

Transcript – Carol Canner, Class of 1959

Narrator: Carol Canner

Interviewer: Whitney Pape

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Location: Home of Carol Canner Gjelsvik, North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Length: 1 audio file; 56:15

Track 1

Whitney Pape: [00:00]. Today is February 17th, 2017. My name is Whitney Pape, Project Archivist for the Pembroke Center at Brown. I'm speaking with Carol Gjelsvik. Is that well said? Class of 1959, at her home in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. We are conducting an oral history for the Pembroke Center archives at Brown University. It's about quarter after one in the after- on a beautiful sunny winter afternoon.

Carol Gjelsvik: That's correct.

WP: So, we like to start with some background on your family, and your childhood, if you don't mind.

CG: Well, I grew up in Newton, Massachusetts. We lived in pretty much a Jewish neighborhood, and I lived in a – I went to a Jewish – an elementary school that was a public school, but about 90 percent Jewish. Then I went to [01:00] Newton public schools until I was ready for college. My father went to Harvard, and I really suppose – I know I wanted to go to Radcliffe, but I didn't get in there. I was happy when I was able to go to Brown. At that time, I don't think Brown had the reputation it had today, but I had a very good time there, and I'm very pleased with how my life worked out.

WP: That's good. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

CG: I have a brother. He went to Harvard. [laughter]

WP: [laughter] Good Harvard stock there. And how about your mother? Did she have formal education?

CG: My mother, surprisingly to me, went to the University of Wisconsin. She also was a Boston child, and went [02:00] to schools in Brookline public schools. That she had the courage to go to the University of Wisconsin, she was much braver than I was. She also went two years to medical school at BU, but had to stop because of the Depression. Then she never worked for money. And, really, in looking back over my life, one of the things that surprises me is she never really talked to me very much about my getting a career, and what was I going to be when I grew up. So when it came to the end of my senior year, I really was surprised, thinking, “What am I going to do now?”

WP: I hear that a lot, actually. That the education goal was there, but then not a lot of thought about career, or what life holds after that.

CG: I always knew I wanted to get married. That was [03:00] probably what I thought should come next, but it didn't. [laughter].

WP: [laughter] And were there any resources for you at Pembroke, or at Brown to –

CG: No.

WP: – guide you?

CG: Nobody. Nobody talked about that. I don't think even at Brown they talked about it for the men. It wasn't part of a liberal education, in my – to the best of my knowledge.

WP: And just before we move along too far from family, you've got a lot of ties to Harvard, but it appears that there were also several family members that came to Brown.

CG: Yes. My uncle Lenny played football, I think, for Brown. Both my uncles were in the service most of my early childhood, both of those uncles; all of my uncles. I don't remember them talking very much about college. [04:00]

WP: Interesting. And when you started at Brown, and at Pembroke, do you remember what your initial impressions were?

CG: No, I don't. I don't have a very good memory, I'm sorry to say. But I don't ever remember thinking a lot about what it was like in the beginning there.

WP: Was it a strange transition between home life and dorm life?

CG: Probably not. I'd been to camp a little. I did also get into Goucher, and I suddenly realized I didn't want to go so far from home. It was a good distance from home, an hour and a half, maybe two hours, in those days. I was ready, I think.

WP: Excellent. What about the food? [05:00]

CG: The food was fine. I didn't think about it. It wasn't important to me.

WP: And how did you decide what you were going to study at Brown?

CG: [laughter] I don't really know that either. It was sort of I studied English. And, again – Well, I had, I suppose, an interesting experience in math in high school. I was in advanced placement. But I really didn't understand math in my junior year that they were doing, so I went into regular math as a senior. But I was very worried about my grades going to college. The teacher that I had supposedly hated girls. I only stayed in that class for a few weeks, and I dropped math. Interestingly enough, one of the only two A – I got two As at Brown; one in math, [06:00] and one in economics. But it never occurred to me to do anything with it. I was a girl. I definitely was a girl.

