

Transcript – Helen Julia Thayer, class of 1922

Narrator: Helen Thayer Paxton

Interviewer: Barbara Raab

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Track 1

Barbara Raab: ...Helen Thayer Paxton, the class of '22, she was an English major, and I guess the first thing that you can tell me about is about wild life in the dormitories in the early 1920s.

Helen Thayer: I don't think it was very wild. It was supposed to be gracious living carried to the nth degree. In the dorms at that time, and there were two of them, Miller Hall and Metcalf Hall, there were no roommates. But there were very efficient house mothers who believed in gracious living, as I've said. And believe it or not, there were maids to do...to clean our rooms. The only thing that was asked of us was that we pile all of our precious papers and flotsam and jetsam on the bed and cover it with a sheet, or whatever else we chose to cover it with. That was, of course, before 1929 when everything changed everywhere. We loved to dance. There was a big Stromberg-Carlson in the living room at Miller Hall and we—some of us would actually get up early to come down to dance before breakfast. And we'd dance before dinner; Jazz was coming in and we were trying all kinds of steps and some of our best dancers did not object to leading, and they were given lots of practice because we all wanted to be very, very excellent dancers.

Some of the best of the girls—we called them Steppers—didn't object to leading at all, and were eager and willing to teach other people, which I think was showing a lot of public consciousness. There were five girls in Miller Hall who met for the first time on the fourth floor when it was opened. Miller was so crowded in the fall of 1918, when my friends and I arrived, that the maids' quarters had to be put together, sort of double room—I mean, two people in one room for the maids, and we had about eight or nine rooms on the fourth floor, which is near the kitchenette. So that we were not left by ourselves by any manner or means, and one...one of the girls on the fourth floor was a fabulous cook and at the drop of a hat, she would make excellent concoctions for anybody. And she never had any trouble finding people to eat what she made.

We spent a lot of time visiting. We spent some of them...some of my friends, way up on the fourth floor smoked in their closets, and also, we didn't use the fire escapes as a way to see tennis matches down below. We used 'em as a place to sleep! In the springtime, we would haul our single bed mattresses out on the fire escape and sleep there. Well, I

had to try it, too, but I gave it up, not because I was chicken, but because the mosquitos liked me so much that I preferred to come back inside and be safe.

BR: The girl...you said about smoking...the girls weren't allowed to smoke, were they?

HTP: (gasps) No. And the hats and gloves syndrome that you've heard about, well, that was real enough, but if you worked it right, and you lived in the dorm, you could get out without your hat and without your gloves and you could really have a very normal time.

We did seem to keep away from the Brown campus, but that—that was per order—but we went...could go to the John Hay as much as we wanted to. And we, because we lived in the dormitory, could go there at nighttime, because if we...if two of us got permission from our house mother, who was strict, but sensible—and we all liked her very much, indeed—we could go over to the John Hay two by two, and that seemed fantastic. You couldn't do that *very* safely today, I would think.

BR: No, not really.

HTP: And then, when the library closed, because we all would stay 'til the bitter end, hoping that some Brown man would have noticed our maidenly beauty and would come over to us and say, "May I see home to your dormitory?" And lots of times we were successful, and lots of times we came home two by two.

BR: But they weren't allowed to come inside, were they?

HTP: Not at that time of night.

BR: What about in the daytime?

HTP: Brown men were welcome in our dorms at any time of day, but they were restricted: no above stairs.

BR: So could you...

HTP: (inaudible) they could go to living room of Miller or the living room of Metcalf and all of us who lived in that building met Brown men, because—there, because they had come for their own girls, and they'd chat with us as they waited.

BR: But you couldn't sneak them up to your rooms.

