

Transcript – Carol Markovitz Raskin, 1962

Narrator: Carol Markovitz Raskin

Interviewer: Eve Raskin

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Track 1

Eve Raskin: This is [Eve Raskin?], class of 1991, interviewing Carol Markovitz [Raskin?],  
Pembroke College Class of 1962. Why did you come to college?

Carol Markovitz Raskin: I always expected that I would go to college. It was just assumed. Both  
my parents were college graduates.

ER: How did you hear about –

CM: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

ER: Excuse me?

CM: And everybody I knew was going to college. And I wanted to.

ER: How did you hear about Pembroke?

CM: Two ways; first my mother met someone on a national organization board who went to  
Pembroke, and also my senior year we got a new English teacher who was our journalism  
newspaper advisor, and she was a 1955 recent Pembroke graduate, and I really liked her and she  
really liked Pembroke so I came to look at it.

ER: Why did you choose to go to Pembroke?

CM: Because it was a coordinate college with a separate women's organization but it was part of Brown University with the same education.

ER: Were there any difficulties within your family about going to college because of your gender?

CM: No.

ER: What were your family expectations about the uses of your education?

CM: I'm not really sure but I assume it was not expected that I would have a career but that I would marry after college.

ER: So why did your family choose to send you to college?

CM: Because education was important.

ER: In your time period, wasn't it unusual for women to go to college?

CM: No.

ER: Think back to your first year at Pembroke College and your first day at Pembroke, what was your roommate like?

CM: I didn't have a roommate.

ER: [02:00] Where did you live on campus?

CM: The King House. The farthest out freshman dorm and the biggest.

ER: How did you feel about living so far away from campus?

CM: It was very far. We didn't like it at first. In fact, we grumbled a lot because we had to come into Andrews from [Elesenen?] to do our laundry and, of course, it was a real hike to classes but it gave us a unique sense of closeness and we stayed together longer, and at our 25<sup>th</sup> reunion more of the King House girls percentage wise came back than any other freshman dorm.

ER: How many women did you live with that first year?

CM: I think there were about 40.

ER: Was there an initiation program for women on your orientation week?

CM: There was but I don't really remember it except I remember we had to read the Lonesome Crowd or something [03:00] that I didn't read but anyhow we had a discussion group on it in our dorm early in the year, maybe during orientation week but I just don't remember anything else.

ER: Did you have a big sister? An older girl on campus?

CM: I think so but I don't remember her either.

ER: What kind of extracurricular activities did you become involved in?

CM: Initially and primarily Brown Youth Guidance which was an outreach organization. We went out and volunteered in civic projects for children on a one-to-one basis generally, and I worked at a settlement house called [Wickerson?] House. I worked out of the – at Pendleton-Bradley Hospital. The only other activity I remember being involved in was the Pembroke biweekly newspaper.

ER: Which was called what?

CM: Pembroke Record.

ER: What was [04:00] your social life like at Pembroke College?

CM: It was pretty awful.

ER: Were your friends mostly women or some men?

CM: There were some men. Our closest friends were women but we had – we all had men friends.

ER: Where did you go to meet men?

CM: We had mixers but you didn't go anyplace by yourself, I mean unless you were at a date or something other than the mixers freshman week, and there really wasn't anyplace to go to meet men that I can recall.

ER: So what did you do for fun? What did you do socially?

CM: Well, sometimes we dated. Of course, we went to some football games. Occasionally to a movie at (inaudible) house. We played a lot of bridge. It's hard to remember. I don't remember much else. We didn't do much in town. Later on as seniors we sometimes would walk downtown to a movie. Some people went away weekends. [05:00] Some people were very – had boyfriends in fraternities and they had an active social life.

ER: If you had a boyfriend in a fraternity what did you do?

CM: You went to fraternity parties.

ER: I noticed when I was overlooking your records that you did something very interesting your junior year. Would you care to share that with me, please?