WP: That sort of direction wasn't really encouraged for young ladies?

CG: I didn't think so.

WP: So you attended, you started Brown in the fall of nineteen fifty –

CG: Five.

WP: Five, and were there through '59. At that time, what do you feel the relationship was between the Brown campus, and the Pembroke campus? Did you feel part of the same institution? Or.

CG: Yeah. Certainly for classes. It was very comfortable. We went home, and walked back for lunch, and walked back again for classes in the afternoon. There was sort of the idea that [07:00] Brown men didn't like Pembroke so much, and that you shouldn't be too smart in class, but that didn't bother me very much. It was important to me to have a dating life, and I had a good dating life until I got to be a senior. Then all the boys at Brown seemed to me to be too young, or. We never, we weren't supposed to go out with graduate students. It was sort of against the rules maybe, even, to be together with these loose men. In the beginning of senior year it was hard.

WP: That rule, if it existed, doesn't seem to have stopped you from meeting a graduate student.

CG: [laughter] That's part of my story.

WP: [laughter] Do you want to tell that now? Or.

CG: Well, [08:00] we lived in Angell House freshman year, which I think was really important. Those friends that were in that house I kept throughout my college years, and some even after. I would say, for the most part, I didn't make any other close friends outside of Angell House, even though they were around; maybe one or two. Pembroke, and I believe Brown too, had a quota

then, and in our class there were two African American – we were girls then. There was no one that would dream of calling us women. And even with today's, quote, "women," unquote, I think we were still girls.

Anyway, so there were two African American girls, and there was a quota for Jewish girls, which I [09:00] am one. The African Americans they put in singles. There were very few singles. But the African American girls had singles, and the Jewish girls were put with another Jewish girl, so there couldn't be any difficulties with these roommates on the basis of racism, or religion, I guess was their thinking.

I had a roommate, Suzie Schiffman, and we lived together freshman year. Sophomore year I decided I wanted to have a single. The singles were sort of in a group, and Peggy was near me; Peggy Brooks, who was an African American Pembroke from Angell House. We got to be very friendly probably freshman year, and sophomore year, and had continued [10:00] throughout our lives, really. She died when she was around 60. In looking back over my life, I think the fact that I was friendly with an African American during my formative years probably shaped, in many ways, how my life turned out.

So senior year, as I said, there weren't too many boys around, and I was invited to go to what was called Friday Club, which was in the graduate student dorms, and on the first floor they had, on Fridays, a party. I found out [11:00] later, much later that I wasn't supposed to be there. They had this *in loco parentis*, where Pembroke was taking the place of our parents, and we had lots of rules of what time we had to be home. There were never any men in the dorms. Maybe there was one day a semester you could have a male visitor.

So, anyway, this fellow invited me to a football game, and we went – he decided we should go to Friday Club to see if we really wanted to spend a good part of the weekend together. And coming to Friday Club was like coming to a flower shop; there were all these men there who didn't know any women. I remember feeling so happy. It was just overwhelming. I told lots of people I would fix [12:00] them up with my friends, which I did, and I found some men for myself. But I said to the man who later became my husband, "I want you for me." I said that, and it sort of amazes me that I did, but I did. But he never called me.

Then one day we met on campus, by accident, and I guess I really liked him. I said, "You never called me," and he said, oh, he was going to. I said something like, "When?" [laughter] We went out that night, that was a Thursday night. We went out to Friday Club again on Friday, and

Saturday he decided this was too much. So he had a motorcycle, and I guess it must have been wintry. And he tried to start his motorcycle, and because it was cold, [13:00] the starter, which you land on with your foot, froze, and then suddenly gave way, and he broke his knee.