HTP: Never...we never even considered that. But we could have them right, I mean, as a...that was a launching pad. Oh, and by the way, the beautiful...Metcalf Hall was new in the fall of 1919 and it was fresh and lovely and very tastefully decorated. But the room for the visitors, and that included the Brown men and anybody's mother, father, relative, or whatnot, anybody who visited went into this red room. It was all red and

cream, and it was really dazzling. But it didn't take the men very long to call it "Dante's Inferno," and they would say, "We'll meet you at the...at the Inferno."

And across from...across from Dante's Inferno was the living room, and men weren't supposed to set foot in there, but of course, they did whenever they felt like it. That was the place where the...where the Victrolas were. And that was the place where we danced on the car...but on the carpet, but nobody seemed to mind. It kept us busy and happy.

The rules weren't particularly rigid. We were supposed to be on time at breakfast, and we were supposed to be on time at other meals, too. Making breakfast was hardest of all.

BR: What time was that at?

HTP: 7:30. Most of us were put into gym classes that came *way* at the end of the day. All of the day girls had to have their gym classes before we had ours, probably between 3 and 4, between 3:30 and 4:30. And it didn't give us as much time as we would have liked for dancing before dinner. But we did manage it, because we didn't have to dress up too elegantly at nighttime. Sunday morning breakfast was the time we were supposed to look our best. We...the few of us who got up to breakfast tried to look decent for that meal. But at night, we...at night, we had fun. We really did. We weren't...we didn't have tables of all sophomores or all freshmen, we had tables of mixed classes. And I liked that, and I think everybody else did, too. And when we were seniors, we each—three or four of us, at least—each had a table of our own, and we were supposed to engage in interesting conversation and, if possible, make people feel, well, that we were amusing and that we could get them to respond and tell stories and so forth. And we took particular care of the freshmen at night, making them part of the scene, but there were, of course, always a certain percentage of freshmen who were apt to grab the whole scene and use it to the exclusion of other people. As I said in the beginning, we were supposed to be exponents of gracious living, and we tried.

BR: Do you think you succeeded?

HTP: It was very pleasant for everybody. It really was. And, of course, we were supposed to be kind to guests, because our freshman year, the war had not ended, we were very, very much war-oriented. Not only nationally, but internationally, because of the visitors who came. And we dormitory people managed to get over to see as many visitors as possible. We could go on the campus at a time like that. I remember...I, myself, remember Cardinal Mercier's coming. I heard him speak. And Pershing [General of the Armies John J. Pershing] visited. And there were advanced degrees given to Marshal Foch; I think he got his ninth LL.D. from Brown, as a large crowd watched and clapped and enjoyed seeing him. The international attitude was shown in the music that came to Providence, particularly in the visit of Madame Schumann-Heink, who was an object of great interest to us Pembroke's because she had sons on both sides. She had German...sons in the German army, and she had sons fighting on the other side. Her singing was magnificent, and we were all proud and happy that we had a chance to see it.

BR: And you got to see...you told me before, you got to see pretty much most of the stuff that passed through Providence, music (inaudible)

HTP: Yes, we saw...we had a...because we lived in the dormitory, we could go out at night if we could pass around the hat to pay for the ticket of an endorsed chaperone. The house mother had to endorse her, so she wouldn't lead us astray. So that the chaperone that we chose couldn't lead us astray, and that's quote-unquote. All kinds of good things came to Providence, but since I was particularly interested in music, I went to everything I could afford and to some things I couldn't afford, and I managed to see a great...I mean, to hear a great many...a great many musicians. I...there was the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Infantry Hall, which is an old place that had pillars that got in your way when you wanted to see what was happening on the stage, but I paid for my own tickets for that, and they were student-price tickets. And I think it was at the time that Koussevitzky was the leader.

Then Brown had a lot of music, and I got to that, too. I...I think through somebody's brother. And Brown had its musical clubs, combined musical clubs, and there was a young man named Bob Baldrige who was the leader of the Brown Orchestra, and he was a superlative violinist, who later became a very fine surgeon at the Rhode Island Hospital. And the brother of one of my friends was a first violin in the Brown Orchestra. And by hook or by crook, I got myself to anything musical I could possibly go to.