CM: Well, sometime in about November my junior – well, to back up, originally I had thought of spending my whole junior year abroad but I liked it here so much I decided not to do that, and they didn't really encourage it. They almost discouraged it in those days, and there weren't a whole lot of opportunities. Presumably we'd go on – Brown didn't have any organized opportunities. You joined up with Smith or Sweetbriar if you wanted to go to France, but in the fall of my junior year, I don't remember exactly when, so maybe around October I was getting really fed up with the place [06:00] and decided that I needed to get out. Well, I knew that I couldn't just – in those days you didn't just take a single stroll and I knew that I couldn't do that so I wondered if it might be possible for me to find somehow to go to Paris, and I think it was in the car going home Thanksgiving I said something to my second cousin who was also a friend – long-time friend and neighbor and a junior – a senior at Brown about finding a program and he told me, I don't know if you've been on it, it's a – in the summer and a year, about a program the Sorbonne ran for foreign students and he had the brochure, and immediately when I came back I went to talk to our dean of women, Dean [Tox?], who was in some ways outwardly an old curmudgeon but was actually a really wonderful person, and she told me that if I could get a department to sponsor me by agreeing to give me academic credit for the work abroad [07:00] that she would approve it and that they would approve that program. So I went to Professor Albert [Delhahn?] from whom I had taken some French courses and by this time I had had – it must have been my fifth semester of French at college, and he was really excited about it, and he went to the French faculty and got them to approve it. And the next thing I knew I was all set to spend my second semester junior year in Paris, which I did.

ER: And what was the name of your second cousin?

CM: Dick Levi.

ER: And what would –

CM: A Providence family by the way. The Levis were a Providence family but by this time they lived in Philadelphia.

ER: I noticed when I was looking through your yearbook that only three women spent their junior year abroad so it was very difficult to do.

CM: Well, there weren't – Brown itself didn't sponsor the activities and they did somewhat discourage it as an interruption in your academic career and, of course, [08:00] they didn't encourage it, and there weren't as many institutions sponsoring the program and, of course, some students I knew of, I can't remember his name but a boy I knew in the class ahead of me spent a year abroad on his own, independent study, and as you can see it was possible but you didn't think about it and so you had to be selected by one of these few programs that were available.

ER: Who was the most important influence on you at Pembroke?

CM: My friends.

ER: And why were your friends your most important influence?

CM: Because they were the ones I had the most contact with. We were a very close group of six or eight people, all originally from our freshman dorm, and I just think we played the biggest part – a bigger role in influencing each other's lives than anyone. [09:00] Also, I wasn't receptive probably because of the times but also because I had preset notions of what I wanted to do to other people. For instance, when my history professor senior year asked me about if I wanted to do graduate work and he was evidently willing to help me, I wasn't willing to consider it at the time.

ER: Why not?

CM: Because first of all I was tired of school and secondly I really didn't think in terms of making a life-long career a priority at that time.

ER: And why not?

CM: Because I expected that I would get married and have children and not work during a reasonably long period of time and then go back to school when my children started school so that I would get my graduate education at a time closer to when I would enter the workforce for a longer time.

ER: [10:00] What was your best memory of Pembroke?

CM: My friends. There's nothing – no one thing that stands out that I can recall at this distance.

ER: What about your worst memory?

CM: Probably going before the Honor Council when we got caught drinking in the dorm.

ER: Would you care to discuss that incident?

CM: I don't remember it. I remember that we – this is sophomore year and we hadn't – of course drinking in the dorms – drinking was allowed but drinking in the dorms certainly wasn't. We had a lot of these little bottles that we could acquire, the airplane size, and we were drinking fairly regularly and then one of my good friends decided that it was against the honor code and turned herself in, and, of course, then we were all stuck.

ER: And what was the verdict of the Honor Council?

CM: I think they grounded us for, I don't remember, three weeks or the rest of the semester or something. I don't remember.

ER: Can you explain what being [11:00] grounded is?

CM: I don't – I guess it was that we couldn't go out at night if there – you know, or socially or something. It's hard to remember. We had – the Honor Council was a major part of our life

because we had all these rules. I mean, we had to be in at certain hours. We had to – it was pretty really nine or 10 o'clock. Weekends it was about midnight until our senior year they let us have an extra hour, I forget, one or two o'clock on Saturdays or something. As freshman you could only stay out at night a limited number of times, either first semester, maybe the whole year. I'm talking about even until 10:00. You were very restricted as freshman. And, of course, you couldn't stay out overnight unless you signed out every night to some place that looked reasonably respectable.

ER: And who got –

CM: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) report yourself.

