he helped them get started and came and listened when they had their first recitation and all which, that was a great shock to them, I think. Surprised them. But I don't know how much contact they had after that until they took his course. Of course, all the students – I think that was a required course in those days.

B: What was the title of that course?

CEGK: Moral philosophy.

When President Wriston came, both my aunt and uncle were just delighted with him because they felt that he had the same intellect and drive and courage that Dr. Andrews had. And that he was a man of principle. And, of course, I had a position with President Wriston, and that pleased both my aunt [13:00] and uncle very much. They knew that that was good for Elizabeth to have that mental stimulation.

Aunt Nettie lived to see me become president of the Alumnae Association and that pleased her because she felt that I was following along in her footsteps. She did not live to see me be elected the first alumna trustee of the Corporation. She died in 1964 and I was elected in 1965. But I, myself, am rather pleased with that continuity. She was the first student and I was the first alumnae trustee.

We can look from today's perspective, I think, and say that Aunt Nettie should've had a career. It was not possible then. Girls were not expected to have careers when they got married and had [14:00] a husband to support them. But she had the mind for it and should've done that. It's just too bad. She lived at the wrong time.

I remember that one time, Uncle John came home and said he'd been talking with some gentlemen. And he had asked him, "What does Mrs. Murdock do?" And when Uncle John told Aunt Nettie that, she was quite disturbed. She commented about it for quite a little while

afterwards. My sister and I realized that probably, this was something very much in the back of her mind that she had not allowed herself to think about.

B: That she might've liked to have had a career.

CEGK: But she would've liked to have done just a little more with her life than she did.

B: What do you think – if you can imagine her having pursued a career – what sort of thing do you think she would've done?

CEGK: I think she would've made a very good teacher or a professor. I think she would have.

B: And I guess that's [15:00] a likely chance she might've done something like that because you said she was involved with the Rhode Island Society for the Collegiate Education of Women. And I know a lot of those women were teachers.

I was wondering whether you had any idea of what the influences were on her life that propelled her to go to Pembroke – well, to college in the first place.

CEGK: Well, she had received very good marks at Pawtucket High School and her parents realized that she had capability to study further. They could not afford to send her to Smith or Wellesley either, that were in existence then. She would have to go somewhere nearby where she could live at home.

B: So her parents did encourage her to go.

CEGK: Oh, yes, indeed. Oh, yes.

B: Even though there weren't very women going at the time.

CEGK: That's right. There was no question but what Nettie should go if at all possible.

B: Had she had any older brothers or older sisters?

CEGK: She had a younger brother, my father, who was [16:00] two years younger.

B: So, she was the first child in the family at all.

CEGK: She was the first child. That's right.

B: Do you think that when she went to college, and when her parents intended for her to go, what do you think was the purpose? As you said, women, in those days, didn't go to college for the sake of having a career. Do you think it was....um...I guess it's sort of hard to imagine back, but if you could, what do you think was in the back of her mind and her parents' minds in sending her in the first place?

CEGK: I think probably it was her love of learning, and they just didn't want that to be turned off. Now, I can't imagine that they thought of any particular ulterior – shall we say job placement – that would come of it. It couldn't be so then, way back then. This was [17:00] in 1891.

B: Not too many women followed careers.

CEGK: No.

B: You mentioned that she told you a lot about certain professors that she had. Do you remember any specific things about specific professors or about courses that she took? Or the ones that were particularly influential, why they might have been so?

CEGK: That's a hard one. I can't remember, and my sister couldn't either, any particular incidents. I think Professor Jamieson in history was certainly one of her favorites. And I think Professor Manatt in Greek – of course, he was the one that directed the Greek plays, so she probably got to know him quite well. She liked Dean [18:00] Snow.

B: He came after she came, though, right?

CEGK: Yes. Of course, he was the very first dean and it was quite something to have a dean when they just had a small group of girls. That was a feather in their cap.

B: Do you remember much about him, or had she told you much about him?

CEGK: No.

B: Where did she live when she was going to college?

CEGK: In Pawtucket.