Then as we made the rounds, as we did in the dorm because we made blind dates for people, we got to various fraternity houses that were interested in music. And the one that I went to most often was the Zeta Psi, which had its *own* little music halls. They were very good, indeed, because they had brought in alumni and other interested people, and we were fortunate enough—by "we," I mean the group of us on the fourth floor—we were fortunate enough to be invited by some man or other. Anyway, we got there.

BR: Did you do everything, pretty much, with these people? The—what'd you call them?—The Gang?

HTP: We called ourselves Les Girls. (Laughter) That's exactly what we were. Well, we did...one of them had the brother who played the first violin in the Orchestra. And another one had a...a brother who was a Zeta Psi, and through her, we got invitations. They knew I liked music, so I was invited fairly often. And certainly every time there was a musical program. And they were very good programs. One of the girls on the fourth floor was a...a very talented pianist, and she became the accompanist for the whole college. And of course, she...and she had the brother who was the violinist, and through her, I got to all sorts of piano evenings. This is theater evenings. And I made a little list here of the people that I heard. This is during my first two years: Percy Grainger, Heifetz Rachmaninoff, Madame Schumann-Heink, Madame [Euritza?], and John McCormack, and there's somebody that I have left out, and...probably two or three I have left out. But those are the outstanding ones. It was a real—for me—a real course in music, because I didn't have time to take it at Pembroke until the last half of my senior year, when I took a formal music course with a professor called Gene Weir.

Now that, having the interest in the music was a focal point for me, aside from my great passion, which was English. Because this little group of ours had in it...everyone in it was interested in English. And that was something of a marvel, because we never laid eyes on each other before we came to Pembroke. And we were not...we not only took courses open to everybody, but all of us were admitted to a graduate course in Professor Bronson's English. And we were only juniors, but we survived it and passed the course with flying colors, and it was one of the great landmarks of our study at Brown.

Then downtown, we got the advantage of very much better plays that came to Providence for a long time. There were...big names came to Providence. And all we had to do was to pass around the hat, as I said, and get the chaperone, unless we were lucky enough to be invited by men, when we were free to go, once the house mother had given...put the stamp of approval on him. He had to meet her, go in and meet her rather formally, and some of them didn't like it, particularly. And once she knew his name and had him pigeonholed in her mind, you said, "I want to go to [Southern and Marlow?] to see *Hamlet* with X from the Brown campus." She would say, "Oh yes, yes, I remember him, a very fine young man, yes, that will be good."

BR: This is Dean King?

HTP: No. This was our house mother, in the dormitory.

BR: Did you ever have a date turned down, I mean, not approved?

HTP: No, I was foxy. (Laughter) I invited people, I mean, I accepted people that I knew she would okay.

BR: Oh.

HTP: There are ways and ways and ways.

BR: You sound like you knew how to beat the system. (Laughter)

HTP: Well, no I stayed within it, but I got around it. I guess that's beating it, isn't it?

BR: Yeah.

HTP: I guess so.

BR: Sleeping out on the fire escape.

HTP: Oh, sleeping on the fire escape. Well, some of the...some of the girls in this group did smoke in their clothes closets...

BR: Did you do that?

HTP: No! I didn't care anything about smoking, and one thing you can say about me, I was not responsive to public opinion. If I didn't want to smoke, I didn't smoke. If my friends wanted to smoke, alright. I wasn't on any committees at that point, where I had to live up to everything that I accepted. As a committee member, if they wanted to smoke, I didn't tattle on them, but I didn't do it if I didn't want to. And anything else they did, because some of the things they did were very off-beat and they didn't...I sound like a prude! But I am somebody, and *was*, as a girl, somebody who didn't care what other people thought. You know, if I didn't want to do it, I wouldn't do it, not because this *tribe* was going off the deep end.

BR: What about when you became president of the student government? Did you have to turn your friends in?