So he was incapacitated, and I took full advantage of the situation. When he got back in his apartment, I went over there, and I bought him a new pillowcase, and I washed the dishes. I was a girl; like I said before, and I took care of him. I didn't stay there then, but I probably wasn't supposed to be in that den of iniquity either. It was a funny apartment on Waterman Street. It had been previously lived in by RISD students that painted the whole ceiling black, with little stars here and there. It was sort of a den of iniquity. Then after he got better, we started dating [14:00] pretty seriously. Do you have a question?

WP: Well, how many years later is it now?

CG: Oh, we got married in 1960. That was 1958-59. It's pretty soon going to be 60 years.

WP: Wow, congratulations. [laughter]

CG: Thank you! It's been good. There are many things in life I'm proud of, but picking him out was one I think was a good thing.

WP: You saw a good one.

CG: Yep.

WP: Snagged him. [laughter]

CG: I did. Well, it was really, obviously, his looks at that time; blonde hair, and blue eyes, and I liked that. So I said in what I've said so far that I think my relationship [15:00] with Peggy was important to my life. I mean, not only because she was my friend, but as things worked out, many times I had the opportunity, which I took, to work in a setting that was either concerned about, or had many people of color as part of the staff. But maybe I should save that, because

then, at the end of senior year, as I didn't know what I wanted to do. I hadn't even thought about it, I don't think. They had a thing that you could go to Harvard Graduate School of Education, or maybe any school of education, and if you worked two years in the school, [16:00] you would get your tuition back.

I went to the Harvard School of Education, and I got a master's, and I kept seeing Atle, my husband-to-be. Then after that I taught in Barrington, French and English. But it was very clear I wasn't meant to be a schoolteacher. I'm not a disciplinarian. I just couldn't deal with it at all. I had nightmares. I was, frankly, a complete failure, I think, as a classroom teacher. I think the teachers nowadays have more help with that. There was absolutely no help. And one of the things I remember is I didn't have my own classroom. I had to go to different classrooms. And once I forgot my pencil, and the regular teacher, [17:00] who owned the classroom, walked in, and I was looking at her desk drawer for a pencil, and she yelled at me in front of the class, "What are you doing in my drawers?"

That was only one of many horrible experiences. It was not good. Then we went to Norway for three years, and then we came back, and Atle got a job at Yale. That was another interesting thing. I decided I wanted to do something like psychology, or social work. Brown, at that time, really had only behavioral psychology, and I wasn't interested in that. I was interested in people.

I went to the Yale Department of Psychology, [18:00] and spoke to the director there about applying, because it was late in the summer. And he said, "Oh, we don't take girls. They never work." What astonishes me now about that memory is my acceptance of that. If people told me the way the world was, I thought they were right. [laughter] There was no fake news then.

So, to go back to Peggy. One of the stories I want to tell about my time at Pembroke; this is a little disjointed, I'm afraid. When I was a senior, and after I had met Atle, and toward the end of the school year, [19:00] I started sleeping there sometimes, which was very bad. They had this Honor Council, and if you got caught breaking the rules, my understanding was you could get kicked out. It's really quite amazing to me that at the very end of my senior year I risked that for sex. [laughter] But that's what I did, and it's just amazing. It makes me realize that there are these things that people talk about, like hormones, when you're an adolescent. That must have been part of what was going on.

One night when I was there, they had a fire drill. I wasn't there for the fire drill early in the morning. [20:00] So a little while later, Peggy and Elise came knocking on the door. We lived at 96 Bowen Street, overlooking that little park, Roger Williams Park. It was a terrific apartment. It had a view of the Statehouse, and behind the Statehouse was the sunset. There's a house, sort of, in front of the window now, but it was just wonderful there. We had a very good time. We lived there after we got married for three years.

Anyway, Peggy and Elise came, and told me that I had to figure out a story of why I wasn't there, which I did. They really saved me. I don't know either what risk that was to them for getting caught, but [21:00] I'm very grateful I was able to graduate, and my life turned out fine. It would have really been quite a disaster for me, I think. My father would have been so angry, and he would have found it incomprehensible, I think. Okay.