ER: Who got written these rules?

CM: I think it was an elected student honor council and we had representatives on it and so forth.

ER: Did you have a dorm mother?

CM: Yes, we had Mrs. Green [12:00] at the King House. They were older ladies mostly, but sophomore year we had a new college graduate who came to the PE department whose name was [Steph Phillips?] I think and she was a neat person and, of course, we related to her because she wasn't an old lady.

ER: Were there any dress rules you had to follow?

CM: Oh, yes. Let's see. You had to dress for dinner every night and Sunday noon, I mean that means put on a skirt. I don't know if it was specifically Saturday and Sunday noon. Wednesday night and Sunday noon were the big candle lit almost dinners and we would invite faculty members and there was coffee served in the lounge afterwards, that kind of thing. We couldn't wear pants on the Brown campus. Actually, I guess we weren't supposed to wear them off the Pembroke campus. Things like shorts, Bermuda shorts and jeans and nobody wore short shorts



much then anyhow except athletics. But Bermuda shorts were very popular [13:00] and it used to make us really furious because in the spring when the weather got warm the guys could wear Bermudas and we weren't supposed to. Or in the winter when it was cold we couldn't wear slacks. We were one of the classes that began rebelling. We began as we got more situated in our careers by I guess junior or senior year wearing Bermuda shorts wherever we felt not particularly slacks but the women didn't wear slacks a whole lot. Nobody wore jeans.

ER: Where you reprimanded for breaking these rules?

CM: No. Although I suppose I think we couldn't have come to dinner if we didn't have a skirt on but you just got in the habit of throwing a skirt on over whatever you were wearing. It was not a big deal although it was an annoying little deal. We also – I had forgotten like freshman week at orientation there was a hazing process. We would wear beanies. There was a rumor that they'd come – the seniors or upperclassmen or something would come and get us out of bed and stuff like that. [14:00] But we were dumb. We didn't wear our beanies long and when they tried to roust us out of bed we wouldn't go. So they didn't do much about it after that.

Posture pictures were a big tradition. I don't remember – when we came in they gave you a cursory kind of PE exam, not so much medical exam, and they took our pictures mainly behind a shadow box. So you had a shadow picture because posture was supposed to be a very important thing and then I guess you'd – I don't remember whether you had remedial posture classes. But first semester we had required PE courses that consisted of things like how to stand up straight, how to sit like a lady, how to put your suitcase up on the train like a lady. You know, that kind of thing, getting in and out of cars. And, of course, there were always the rumors that the Brown guys were going to steal our nude pictures and, you know, blow them up [laughter] and put them on the door but it never happened. [15:00]

ER: Were women restricted from particular classes?

CM: No.

ER: No.

CM: It was totally open in those days. Totally coeducational. Except things like – I guess women could be on the radio station but I don't know if any women could be on the Brown Daily Herald. We had our own newspaper so we probably didn't want it. We had our own yearbook.

ER: Do you remember participating in any traditions such as May Day or Ivy Day?

CM: I don't remember Ivy Day at all. I vaguely remember now because we talked about it at the Union that we had May Day but I don't remember May Day, so it was not a big tradition that it was at Wellesley and the other women's colleges.

ER: With the commencement ceremony, do you remember what the women's place was in the march and seating?

CM: Yeah, we marched side by side. I think two women with two men, and I don't remember the seating.

ER: Did you have much contact with the Pembroke [16:00] deans and faculty?

CM: There wasn't any Pembroke faculty except the (inaudible) faculty. We had whatever contact we wanted with the regular faculty. Once in a while there were some who were more accessible for coffee in the Blue Room but I mean you could go to office hours and talk to them. Senior year we had a young woman, International Relations professor who was wonderful who had us over to her house sometimes as International Relations major people, and that was the closest contact. Some people had similar contact with other people. The deans were fairly accessible. You didn't ever go see the dean, who was Dean Lewis. I'm sure he was very nice but he was a tough (inaudible) but Dean [Constance?] was very accessible but basically we wanted to stay away from the deans if you could. You had to see them for registering and they had to approve your course registration every semester.

ER: Why did you want to stay away from deans?

CM: [17:00] Well, because it usually meant you were in trouble.

ER: Did you have any contact with any female role model?