HTP: Oh, I was ver...no, no. No, because they didn't cheat. That was the big thing, you were supposed...oh, no, the house. No! You're pretty foxy! Over in Pembroke Hall, I was student government president for the whole group of girls. And what I did there was to keep quiet in the corridors, to...oh, just be helpful in every possible way, but my friends—I'm telling you—they didn't cheat. In the first place, they didn't need to. They had a big endowment of brains per person. But they wouldn't have done it. They wouldn't have been good friends of mine if they cheated like that, I mean I wouldn't have been interested in...

BR: Did you have to "politic" to be student government president?

HTP: Well, they were my claque. They went around getting votes for me.

BR: So, you had them all working for you? (Laughter)

HTP: All that group, yes. Of course.

BR: Did you stand around and shake hands on the corner of...

HTP: No, no, I didn't do that, but, I mean, they...they certainly got the two dorms alerted. "Vote for Helen! Remember, she's the Dorm Girl! Come on, come on," that sort of thing.

BR: Do you remember who you had to run against?

HTP: I haven't the faintest idea.

BR: So you must have been pretty popular.

HTP: Well, I looked old for my age, and it thought that looking mature meant that I had some brains, and I certainly didn't. But I did know how to keep my mouth shut, and also, to be honest. I think if I had stood for something...if I had stood up in Pembroke Hall

and talked about this and that and not cheating, and all that sort of thing, and then had done it myself, or had been found in Mrs. Green's coffee house which was *really* something and some of my friends went there.

BR: Where was that?

HTP: Downtown.

BR: How come you couldn't go there?

HTP: It wasn't nice.

BR: The place wasn't nice?

HTP: Well, it was really off-bounds. You wouldn't recommend it to your own daughter. Or maybe you would today; I don't know.

BR: But some people went anyway?

HTP: Oh, sure, some of my friends went. But I never knew about it. They kept it from me 'til afterwards.

BR: Well, what was the attraction of going?

HTP: Men. There were men there.

BR: Ooooooh! (Laughter)

HTP: Lounges and dim lights and all that sort of thing. I mean, I wouldn't have done that sort of thing when I was trying to stand for something decent. I think...I remember telling that to a boy at the private school where I worked so many years, I said, "You should resign from the class presidency! What you stand for is...is not what we want here." And he was very angry, and I didn't care, because I think if you take a job like that, you have to take the responsibilities that go with it. Or give it up. If you want to be a free lance, and do anything you want to, don't take the plaudits of the group for standing...for taking a job of that kind. Unless you're going to follow it up.

Well, I...my friends used to say, "This is Helen, our student government president, but we love her just the same." Which gives you a little idea.

Now, let's see...about the fire escape. Well, I read in Miss [Caulks's?] book that the fire escape was used in her day, which was before the 1920s. That they...girls sat out there, very circumspectly, and watched tennis games, it was kind of like a bleachers for the tennis games. But what we did in our time, was to drag out our single mattresses and sleep out there. But I soon gave that up, not because it was illegal; I liked the fresh air.

BR: It was illegal, wasn't it?

HTP: Oh, yes! Pembroke girls sleeping out where men in the street could look...look up and see them in their deshabelle? Yes, it was very illegal. Well, I did it two or three times. This was before I had...held any offices. You see?

BR: You're still clean.

HTP: I could still do pretty much what I wanted to without feeling qualms of conscience. But the mosquitos took care of me; they ate me alive! On every night that I slept out there, and so, I gave that up. I think my husband, I mean, the man I met halfway through...the end of my sophomore year, I think he used to give cigars to the watchmen who let us in at night. We couldn't have our own keys! My daughter, years later, at Radcliffe could have her own key to come and go to her dorm when she went out with men, but I couldn't have mine...the watchmen had to let me in.

BR: What time did you have to...?

HTP: 12:30. Except on a prom night, or a Senior-Sophomore Ball, or some big campus bash, where you could stay out 'til three or four, or something like that.