B: So, she commuted back and forth. I guess there were no dormitories then, or even any arrangements for –

CEGK: No. They weren't. No. So, they had to live at home, each one of them. So, that would mean that she went to class and then she went home and studied, I suppose.

B: Did she ever tell you anything about how much contact there was between the few women who were at the women's college and then the Brown campus and the Brown men?

CEGK: Very little. Very little.

B: They had classes with [19:00] the men.

CEGK: Yes. I think after the first year. After the first year, they did, and that's where she first heard my uncle's voice but there were so few of them, and they were definitely second-class citizens. And they kept their place.



B: In what sense? Were they not encouraged to – I don't know – to speak or to participate as much as the Brown men in whatever sense that means?

CEGK: I do know that in one of these Greek plays, there was a Brown man that had a part. That's the only thing that I can be sure of.

B: I have the impression that at that time, both for the men and for any women who were there, the sorts of education that went on was very much – the students were lectured to and there wasn't a whole of give and take in the first place.

CEGK: Not as there is now. Everything was more formal. It was a formal age. [20:00]

B: I guess when she went to school every day, it was very formal dressing and things like that.

CEGK: It was. It's hard for you and me to imagine that, but it was.

B: Did she tell you anything else about rules or regulations or customs? I guess there were no traditions since they were the first class of women.

CEGK: Just that they always had to wear hats and that sort of thing, but, of course, a lady did then wherever she went, not just in college, but on the street.

B: Do you know whether they were allowed to study in the libraries with the men and use any of the facilities?

CEGK: I don't think so. Of course, Pembroke Hall was built in 1897. It moved fairly fast and they did have those early Pembrokers, but that was after. If they were allowed to study in the library, I wouldn't be able to say one way or the other.

B: Do you know whether [21:00] she had to take physical education or anything in addition to –

CEGK: I don't think things like that had started by that time. They did shortly after. It was really – in '91 and '92, there were so few of them and they were just getting going.

B: So they didn't have any sorts of expanded program other than –

CEGK: No. Whether by '94 – maybe this you would find in Grace Hawk's book; I don't know – but these things, I don't remember her saying.

B: I guess they did come in just a bit after that.

CEGK: And some of the things might've happened when she was a graduate student, when things were beginning to be more organized. She could've taken part in some things then, as a graduate student.

I can say that when she worked in the library, the library was in what is now the economics department. Is it Robinson Hall? Is that [22:00] what they call it? Yes.

B: That's where the library was?

CEGK: That was the library.

B: I'm curious about her decision to go on and get a graduate degree. Do you know what influences served to –

CEGK: I just think it was her love of learning. And the opportunity was there.

B: So that her perspective on her education was – rather than being the means to an end, it was then much an end in itself.

CEGK: That's right. Very much so.

B: I don't know whether you know this, but I gather that must have been the case for most of the earliest women.

CEGK: I think so.

B: Now, you mentioned that when you were living with your Aunt Nettie, and I guess also before, you got to know some of the people that she had become close with at the college. How much do you know about her relationships at Pembroke and afterwards with the women who entered with her? I gather those women must have all been a very close group. [23:00]

CEGK: They were. She was very fond of Lily Kinder. She called her Lily, but her name was Elizabeth, Elizabeth Peckham Kinder. And I always knew her as Lily Kinder. She was a very pretty woman, as I remember her. She lived in Pennsylvania but she and Aunt Nettie were fairly close and whenever Lily came back for a reunion or something, why, they spent time together.

And Mae Woolley at Mount Holyoke was a good friend of hers because, of course, they were there together. I always know her as Mae Woolley because that's the way I heard it from Aunt Nettie. And when she came to the university, as she did from time to time, she usually stayed with Aunt Nettie.

B: How many other people entered with her? Was it six people all together?

CEGK: Well, there again, it's in Grace Hawk's book.

B: I just read it this morning. I can't remember the –

CEGK: Yes. And Miss Woolley and Annie Weedon – she was one who did not live very long, so I don't know. [24:00] She died at a fairly early age. But I think she and Miss Woolley got their degree in '94. And then were there six or seven or five in '95?

B: Four or five.

CEGK: Yes. I should have looked this up.