WP: Were there any checks in place for your whereabouts, generally? Or.

CG: Oh, yeah, you had to sign out.

WP: Okay. So you were doing that regularly; you were signing out, and not coming back?

CG: Yes, but I hadn't. No, if you don't sign out, you're in. And nobody made room checks.

WP: Right. Okay.

CG: No. It's just that I had not signed out, and I was not there.

WP: What was your excuse?

CG: Well, I have an aunt who grew up in Pawtucket, and her parents still lived there. [22:00] When there were big parties and things I sometimes slept there, because otherwise we had to be home, I think, at one o'clock. I just said I had slept there. It wasn't too hard to make up a reasonable story.

WP: Fortunately.

CG: I'm not proud of it, the whole thing to me. I mean, now the funny thing about it to me is how incredible it is just that I did that. It's not really like me, particularly not at that time. I was pretty much a very good girl.

WP: The same young woman who, a few years later, just took Yale's refusal –

CG: Exactly.

WP: – on the face of it, yeah.

CG: That's right.

WP: That's an interesting contrast. Well, I guess we know what your priorities were. [laughter]

CG: [laughter] I guess we do. As I said, I guess I said it to you, maybe I said it on tape, I mean, one of my priorities [23:00] was to get married. It never occurred to me to do anything else.

WP: Aside from the Friday Club, are there any other social activities that you participated in on campus? Or what was the social life while you were dating other people?

CG: We went to the movies, we went out to supper, and he paid. It never occurred to me to pay. And he even opened the door of a car. We weren't supposed to go to other, some other guys' apartments, and I don't think that we did. Oh, we went – every night we went to the drugstore – which [24:00] is on the corner of, was on the corner of Thayer, down near Waterman, or Angell Street – and had coffee. He would come and pick me up, and we would walk down there. Then we would walk back to Andrews. Then we would kiss goodnight on that platform there, where there were about a hundred other couples. Then that was our life.

WP: And how about with your friends from the dorms? What would you do together?

CG: I don't think we did a lot together. Mostly we talked. I mean, socially. It never would have occurred to us to go out to eat with a bunch of girls like lots of times people do now. I don't think it would have occurred to other girls in my class either. [25:00] We would eat together. We would go down, and there were big tables, and we would sit at a table together with friends, and we would – oh, there was The Gate. We might go to The Gate to have coffee. That was a little coffee shop underneath Alumnae Hall there. I don't remember making plans to meet anybody in the library, or anything.

I was in Brown Brokers, which was really fun. Al Uhri, who wrote *Driving Miss Daisy*, I think he was in my class. But, anyway, he was there the two years that I was there, and he wrote the musicals, and they were great. [26:00] I was in the chorus.

WP: Good. I've heard tales of dorm life in the past generations before you talking about the girls hanging around, and dancing together, or playing bridge together, or.

CG: We played bridge. I played bridge. I don't think we danced together. I don't remember that.

WP: That was a long time before you.

CG: Yeah. I remember there was some May Dance, or something, but I thought that was pretty strange. I wasn't part of it.

WP: Yes. Were there still any strong Pembroke traditions, like May Day, with the May Queen, and all that, or the Ivy Day? Or.

CG: I don't think so.

WP: I think that may have faded by.

CG: I mean, we had posture pictures, and we had gym by ourselves, [27:00] and we had chapel.

WP: Still had chapel.

CG: Which, of course, as a Jewish person I wasn't particularly interested in. But everybody had to go. We had Gracious Living, where we had to wear stockings to go to chapel, and then we would have lunch. We had to dress differently that day. We wore bobby socks, or knee socks the rest of the time. I can't think of any particular traditions. I don't think Pembroke – There was the Honor Council, but I don't think they had a lot of their own organizations either, at that time. But I don't think that girls were part of the Brown organizations that much either. I know that the fellow that I dated freshman and sophomore year, [Fred Berringer?], was the sports [28:00] editor of *The Brown Daily Herald*. We went to basketball games, and football games. That was something people did, but I don't think a whole group of girls went together. I could be wrong, but I never did that. But I don't remember there being any girls on *The Brown Daily Herald*, or even a reporter from Pembroke, or anything like that. We went to the library a lot, and we did our work. There was school work. [laughter]

WP: [laughter] You pepper that in every once in a while. Did *The Pembroke Record* still exist?