BR: So, could...if you didn't come in, did someone know? The house mother?

HTP: Oh, my dear! The watchmen had your name, and as he let you in, he noted the time that you arrived, and he opened the door for you. And saw you safely inside and walked down the front steps with your young man. You see, there was no margin for error, whatsoever.

BR: So why did your...

HTP: So my...the man I married got the idea that...he loved...my boyfriend loved to smoke, absolutely. He'd smoke and smoke and smoke and smoke. And he decided that the watchman might like cigars. And so he would come provided, and what...what would happen—of course, I didn't know anything about this—of course, I did, but I...I mean, technically I didn't—he would give out the cigars, and then the watchman would forget to put...put down the time that we'd gotten there.

BR: Which was what?

HTP: Later than...the house mother had expected. But that's as far as I ever went on...trying to...well, I didn't do it, you see. Did I?

BR: No, you didn't.

HTP: No, he did it. He brought the cigars. There was one other thing that the girls, and not only our little group, but the whole of Miller, whenever it felt like it—this is my



freshman year, when I lived in Miller—knew how to put a brick in the back door that lead to Cushing Street, and go down. This would be late at night with a coat over your nightgown. Go down to Reiner's drug store and what is known as re...reinforcements.

BR: (Overlapping dialogue, inaudible question)

HTP: Food! Candy! Anything. Because the store on the corner that had the Danishes and things that we got for breakfasts when we missed breakfast in the dining room, weren't available late at night, 'cause that store closed. But Reiner's was open very late, and you could...I don't think anybody ever got caught, because the brick would hold. I was tempted to do it a couple of times...then wait to let my friends in after they got very excited, but...I don't think anybody ever got caught with that. I think it was...I think of it today, it would be dangerous today. Absolutely taking your life in your hands! It was as safe as a milk (inaudible) then. Some things are much worse today, and some things are much better. Yeah. I believe in more freedom. But within our...within our framework, we had a very good time.

BR: But you'd like to go and do it again? Today?

HTP: No, I would like to try today's...

BR: That's what I mean.

HTP: Oh, yes.

BR: What do you think you'd be like?

HTP: I think I would have a very good time. I really think I would. I would have enjoyed the...more freedom.

BR: What would you have done with it?

HTP: Well, I would have gone more places with more men.

BR: With more men all at the same time? You and six men going someplace at the same time?

HTP: No, but...stop pulling my leg! (Laughter) But I think some of the things that are done today by Pembrokers are good. I'm sorry I never had a chance to try them out. And by that, I mean—I'm going to be explicit about this—some of the organizations that you have with men, it's good to be in contact with men for...well, I mean...I was going to say uprisings. But I mean getting together to try to do something about very, very bad things in our present day social make-up. We didn't...we saw men only socially. I don't remember working with any men in my last two years at Brown, for any...what I would call a cause. And I believe in that. And I believe in knowing what goes on in the man's mind. Both of my daughters went all of their lives to...all their academic lives...to

women's...I mean girls' schools. Prep schools. And one of them complained bitterly that she never knew what...what went on inside the men's' heads. The boys came to the house with flowers and things and took them out all the time, but they never saw them when they weren't all dressed up and all that sort of thing. And they felt cheated, and they wanted to drop their girls' school and go to Hope High. And we said, "No. Pick a college with plenty of men in them and get to know them then." I...I...we realized what they were talking about. And I never knew what young men students...I just went on dates with them. Who knew what they thought, or what made them tick, or what they were willing to work for...what they cared about? The ones who liked music, I spotted. I mean that's for me, a universal thing. But...no.

All the teas, and meetings at church...Central Congregational Church had very good five o'clock on Sunday meetings for young Brown and Pembroke people. And we liked that; we went to that. We made a tour of the city, trying the churches. I made a tour of the city churches on my own, hunting for the best organ. And it was at Central Congregational Church, and I still go there. And their organ is *absolutely* wonderful. Today, it's a new one from when I was there.