B: I did, too, and I didn't write it down. Why was it that some people were able to get degrees earlier than others?

CEGK: I think Miss Woolley had done work somewhere else, so she had some credits. And I guess Miss Weedon must have also.

B: Do you know what year Miss Woolley died?

CEGK: No.

B: But your aunt did stay in touch with most of those women?

CEGK: Yes.

B: Let's see.

CEGK: I can tell you one more [25:00] thing. When she and Grace Leonard were really well along in their eighties, they memorized Shakespeare's sonnets, just for the fun of it.

B: Had they studied that when they were at college?

CEGK: Yes.

(break in audio)

B: You said that her father didn't have the money to send her to college. And I wondered who financed –

CEGK: Well, he was able to finance the fees that she had to pay Brown University, but he could not afford to send her away.

B: To send her away. I see. Do you remember what the – did you ever know what the tuition or other fees were for her then?

CEGK: Well, that probably is in Grace Hawk's, but it was very small.

B: Someone told me [26:00] – oh, it was Dorothy Brown when we were talking about her experience there, and I think she told me – and this was way later, 20 years later or 25 years later – that I think she told me \$250 for tuition. So it must have been very, very low.

CEGK: When I was there, it was \$400.

B: I can't believe it.

CEGK: No, I bet you can't.

B: When you went, did you live with your Aunt Nettie and Uncle John for four years or did you live in the dormitories at all?

CEGK: Yes. No, for four years, I lived here.

B: Can we talk a little bit about why you went to Pembroke?

CEGK: I just couldn't have gone anywhere else when Aunt Nettie and Uncle John had gone to Brown. It was just in the family.

B: Were you expected to be going to college?

CEGK: Yes. I wanted to and I worked in high school, took the college course, so I could go. And then they made it possible for me to go. [27:00]

B: Where did you – what town did you go to –

CEGK: I came from Worcester and went to South High School in Worcester.

B: Were you brought up ever since you were young that you would be going to Brown?

CEGK: Pretty much so. It was always in the back of my mind, a hope that I had.

B: I guess your experience there was very different from hers, a good forty-five years later. Maybe you could talk a little bit on the tape about what sorts of things you did when you were at Pembroke. Courses that you took and – why don't we start with that? Sorts of curriculum that you –

CEGK: Well, I majored in history, European history, pretty much so.

B: Did you have to fulfill lots of requirements? I know at the time, there were lots of distributions and requirements and things like that.

CEGK: Yes.

B: [28:00] Who were some of the professors or deans or personalities that you remember?

CEGK: Dean Morris was the dean when I was there. My very favorite professor was Professor Armstrong in history and Professor Hedges in history. I think my favorite professors were mostly the ones in the history department. I suppose one gets to know them best. To fulfill a requirement, I took a course in bacteriology with Professor Charles Stewart, and I loved it. I just enjoyed it. Now, I wouldn't be able to do that because there would be chemistry requirements, prerequisites to forego that; (inaudible), but then I was able to.

B: Did you see your education as being – you said before that for your Aunt Nettie, it was very much an end in itself. It wasn't a stepping stone to something [29:00] else. And when you went, what was your expectation?

CEGK: Well, I knew that I would have to support myself when I got through, one way or another. There was no question about that. So, I hoped to get a job. I didn't know what that was going to be, either.

B: And in what year did you get married?

CEGK: Nineteen forty-six.

B: So, you did support yourself.

CEGK: So, I did support myself.

B: And then you didn't stop working.

CEGK: No, not for a while.

B: Do you remember any of the – I don't know how to phrase this – the sorts of restrictions and conventions that went along for Pembroke women vis-à-vis the Brown campus and Brown men. At that time, I guess there was a little more contact than what your aunt –

CEGK: There was a little more contact. Our freshman and sophomore years, pretty much [30:00] all the classes were separate. But by the time they start major-wise, then you had mixed classes with the men.

B: I had heard stories from other people who graduated earlier than you did, so this might have changed, that even though there were, by the time you were an upperclassman, you could take

courses with the Brown men over on the Brown campus. Many times, women were discouraged from doing that. And when they did take courses over there, they were encouraged to really be seen and not heard at all. There wasn't a whole lot of a spirit of welcome on the Brown campus.