CG: Not that I remember. I don't know.

WP: That's interesting. And when you ate at Andrews, was that set up like a cafeteria? Or was it were you served at your tables?

CG: Both.

WP: Both.

CG: [29:00] Sometimes it was a regular schedule. Maybe like Friday night and Saturday night it was a cafeteria, and during the week we had dinner, and you sat at tables. Like I said, my memory isn't too good. Maybe breakfast was cafeteria. I really don't remember. I do remember being Jewish and being in Brown Brokers, one of the holidays, the few holidays that was important to me, as a Jewish person, was Passover. They served, and I remember being in the

line in the cafeteria, and then I was going to go to rehearsal before the production, and they had ham. I remember I was thinking that here I was eating ham, and I did. I remember there was a cafeteria. That's really [30:00] the other part of this memory. I remember that all the food was there, with ham.

WP: So you were not trying to keep kosher.

CG: No, I never was very religious, and I'm not at all religious now.

WP: Was there any sort of sense of pecking order, with older students, and younger students? Anything like that? Or.

CG: I think when you're a freshman at the beginning you got a big sister, or something. But I don't even remember who it was. It was very much Angell House, and there were a couple of girls from my high school that were there that were older than I. There were certainly people I could have become friendly with, but that never really occurred to me. It was very [31:00] class – meaning 1959 – conscious.

WP: Interesting. And you spoke about, speaking of classes, academic classes being on the Brown campus, primarily, as opposed to –

CG: Oh, totally, I think.

WP: It wasn't that professors were coming to Pembroke –

CG: No.

WP: – and holding class there.

CG: Not at all. The only classes we had at Pembroke was gym. It was the beginning of what were called the IC classes, which I guess turned into the kind of curriculum there is today. I

really liked that. There was a lot of discussion, and learning, listening to others' ideas. It's, perhaps, interesting that, as I told you, I was a member of what was called BCLIR, [32:00] Brown Community Learning In Retirement, which existed for I think probably something like 20 years on the Brown campus.

That collaborative learning, in their definition of it, meant that – for example, I did a class, I coordinated a class on Cuba. What I did was write out the topics for each of the ten sessions, two topics for each session. Then everybody in the class took one of the topics, and presented something, and then there was a discussion about it. I now also go to the University of Rhode Island classes, which I tried to get collaborative learning there, but it didn't work. And [33:00] there it's just lectures, and I don't like it nearly as well. I really miss the opportunity to talk to other people. It's also very nice, it's more social to get to know people. That's interesting. The Brown Community Learning In Retirement is now a private nonprofit called Life Learning Collaborative.

WP: And you said you missed having that reason to go back to the Brown campus, on a regular basis.

CG: I do. I do. It was fun to be there. You could go over to the Blue Room, and have some lunch, or something, and walk around. We often went into that museum, the Anthropology Museum. What is it called?

WP: Haffenreffer? [34:00]

CG: Oh, the Haffenreffer, yes. I'll walk around and see things, remember old times. Often when I walk around Brown, I get in my mind, "The happiest moments of youth's fleeting hours." I think that's so true. [laughter]

WP: What is that song?

CG: That's the Brown song.

WP: What do they call that?

CG: I don't know, the Brown –

WP: The Alma Mater.

CG: Yes. No, there's another – maybe it's part of it. I'm not going to sing it. My voice isn't the same as it once was. In fact, I was told in the last Brown Brokers I was in I shouldn't sing too loud, because I was going off key. [laughter]

WP: [laughter] Oh, dear.