Do you see how the music helped me focus?

BR: Mm-hmm.

HTP: Music and men and books, I mean, those are my focal points, and this group of friends.

BR: I can turn this over.

Track 2

BR: Okay.

HTP: During my four years in Pembroke, I had to work. Every year, I worked every summer, I worked every vacation. I think one of the reasons that I was fairly circumspect was that my parents were giving up a great deal to let me live in the dormitory in the first place, because I could have been a carpetbagger, and I could have come in every day on the trolley from North Smithfield. And I felt it was a privilege to live in the dorm, and I wanted to, at least, do my part when my parents were giving up a great deal to send me there.

My first job, my freshman year was a stint in the Pembroke Library, 15 hours a week, and it was very demanding, and the librarian let me do more and more things because I had worked in a library before. And I found it was taking more than 15 hours, then there was all the business of keeping discipline in the library—it's no wonder I became adept in keeping people quiet, but it certainly wasn't easy. It was a strain as a matter of fact. And

at the end of my freshman year, my father said, "We've had enough of that. We'll find the money so you don't have to put in so many hours." Well, I had to find another job. And here again, I had very, very good fortune, because I put my name in at the Pembroke office to try to get babysitting jobs on the East Side. After all, I could walk to most of them, and I certainly was right nearby people who had the money and who wanted people to care for their...to take their little children walking afternoons, and I also could do babysitting at night, if I were luck...if I happened to be lucky enough to get the job. So I took that over. And that led me to some of the most...the pleasantest times I had at Pembroke, because the woman for whom I worked was a professional singer. And she liked me, and invited me to her house whenever she had an evening of piano, or voice, or whatnot. That would be socially, and in the meantime, I was her very, very faithful caretaker for her little son, who wasn't much trouble, but still you had to watch it. As you do, taking care of any child.

Well after I met a young man that I liked very much indeed, I found that that consumed too much time. So I went to the Pembroke office and I said, "What do you have for me now? That won't take me off the campus?" You see, I was thinking of the Dante's Inferno and entertaining there while I worked. And said, "I've got—you're reliable—I've got just the thing for you. How would you like to answer the phone?" Because there were no extensions, and the person...the girl who answered the phone *and* the door had to run up and down stairs, up to the fourth floor, you see. And there were some very popular people on the fourth floor.

BR: That was your floor.

HTP: Well, that had been. No, it wasn't my floor at Metcalf, but it was...there were some very, very popular people up there. And so I took that job, and I kept that until I graduated. And it...oh, I could do studying in the Inferno. And I could...my friend—so, narrowed down to one very good friend—could come visit me there. Sometimes we studied there. Sometimes, if he thought I was too tired, he would call me up to keep the phone tied up so I wouldn't have to go up to the fourth floor! Or the third floor, or the second floor, getting people to come down. That was his idea.

BR: So you really did know how to beat the system, didn't you, and still stay within it?

HTP: Yes! I didn't cheat. He called me; I didn't ever call him.

BR: Oh, I know what I can ask you about: you said you played on the basketball team.

HTP: Oh, yes. I was a...I had been a varsity basketball player in high school and I was looking forward to being on the varsity at Pembroke. But I wasn't fast enough. I was a good center-center; we were called then. You know how they were divided, don't you?

BR: No.

HTP: The center-center, 'cause I'm tall, I was that. And two side-centers and then two guards. And you stayed within that...

BR: Zone.

HTP: ... denomination or zone or what have you. But I wasn't good enough. There were too many people in my class, mostly among the day girls, they were the good athletes. There were more to choose from, you see. There were many more day girls than dormitory girls at Pembroke at that time. And so I was a substitute for the varsity, and I went with all...with the team on all of their trips. We played Wheaton, Rhode Island University women's section down there. They were fun trips. I enjoyed it all very much. Once in a while, I had a chance to play. Enough so that I stayed on the...I would call it today the squad. And I liked that, and it was...later on, I was glad I had gone to Pembroke...I mean to Wheaton, because one of my daughters thought she would go there and I had liked it so much when I visited that we took her there, but she took one look at Wheaton and said, "No men! I'm not going to go there!" And she didn't.