CEGK: I think that was not quite so bad when I went, but the *Brown Daily Herald* always had a statement on their masthead. It said something to the effect – separate Brown and Pembroke. They wanted Pembroke just to be gone and have [31:00] no tie to the university at all.

B: Do you think that was – did you know a lot of men at Brown when you were going –

CEGK: Quite a few, yes.

B: When you got down to the individual, did you find that was an attitude that many of them held or was it sort of a joke?

CEGK: It was sort of a joke, sort of a joke.

B: There were all kinds of songs –

CEGK: But they were quite friendly.

B: Was there a lot of socializing with the Brown men?

CEGK: Yes. They came and attended our dances and things like that in good numbers. Didn't seem to mind.

B: If you had to divide it up, like 50-50 or 40-60 or somehow like that, when you were there, was the emphasis at Pembroke College very academic or were you encouraged to do a lot of socializing? How serious and rigorous was the attitude about women [32:00] by professors and students alike?



CEGK: I think the professors' attitudes were good. They thought we were serious about our work. And I wouldn't say all the students were serious about their work.

Track 2

CEGK: [00:00] I had the strong feeling that the students in my class and just before and just after were not the caliber of those early girls that were in my aunt's time.

B: Not as rigorously selected or –

CEGK: That's right. They weren't as interested in pursuing their courses.

B: More just in the socializing –

CEGK: I think so. You could almost, perhaps, say that they were not as selective, that they had not been – by the university, they had not been selective as well.

B: I wonder whether any of that had to do with the year that you entered, '36 I guess it was, and I was thinking that that was just at the tail end of after the Depression, and whether the people of your generation didn't [01:00] have a very serious or career attitude about their education. Simply because having gone through the Depression and that sort of thing, when work was very scarce, women were certainly second-class citizens in that respect.

CEGK: That's right, and you would still hear of certain men that would say that they'd send their sons to college but not their daughters because it would be a waste of money. That attitude lasted a long time.

B: And I guess that must've affected some of the people that were there.

CEGK: I'm sure it did.

B: Although then, it would make you wonder why they were there, but then were there with not a not-quite-as-serious an attitude. Well, was the emphasis for a lot of people on – we said the social aspect. Was there a big emphasis in your day, say, meeting a prospective husband, that kind of thing? Or not so much?

CEGK: Well, I think human nature being what it is, it was [02:00] probably there whether they talked about it or not.

B: The reason I asked that is, I've talked to my mother a lot about her college years, and she was a '55 graduate which was –

CEGK: Of Pembroke?

B: No, she didn't go to Pembroke. She went to Skidmore. And when you hear her talk and other people of her generation, that was certainly one of the prime goals, I think, of going to college although I don't mean to say that people weren't serious. But it seems that it was quite – if not expected, at least the norm that many people, including my mother, were engaged at some point during their college years. Did you find a lot of that?

CEGK: That's right. A fair amount, yes. And I can remember one time someone – a story that Aunt Nettie told that some committee that she was at that Miss Morris was present – and this person from some college outside asked her about the Pembroke students marrying the Brown men. And all Miss Morris did was just turn [03:00] and point to Aunt Nettie.

B: What kind of a woman was Miss Morris?

CEGK: She's very handsome. I don't think that any student would feel very close to her. She was, more or less, sort of a figurehead, or at least she was to me.

B: She didn't have a whole lot of contact with many of the students.

CEGK: Not a great deal.

B: How old, about, was she when you were there? Was she middle-aged or –

CEGK: That's a tough question. When you are your age, somebody my age looks old as the hills. Now, at my age, looking back, it would be hard for me to say how old. I would say that Miss Morris was in her forties.

B: And did you personally get to know her or – when you say you admired her and that sort of thing, was it –

CEGK: Oh, it was seeing her in chapel [04:00] and that sort of thing. I think she went over my schedule with me, she herself did, when I was deciding on a major. Did it in sort of an offhand way which rather amused me, especially later. But she steered me into history which was just fine because I loved it. And so that was a good steer.