CG: I did it anyway.

WP: Good for you. [laughter] Were the IC classes that you took in English, or were they in other subject areas?

CG: Oh, they were in everything. [35:00] I don't remember the exact numbers, but like three science courses, and math, and three history, and social studies courses. So some of them would be IC courses, and some of them wouldn't.

WP: Okay. Yeah, you still had the requirements.

CG: Requirements, right.

WP: Did you feel that there was any preference, or if there was unequal treatment by professors of male and female students?

CG: No, I really didn't.

WP: Good.

CG: I think Brown was okay about that.

WP: Wonderful.

CG: Pembroke might not have been taking care of us a little too well, but Brown, you know.

WP: Did you have –

CG: Most of my professors were fairly young, also, seems to me.

WP: Were there any favorites of yours?

CG: [36:00] Oh, sure. In a story, taking a short story class at LLC in Providence, and a fellow by the name of Charlie Watts came, and his father was one of the professors I really liked at Brown, Charlie Watts. I talked to him a little bit about his father, who's died. But I liked him a lot, and I liked – when you ask me I can't remember – Barry somebody, who was in the English department. I really liked my psychology course. I'm sorry that I didn't continue with psychology, and that Brown didn't have more that was [37:00] relevant to working, except in doing research. But that's how it was. Pfaffmann, his name was.

WP: Fafferman?

CG: P-f, Pfaffmann, Dr. Pfaffmann, I think.

WP: I'll look it up. [laughter]

CG: Good. [laughter]

WP: I'll look it up, and let you know.

CG: Yeah. I had lots of good courses.

WP: Good. We've talked about the diversity in your dorm, even, as a freshman. How do you feel that compared with the campus as a whole, among Brown students?

CG: I'm sure there were racial quotas at Brown, but I don't know.

WP: Wasn't something you were conscious of. Do you want to talk about your career post-Barrington?

CG: Sure. When we came back, as I said, I decided [38:00] I would go to graduate school, and try something else. So my first idea was to go to the University of – not the university, to Connecticut College, and be a psychologist, but their program was really for working women, and it was early in the morning, and late, after 5 o'clock. And as a wife I didn't think I could do that, and it never occurred to me, although I'm not sure I would have liked to have done it, even if it occurred to me, to live where I needed to be for my life, and that Atle would commute. I never thought of that. I didn't go to Connecticut College, and then, as I said – did I say it on tape about going to Yale? [39:00] Okay.

WP: Yes, that they don't have female students?

CG: Right. So I went to the University of Connecticut, in Hartford, and studied social work. That was an interesting experience. At that time they had a lot of social workers that seemed to me to be about my age now, which is 80, who were teaching the classes. [laughter] I'm sure they weren't that old. But even at Harvard School of Education, the classes that were required to be a teacher were pretty different level than the classes that Harvard did, in general. We had to take certain things that were professional classes, and then at Harvard, anyway, other things like French, and English in our own field to become teachers. [40:00]

There was a group of us that drove up from New Haven to Hartford, and that was really one of the best parts of social work school. There were about ten of us, so we got to know all of them. And actually one of the students who came with us was a fellow, an African American

fellow. We had a very good time driving up, and really talking about the issues that the school was – the issues of the time, which were the mid-'60s, and there was a lot going on, and Yale was sort of a hotbed at that time.

When I finished I got a job. They were opening a new mental health center, and I got a job in a program [41:00] that was doing community organizing. We were involved with the Black Panthers, and I remember demonstrating. There's a road in New Haven which comes off of 95, and they were doing what was called urban renewal, which was actually tearing down all the houses of all the black people, and putting a road through; a big, wide road through. We stopped that. That got stopped. There was then, I think it's changed now, this little piece of road that went into the center of New Haven, and then stopped dead. And after New Haven, then we went to live where we live now. Lived, up until recently, which [42:00] was ten years ago, which was Rockland County, New York. There I also worked in a mental health center, in the Division of Consultation and Education.