CM: Other than this professor who – I can't remember her married name but her father's name was (inaudible) and he was a famous anthropology professor, there weren't any women professors that I can recall. The PE department was not a role model for most of us, and in my view the deans were too aloof and you just didn't apply to be a dean usually so there really weren't any female role models and, of course, there were no – there was no attempt to encourage us to have careers or professions so there was no drop-in with whatever – lawyers, doctors, business people that might have been available. [18:00]

ER: How did your years at Pembroke develop a sense of a role in society or job perimeter or develop your role, the role you wanted to play?

CM: It was partly me and partly Pembroke that being here you always knew that you could do anything you wanted. Although most of us did not see ourselves as having life-long careers, I think most of us felt very confident of our intellectual and organizational abilities some of which finally showed up in running the yearbook or the newspaper or whatever, but just because we did mix on a regular basis with our male peers in classes and generally you had to (inaudible 18:53) in those days, we knew we could do anything we wanted and I think most of us felt [19:00] that we had this education and we would want to use it. At the last minute some of my class – well, some at the last minute, some with a plan, did go to graduate school and that I think encouraged the rest of us to think that we could do it as well.

ER: What were your particular goals?

CM: I'm not sure I had any. At one point I wanted to go into the Foreign Service but then I decided I didn't want to go abroad, and I had heard how hard it was to pass the test and so I

didn't even try for that. It kind of undercuts what I just said but that applied both to men and women, although I did know that mostly – well, at least women in the Foreign Service would be secretaries and I didn't want to be a secretary even in the Foreign Service.

ER: Do you have any particular memories about the roles your friends wanted to play in society or any decisions they made that affected their future?

CM: Well, [20:00] marriage was a very big goal of all of us in college. I mean we couldn't perceive our lives any other way in that generation. I had two very good friends and the three of us and a fourth person planned to go to Europe the summer after my junior year.

ER: What were the names of your friends?

CM: Jane [Taperin?] and Jane Levin and the fourth person wasn't a Pembroke. Her name was Sarah, she went to Vassar. Anyhow, we made these plans and sometime in our sophomore year one of the Janes began dating a guy who was a year older and he was a Brown student. He was (inaudible) I suppose fell in love with him and was planning to marry him. Anyhow, the summer after our sophomore year [21:00] we made plans to go to Europe and they were pretty firm plans but as our junior year wore on Jane became more worried that if she went to Europe the next summer she might lose her boyfriend. What she really said to us was that she didn't want to be apart from him. But anyhow, even though she had had this dream of going to Europe she decided not to but the other Jane and I and Sarah and Sarah's cousin went anyhow.

ER: Was that an unusual decision for a woman to make at that time?

CM: Probably not but Jane – the other Jane and I thought it was a dumb one.

ER: Do you have any feelings about the merger of 1971?

CM: Well, yes. At the time I thought that we were giving up a good thing and I still think so in some respects. They were certainly giving up a certain amount of freedom and independence that

[22:00] comes with having single sex dormitories and a real ability to literally and metaphorically let your hair down. I think women's interaction with other women when there are no men around is a very valuable thing, and it is different from when there are men around. I also think that while women should be able to compete and by this time they were competing as men in extracurricular activity, they also could stand to learn a lot from having organizations of their own, whether they be legal or government council or what but it was obvious that that's what the students wanted and that was the trend at the time. And even when I don't agree I think that sometimes we have to see a balance and let the thing just move towards what's necessary at the time. [23:00]

ER: The clubs that you belonged to and the organizations, were they co-ed or single sex?

CM: At Brown?

ER: Yes.

CM: They were both. Well, Brown Youth Guidance was co-ed; and the Pembroke Record was all women.

ER: Eventually the clubs did merge, how do you feel about that?

CM: Well, I thought that was good and probably within a couple of years I might have seen (inaudible) integrate things like Brown Daily Herald but we weren't integrated at the time. But I still think there's a role for single sex women's organizations in education.

ER: And why do you feel that way?

CM: Because it does give women more of a sense and a different kind of competitiveness if they're not trying to prove they're better than men but just being themselves and taking charge.

ER: What degree did you earn from Pembroke? [24:00]

CM: [NAU?].

ER: And which is?