B: Do you remember why she steered you that way? Was it courses you had taken?

CEGK: It was part my – of course, it was my own indecision. I hadn't quite decided what it was I wanted to major in. So, I think she did me a favor.

B: Did you have to choose a major after two years or after one year?

CEGK: After two years.

B: That's how we have it, too. I know sometimes there are some places you have to do it almost right away. (inaudible) What sorts of extracurricular things did you do when you were there? Clubs or –

CEGK: Oh, [05:00] I was in the International Relations Club and was president of that my senior year which put me in Question Club. We had Question Club then. Maybe you know about that.

B: I know about it.

CEGK: It was made up of the presidents of all the extracurricular organizations.

B: I'd heard about that and I knew that that was the membership of it, but I still am not clear about what function the Question Club served when –

CEGK: It was sort of the – I wouldn't say the – well, I don't know how to say it. The governing board of the college.

B: And in that respect, what sorts of things were considered by the people? Was it a decision-making body or was it just –

CEGK: I think some decision-making, but not earthshaking. It was almost, perhaps, more of an [06:00] honorary thing than anything.

B: So, it was sort of like an honor society.

CEGK: Yes.

B: And it was recognition by both the college but also once peers because –

CEGK: That's right. It was recognition by one's peers. That's really what it was.

B: Did you ever take part in any of the interclass contests, song contests, or dramatic?

CEGK: I didn't take part in any of the dramatic stuff. And I was not a great athlete. My biggest – what shall I say? Only thing that I did then was play fistball, so you see.

B: What was that?

CEGK: Oh, something like volleyball. Miss Rudd would put us through our paces, you know.

B: Oh, you were there when Bessie Rudd was there.

CEGK: I certainly was.

B: Oh, tell me something about [07:00] her. I've heard a lot.

CEGK: She was a delightful person and a scary person, too. She had a powerful voice and she was a large woman and very energetic. And when I was not particularly an athletic type, I had her come after me for something or other. It was intimidating. Many years afterwards, I got to know her socially and became very fond of her, and told her that I used to be afraid of her which really rather pleased her.

B: She seems to have been a very influential person.

CEGK: Yes, she was.

B: Which leads me to believe that people must have seen her or have some sort of contact with her outside of just class. Was she a very visible figure?

CEGK: Very visible. Very.

B: In what way? What sorts of things was she –

CEGK: Well, just by her physical stature, for one thing. But her personality, too. [08:00] In a room full of people, you just wouldn't overlook her.

B: And I guess every student came in contact with her because you have to have physical –

CEGK: They certainly did. When you came as a freshman and had your preliminary medical examination, there she was, booming out orders. First impression of her.

B: And you wanted to go turn around and go right home.

CEGK: Yes.

B: Did you have to climb ropes? I've seen pictures of gym class climbing ropes.

CEGK: Yes. All kinds of things. She was well-liked by many of the students, and not by some who were – she was just a little bit too much for some.

B: Was she also the supervisor of the teams and things?

CEGK: Yes. She did a lot of intercollegiate women's sports, too. Refereeing and [09:00] that sort of thing.

B: I know that her name still comes up today every once in a while about, I don't know... in discussions about women's athletics and things like that.

CEGK: At my last reunion, which was our fortieth, Bessie Rudd had died since our previous reunion. And she was an honorary member of my class, so we thought we would do something in her memory. And there was a discussion of just what would be appropriate for Bessie.

We finally hit on the wonderful idea of presenting the university with a bubbler in her memory –

B: What's a bubbler?

CEGK: A water fountain. At the tennis courts, large tennis courts at the – can't think of it.

B: At the large...A.D. Field?

CEGK: Yes. Over behind Meehan. And it's much appreciated because [10:00] there's no water around there anywhere and ever so many tennis players have said how much they appreciate that bubbler there. But we just thought that that was something in the athletic complex that was suitable for Bessie and a bubbler sort of would epitomize her energy. We think she would approve.

B: Does she have a little plaque on it?

CEGK: Yes.