Then we went to Norway. When I came back from Norway, lo and behold, one of my teammates' daughters had my job. Then I had to get a new job, and I got a job in Head Start, eventually, where I stayed for 25 years, and I became the Assistant Director. I loved that job. It was wonderful. I was a family worker at first, and went out and visited families in Head Start in their homes. And Head Start, although people think of it as an early childhood program, it also [43:00] was very much about parent involvement, and home visiting, and helping people get services. Then, after a while, I had a staff of family workers. We had a lot of Haitians also, and if you look around my house you can see a lot of things from Haiti. I learned Creole, and after a while, when I got bored, I would figure out something to write a grant, and get a new program to supervise.

I had many different programs that we did. I started a program of integrating children with disabilities into Head Start. We became a state-approved program [44:00] for children with disabilities. We had over 800 people getting GED, and ESL in a program I started. We had an early Head Start program. Many of these things are still there, but I'm speaking in the past, from my point of view. I had a great time. I really was very fulfilled with my work, and I could be creative, and feel good about it most every day. I think that was very lucky. Then we moved here, retired here; to Rhode Island.

WP: Not a bad place to be.

CG: No.

WP: It was family that drew you back to Rhode Island?

CG: Our daughter was here. [45:00] It was family, and the beauty of it. I think Rhode Island is a beautiful place. We've always lived someplace with a nice view. Where we lived in New York, it had woods behind the house. I guess that's important to us.

WP: Well, it certainly exists here.

CG: Thank you.

WP: I guess I want to ask you, we've talked about sort of your activism, and mindset now, compared to when you were a young Pembroke student. Do you have any explanation for that transformation?

CG: Well, part of it is just the jobs I got. I think that many people wouldn't have taken the jobs I got. And, I mean, I think that many people wouldn't have taken the jobs I got, and I was very happy to take them. [46:00] I think my mother was pretty much of a – I don't know what you might call her. A contrarian, or something. For me, even starting with marrying Atle, who wasn't Jewish, that was a big step in my family. And, fortunately or unfortunately, I led the way for many of my cousins. I was the oldest.

I can't say that I had a moment of change. Certainly, my job at Yale was important, but I think being friendly with Peggy was important. Although neither one of us thought about issues of race, [47:00] racism at that time; at least to each other. Peggy, I've spoken to Peggy's son before I did this interview, and he said that one of the things she regretted in her life, that she hadn't been more of an activist. I certainly have become more and more of an activist as I have gotten older, and also had more time to do that, but I can't say I'm a tremendous activist.

One of the things I'm doing lately that I think is sort of amusing is I'm a member of the garden club here, the Plum Beach Garden Club. Somebody said they wanted to have somebody do a new project with the groundwater committee. [48:00] This maybe is, like me, "What in heaven's name was the groundwater committee have to do with the Garden Club?" I thought that would be interesting, so I volunteered, and became, at the time, the only volunteer doing that. It turns out, in the year and a quarter that I did it, that we've built a butterfly pollinator garden in the local Casey Farm. Have you heard of that?

WP: I have.

CG: I'm applying for a grant to spend more money on it, and buy, and create brochures so that the public can know more about the dangers to the bees, and the threat to world food if all the bees die, [49:00] or many of the bees die, which is a real danger. And Brown helped me to stay curious, and interested, and I guess that's who I am.

WP: Well, it's been a pleasure meeting you. [laughter]

CG: Thank you.

WP: Do you have any thoughts about the Brown University of today, versus Brown at your time, and Pembroke? Or did you have any reaction –

CG: I'm happy to –

WP: – to the merger?

CG: Hmm?

WP: Did you have any reaction to the merger?