CM: (inaudible) degree in (inaudible). It's the Latin for Bachelor of Arts degree [laughter].

ER: And what was your field?

CM: International Relations.

ER: After you left Brown, what did you do?

CM: I was able to parlay the two economic courses that were required of an IR major into a job as an international economist in the Canada (inaudible) summer for the US.

ER: And what did you do after that?

CM: I got married, moved to Montreal and because of my experience now was able to get a job as an economist with the Bank of Montreal (inaudible) Canada.

ER: And how did marriage affect your career?

CM: Well, it meant that I didn't even think in terms of creating a career in so many different ways.

ER: Do you have any children?

CM: Two. [25:00]

ER: And how did you tell them to (inaudible 25:02) career?

CM: Well, it was just a continuation because again I didn't plan to do anything about a career until my children were in school but actually what happened was I decided that school should wait that long because I sometimes start school and (inaudible) the motherly role and all that so then I couldn't start school and mostly when they were little.

ER: How did your career benefit your marriage and the children?

CM: Well, it made no difference because I was obviously working full time. It (inaudible) ahead of time (inaudible) have to stay with your family or do things for your family. I gave up a lot of the [26:00] cooking, I never (inaudible) cooking. You know, I didn't have much time for school-related activities like taking the kids on field trips. I didn't have time, I don't think I was (inaudible).

ER: The other women around your age, did they also have jobs or were they mostly homemakers.

CM: Most of them then when my children were younger were homemakers. Today more and more of them accept jobs but their children are grown, as are mine.

ER: Did you feel that because the other women were home that that affected the social interaction of the family?

CM: Oh, yes. Very few of my friends were homemakers. Partly for reasons other than (inaudible) were not as interested in being friends with (inaudible) women, partly because you didn't have as much time working every day. [27:00] (inaudible) partly because you couldn't do the same thing I'm going to be friends with (inaudible) and whatnot or committee work (inaudible) and partly because in (inaudible) other working women were much nicer.

ER: Did you feel that because of your career you missed out on a lot of the things your children were doing as they grew up?

CM: Yes.

ER: And how did you feel about that?

CM: Bad.

ER: Why did you feel bad?

CM: Because you wanted to do everything. You wanted to spend more time with your kids (inaudible). I still could (inaudible), distraction and have lunch. And, you know, there just wasn't enough time and I couldn't make the priorities (inaudible) even if I wanted to.

ER: How do you think the fact that you had a career affected your children as they grew up?

CM: I'm not sure. I think in some ways they [28:00] missed out on some things and they sometimes expressed it. I think that my daughter especially would have liked me to attend the school more often, see (inaudible). On the other hand, I know baseball games after school that my son had played in for several years and whatever special events my daughter was in and you played some sports at high school games. Later when I had a chance when I worked part time my children were, I think, late middle school, beginning high school they both told me (inaudible).

ER: Why do you think your children said that?

CM: Because they were used to the independence of not having a mother at home, on their face and to do everything for them basically.

ER: Do you think because of (inaudible) working (inaudible) the children grew up very independently?



CM: Certainly I think more independent, partly because [29:00] I think most mothers, and I would have been one of them had (inaudible) a lot easier. Once they (inaudible) go away to college and maybe to Europe at 14 and then high school told me about her best friend (inaudible) since they were five...

## Track 2

ER: This is side two of the interview with Carol Markovitz Raskin by Eve Raskin, Class of 1991. Did you try and raise your daughter with any different goals or ideas that you weren't allowed to have because of the time you grew up in?

CM: Yes, actually I tried to raise both my children with some different ideas which was that both sexes could do everything; cook, clean, work, whatever, but knowing that my son would automatically think in terms – or assuming my son would automatically think in terms of a career because there's no getting away from that we still have gender bias in that culture, I was particularly – it was particularly important to me that my daughter see that she could be anything she wanted and that she would start her career [01:00] when she was young and not wait until later.

ER: Did you do any volunteer work?