B: Really? I've never seen that. I'll have to go over and look. What were some of the traditions or, on the more light side, maybe some pranks or stunts? Kind of a lighter side of everyday life that would go on while you were a student? I guess there must have been all kinds of things between the Brown men and Pembroke girls, songs and cheers and things like that.

CEGK: Well, of course, we had our own campus life which we enjoyed. It was quite unique. And I think this is one of the things that the college [11:00] girls now miss. They don't know it. I think it's too bad that they don't have this in their college life.

But we used to have a Sophomore Masque every year. And I remember one time, I think it was the class of '38 presented a class mascot, as was customary every year. And they hit on the idea of presenting to the college a wonderful man by the name of Mr. Applebon who ran a lunch place on Thayer Street. And Applebon's was sort of a not entirely – it was all right, but it was just an ordinary lunch place. And when the class revealed Mr. Applebon was their class mascot, Miss Morris was not at all pleased. And that was one of the memories that my class and all the other classes [12:00] at that time think back on with rather delight.

B: She thought that was sort of improper. Any other things like that that you can remember?

CEGK: Well, that one stands out in my mind. Oh, we used to have May queens and May Day. At the same time that the Sophomore Masque was put on, why, the seniors crowned their May queen. Those were all nice customs, pretty customs.

B: And I guess you had lots of dances and things like that.

CEGK: Lots of dances. Tea dances.

B: What are tea dances?

CEGK: A tea dance. That was especially nice in the smaller houses when you had tea and you danced. They were just very nice, refined affairs.

B: And did the girls – it was their duty to invite a date or something.

CEGK: That's right.

B: Would most people... Would you have [13:00] some steady beaus or a lot of – were these opportunities to test out the men with nice voices?

CEGK: A lot had steady beaus. Not all of them. In those days, I don't think people went as steady as they do these days.

B: I'm not sure if people do that these days. I don't know.

CEGK: Maybe they don't. It'll be your turn to tell me about your days.

B: After we turn this off, I'll –

CEGK: Yes, yes.



B: I don't want to go –

CEGK: Everything is fair.

B: I'd like to hear more, if there's any more specific to tell, about the separate life that you were talking about that now that it's all one school, we don't have that anymore. But it sounds as though Pembroke was really a whole separate world in itself.

CEGK: It was, and it was nice. And this makes me think that maybe – I think it was about three years ago, [14:00] some of us alumnae were invited by the undergraduates, the women, to come to a meeting in Alumnae Hall so that they could ask us questions, a sort of a give and take. And from the questions that they asked and some of the things that they told us, we got the impression that they were looking for an identity.

B: And you have that identity.

CEGK: And we had an identity. I don't like this idea that the old days were the best days. I don't want to ever say that about anything because I like to look forward, not backwards. But there were many things then that were good and it's too bad they're gone. And it isn't just that the university has got rid of them, it's society today has changed things. But I came away [15:00] from that meeting feeling sad and a little depressed because you could see that those girls really missed that, though they didn't know that that was what they missed.

B: And that was something that just by having a separate college, you did have.

CEGK: Yes.

B: I don't know. It's –

CEGK: They sort of wanted a life of their own and they felt that they were being overwhelmed.

B: I guess in every way, it was a separate – even though you had courses with the men – socially and people who lived in the dormitories, of course. And even academically, I guess. Maybe you can fill in other things I'm forgetting, but it seems as though even though there was the opportunity to reach out and do things with the Brown men and on the Brown campus, in the end, Pembroke women were Pembroke women.

CEGK: That's right. And it meant a great deal to us. It was a nice [16:00] world. I'm sure other alumnae have said to you that they had the best of both worlds. I've heard that said so many times.

B: And I guess you think that's true.

CEGK: But at the same time, looking at the way the university is or was at the time that they did disband Pembroke, it was not a separate unit by that time. So when people say to me, "Oh, it's so terrible that Pembroke is gone, and don't you think it was awful?" And I said, "Well, it did not exist, so why not face facts? It's too bad and I regret that it's gone, but by the time they put everything together, it was gone."

B: But I guess you would say that having gone to Pembroke at a time when it did have an identity of its own has shaped your [17:00] life.

CEGK: I would say so.