CG: No, I was glad. I mean, it was fine. I'm certainly happy to sit in restaurants, and see the diversity there, and I hope that it continues. I'm [50:00] – I'm really happy for Ruth Simmons' activities bringing Rhode Island, maybe the whole United States, and the university system into awareness of Brown's connection to slavery. I think that's very important. I feel I went to what was supposed to be excellent schools, excellent public schools, and what I learned was that New England were perfectly good; we were just pure.

WP: Right, untouched by slavery.

CG: Yes. It's shocking to me to learn otherwise. And a little thing I did was I went to visit the Visitors Center at Touro Synagogue. When you walk in there [51:00] they have a film. I guess all the money was given for that, or much of it, by a man named Ambassador Loeb. When you walk in there you see a film with him talking about how in Newport, in the beginning, everyone was free to be whoever they wanted to be. I wrote him a letter, and I said that it wasn't true, and that I thought that it was a shame that he was talking like that. I'm going to go back and see – I have a reason to believe that he changed it a little, and I hope that he did.

WP: Yeah, there certainly was a history of tolerance for different Christian sects, and, obviously, there's a synagogue there, and everything was very much focused on commerce in Newport in Colonial times. But that didn't mean that there wasn't slave trade. [52:00]

CG: No.

WP: It existed.

CG: That was the commerce, the big commerce.

WP: Yeah. If it wasn't slaves directly it was goods from Africa, and rum, and all that, so yeah.

CG: The Triangle Trade. There were slaves directly to the islands. And Wickford was involved in that too, and there's a town historian here who I very much like, Tim Cranston. If you ever get

a chance to go on any of his walks out of the library – And he often makes reference to where the slaves lived in Wickford, and what was going on. I think Brown started a very important movement of telling the truth.

WP: Indeed. Indeed. Well, any topics that you want to delve into that we haven't touched on?

CG: I don't think so. Do you think so?

WP: [laughter] I don't think so. I'm just looking at the time. [53:00] It's been almost an hour.

CG: I don't really know a lot about what's going on on campus now. I don't follow it. It's just it's a little bit too far. We go there in the daytime, to Providence, and we go to see our children. But a lot of things at Brown that would interest me are in the evening, and that's hard. They don't necessarily interest my husband either. I don't drive that much out there. I think 95 is very hard. [laughter] There's a lot of crazy drivers.

WP: Yes, I'm one of them. [laughter]

CG: You're one of the crazy drivers?

WP: I hope not too crazy. [laughter]

CG: Passing like this?

WP: Somebody did that to me on my way down here, actually.

CG: Yeah, they do it all the time.

WP: It was terrible. And, yeah, decided once he was on the exit to 4 South that, [54:00] "Oh, no, I need to keep going on 95, and cross three lanes of traffic." Crazy. Well, I guess my last

question for you, then, will be: how do you think your life would be different if you hadn't gone to Brown? What if you got into Radcliffe?

CG: Oh, I don't know. I mean, obviously, I wouldn't have met my husband. And he's been very, very important in my life, I think. I give advice to anyone who can't marry a Norwegian. I think they're very good people, and very liberating. My marriage has been very good for me. I don't know. Maybe it would have been almost exactly the same, in some ways.

WP: Maybe.

CG: Maybe it's good up until that time I had everything – everything happened the way I expected. Then there was this time [55:00] when it didn't. Maybe that was good too for the future, to toughen me up.

WP: Well, you did say that your life was a series of accidents that turned out pretty well.

CG: Yeah. In so many ways it was. I don't know. I mean, as I said, marrying my husband wasn't an accident. I really made it happen. [laughter] But in other ways it was.

WP: Meeting him? Meeting him, perhaps?

CG: Right.

WP: All right. Well, if you have any last words, now's the time.

CG: No, I don't think so. I hope if anybody listens to this, they enjoyed it. It's an interesting thing to feel that you're contributing to a record of history.

WP: Absolutely.

CG: Thank you for interviewing me.

WP: Well, thank you so much for hosting me. We'll end it here. [56:00] Okay.

CG: I have another little talk.

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