By the way, my two daughters who felt so thwarted in having no men—boys—in their classes at private school where they went...one went to Radcliffe. At the time, Harvard was combining because of the World War II.

BR: Right.

HTP: Yeah. And the other one went to Pembroke. Where there were plenty of men. And she saw plenty of them, too. I don't mean a lot, but they...they were around as they hadn't been in my day.

BR: Popular just like her mother, huh?

HTP: No, she wasn't at all. I don't know...she had a very unhappy time, very unhappy love affair. It was really grim. But it's all...it all cleared up in time. No, she didn't. She dropped out.

BR: Out of where?

HTP: Pembroke.

BR: So she didn't graduate.

HTP: No. She never wanted to come back. But it wasn't Pembroke's fault, as she would admit. It was her private life which was really grim at that time. That's the way it happens for some people.

BR: That's right.

HTP: For me, it was a joyous experience. For her, it was a grim one. Except for her work for the Brown Christian Association, where she was...acted as a un—practically—an unpaid secretary. She typed for them; she did everything for them. She brought foreign students home for me to feed and be nice to. I mean, she made a life for herself, but it wasn't a particularly happy one. Not the way mine had been. So I'm lucky in that respect. I guess that's about it.

(Tape stops.)

BR: Okay, you wanted to tell me one more...

HTP: Yes. One of the amusing things that happened when I was at Pembroke was the propensity of some of the freshmen—I must have been an upper classman by then—to call attention to themselves by becoming real flappers. They wore the old-fashioned kind of overshoes with the...what do you call those things where they click together?

BR: Oh, I don't know...

HTP: Well, anyway, they wore their overshoes like men's overshoes in those days, wide open, and they clopped and flapped and...they were called flappers. But that wasn't enough. They had to call attention to—they were getting very modern—call attention to themselves even more. And so two or three of them had raccoon coats that were big and shaggy and...noticeable. And with the raccoon coats, they wore leghorn hats. And it became one of the joys of our campus life to have the rac...the leghorn hats disappear, as they did from time to time, and then they would reappear and be worn again. It was silly and Sophomorish, but very amusing, we thought.

No, the kind of overshoes had buckles...

BR: Right, buckles.

HTP: ...all the way up and they left them unbuckled. And I don't know, we had snowy winters for those two winters. And they clomped around in the snow with the...the overshoes flapping. I thought you might have heard of that because it was in cartoons and magazines, and so forth.

You want to turn it off (inaudible)

(Tape stops.)

HTP: I can think of one more custom, which I liked, because I like music. At Metcalf Hall, before Christmastime, just before...the night before the day that we went home at Christmastime, we would...upper classmen would appear in their nightgowns with their hair hanging, and of course everybody had long hair. Long, *perilous* hair, as my boyfriend used to say. I believe it came off on his coat or something. They would march

around the corridors of Metcalf Hall, singing beautifully Christmas carols. That was a lovely custom.

And when we first went to Metcalf Hall, all of the...the mixture of classes that had been chosen for the privilege of going to that new building. In the little slot on your door for your *calling card*! I didn't have any; I was too poor. But everybody else did. When we went...first went in, our first, first overnight there, we found in our doors a name for each girl, and the name was chosen from some heroine from English literature. Two upper classmen had done this for everybody. And I took a look at the name on my door, and I...I was majoring in English. I was planning to, anyway, I was a sophomore. I didn't know who the heroine was, and I was *very* chagrined. Well, she was Eustacia Vye, and it didn't take me long to get *The Return of the Native* and...and to read it. And I wasn't sure she was a wholesome character, but that's what they put on my door.

I think that's it.

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