B: How would you say? Maybe your outlook or your – I don't know. I don't want to say it for you.

CEGK: Well, I don't know exactly what you mean, either.

B: Well, I guess – if you had not ever gone to Pembroke, you would've probably been a very different person. Or no?

CEGK: Very likely. Very likely. I'm sure that Pembroke enriched my life in ever so many ways.

B: Maybe you could say for the record what sorts of things you did immediately after you graduated?

CEGK: Well, the first thing I had to do was to get a tool so I could get a job. So, that meant learning typing and shorthand. That was my stepping stone.

B: And you went to Katharine Gibbs or someplace like that.

CEGK: Yes. I went to a [18:00] (inaudible) school up in Worcester. And my first job was with a manufacturing company up there where I was for just a few months. And then I got a letter from Miss Morris asking me if I would be interested in coming and being assistant to the Social Director, or really, a secretary to this dean. She was called the Social Director. And being head of one of the smaller houses. I liked that idea because I wasn't too happy where I was, and I liked the thought of getting back into the academic atmosphere.

And I was in that job for two years when, one day, I got word that President Wriston would like to see me. And I thought, "Whoa. What have I done now?" And he was looking for a secretary especially to work on his speeches. [19:00] And he wanted a history major and someone who had secretarial training.

B: And that was you.

CEGK: So, there I was.

B: And you did that for how many years?

CEGK: Oh, about seven or eight. I was married in 1946 and about the time we started building this house, why, I stopped work.

B: Was your husband a Brown man?

CEGK: He was a Brown man and I never knew him while I was in college. He was the class of '36.

B: Well, you weren't really there that –

CEGK: And I met him when I was working for President Wriston.

B: Sounds like a movie.

CEGK: Yes.

B: Things keep slipping my mind. I keep holding them in the back and then – oh. I was going to ask you about going to learn secretarial skills. Now, maybe this is just my perspective now, but I think if I walked out of college with a degree in hand and then I went to learn secretarial skills, it might bother me.

CEGK: Oh, that was a low [20:00] point in my life, I can tell you. That was one of the darkest periods in my life, sitting there doing that humdrum stuff and wondering where I was and how long I had to be doing this and knowing that I must earn my living. It was very necessary for me to get out and be independent.

B: It must have felt sort of like a negation of your intelligence which Pembroke had helped to build up.

CEGK: It was dreadful. It was just dreadful. Just awful. It was a dark time in my life.

B: But there were no alternatives, I guess, right?

CEGK: No.

B: There was nothing you could take a history degree, as a woman, and go off and do.

CEGK: That's right. And if I had wanted to go on, do graduate work, I would not have been able to afford it. Aunt Nettie and Uncle John had helped put me through Pembroke, but that was it.

B: Well, when you were a junior or a senior at Pembroke, was there any sort of counseling [21:00] or guidance that would've offered you alternatives other than having to support yourself through, say, learning secretarial skills or something like that?

CEGK: Very, very little. I think that when it got toward the end of my senior year, it was Miss Mooar who was the Director of Admissions. But she did some of that – what they would call counseling today. I don't think she called it that.

B: Do you have the – I don't know whether you would know – but do you have the impression that a lot of people in your class didn't have these alternatives of taking their college education and doing something with it? Rather, they would have to learn a more practical skill.

CEGK: Well, some of my classmates had taken teacher training courses, or education courses. So, some of them were pointed in the direction [22:00] of teaching. And I was not interested in that.

B: So, if you weren't interested in the couple of options open to women, a college education didn't propel you to any sorts of alternatives.

CEGK: That's just right.

B: I guess you must know that's different now, although I'm telling you from the perspective of a senior. I don't have the faintest idea which of those things that I want to do. So, I don't know. We'll see.

I don't think I have any other things that are jumping to mind. Have we talked about anything that has stimulated anything that we haven't talked about that you want to –

CEGK: I can't think of anything else. I think we've covered things pretty well.

B: Nothing else about your aunt or anything like that that's come to mind since we started talking about your –

CEGK: No, I think we've covered things quite well.

B: OK. Well, thank you very much for the opportunity. I'll turn this off.

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