CM: Yes, I did, all the time. At Brown Club of Kentucky for one thing but also civic volunteer work and sometimes seeing the Jewish community, I established and ran for two or three years a workshop where Judaism for our public school teachers was initially a two-day effort and then eventually a one day. I worked for the League of Women Voters. I've been active in Women Lawyer Association and we are running a – I set up a project now that is to recruit more lawyers to do pro bono divorces in our community which we are starting with a training session. I was active on the High School [2:00] of Jewish Studies board and I also conceived and organized the first civic organization – women's organization subgroup for working women, Moonlighters for the National Council of Jewish Women in our community. Other community groups did follow afterwards but we were the first since World War II.

ER: Do you have any other stories about your experiences you'd like to share with me?

CM: Well, one of the highlights of Pembroke back in those days was panty raids. Sometimes in the spring mostly but occasionally in the fall the guys would raid our dorms and try to hang panties outside. That was a lot of fun. I'm not sure they ever got any panties to hang outside.

ER: Do you remember any significant experiences at Pembroke?

CM: Well, [03:00] I'm not sure that I remember any particular ones. Well, there was sort of one thing. I know it sounds silly but our meals were at scheduled times, 6:00 for dinner and I don't remember whatever time lunch was, and you couldn't get in the dining room before then and you had to get in then or you didn't – or close to then or you didn't get lunch and, of course, you always wanted to sit with your friends. So one of the things that I think taught you to be assertive was getting in at the front of the dining room so that you could save a table for your seven friends. But also just being at Pembroke with the competition that there was taught you to speak up and that was encouraged in classes. And even though we were way before the new curriculum, and we had some distribution requirements, they were modest [04:00] requirements and one of the things we discovered and maybe the King House bunch was unusual but we looked for ways of getting around them, and we discovered that if you passed the final exam with a C average you got your distribution credit and none of us – most of us wanted to avoid sciences. And I remember my second semester freshman year about six of us studied for and took the Psych I exam and we all passed it, so we were really mad because we discovered the next fall that we still had to take the Psych lab but we didn't have to take the lecture and we got credit and that was, I think, unusual. And so we used it again, I did anyhow, I took my sequence in science that way by passing the Psych 81 child psych exam, although it took me two tries. We also discovered early on that if there was a prerequisite [05:00] for a course a lot of times if you just went to the professor and asked for permission you could be let in, and I was able to use that to get into a graduate seminar in my sophomore or junior year with Mr. Williams, who I believe is still here, and to waive some preliminary requirements. And I remember, of course, that meant that where they wouldn't waive requirements you got pretty mad. I wanted to take Labor History

which was in the Economics Department although I really didn't have any need to have an economics background to take it I don't think, but Mr. Taft wouldn't waive the requirements so I read [Samuelsson?], the textbook and passed Economics I that way without taking the course and then I was eligible but I never did take Labor History. So it taught you that you could do just about whatever you wanted. There was always somebody willing to work with [06:00] you if you would take the initiative. My junior year, junior semester and Grant's was another example.

Basically, I think many of us learned that we could do and be anything we wanted to me even though we were still caught in the social cultural context of that time, were we had some preset goals to get more but still I think that explains why when I came back to my 2015 reunion and many of us were doing such interesting things and in the (inaudible) field although not everybody. The other thing about Pembroke and I don't know if you can have that now that you have a merged university, partly because, of course, the university has gotten so much larger but we just made such wonderful friendships that really have kept up (inaudible) way [07:00]. More recently for 10 year we kept very close and my friends were probably the other biggest influence on our life and that was Pembroke.

ER: Are there any other experiences you'd like to share with the Archives Department?

CM: Well, not so much other experiences but getting back to what I was just saying before, learning to be independent and learning that you could do within the curriculum whatever it was you wanted to do or pretty much so if you learned how to work with people, I think that helped me get my first job. There I was with one actual economics course and a credit for Economics I and discovered that economists were needed and not political scientists in Washington so I just kind of played that up and used the same thing I had – the same techniques I had used to get out of prerequisites to help me get into a job. I was convinced I could do it [08:00] and I convinced my employers I could do it, and I did the job. Again, when it came to law school everybody was saying how tough law school was and my brother who was seven years younger and I think just completed law school said it would be impossible for me to get in because 1973 was in that surge of applicants to law school. Everybody was applying to law school, and I just knew that was

ridiculous and, you know, I could do anything I wanted so I went ahead and did it, and I think that was the Pembroke experience to a large extent.

ER: Thank you very much for your time.

CM: You're welcome.

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