

Eva Bitsberger Transcript

Eva Bitsberger: [inaudible]

Q: What do you mean?

EB: Well, they all had it. Many of them had many more specific goals than I did. We produced, for reasons unknown to me, a lot of anthropologists; it was the time to go into anthropology, and I frankly don't know if any of them ever did anything with it or not, but they probably did. A lot of English majors who went into editing for the major publishing houses. That was definitely the thing to do. Terribly acceptable.

Q: Very lofty.

EB: Very lofty. I didn't have to make [inaudible].

Q: Did you get any direction from any of the professors or counselors?

EB: No, I never really did.

Q: Did they have any? Did they have guidance counselors?

EB: They were supposed to. I mean, you certainly were supposed to have an advisor within your major, [inaudible] cannot remember. [inaudible] 20th Century French literature. And I knew where he had come from and who he was. He did not know who I was. [inaudible] introduced myself to him, and we had a nice relationship, and he was helpful. He knew exactly what I was doing, because I made no bones about it.

Q: About?

EB: [inaudible] emphasis on advising was really minimal. It was minimal. You had a bunch of women. [inaudible]. That says it all.

Q: [inaudible]

EB: [inaudible] and all this other stuff. [inaudible] I would love to see – I understand that there's still studies being made, I believe even at Harvard, class participation and what is now supposed to be a totally integrated situation, though, I think we were totally [inaudible]. The only thing I ever had that wasn't [inaudible].

Q: But [inaudible] you were a bunch of women.

EB: We were a bunch [inaudible].

Q: Were you conscious of that or just [inaudible]?

EB: No, [inaudible] because I was not –

Q: You didn't expect [inaudible] –

EB: [inaudible] aware, but that was different. [inaudible] whatever the furthest left wing Democrat [inaudible] at that point in time [inaudible] all the rest [inaudible] I was there.

Q: You were carrying the banner for the Left? Not quite?

EB: And certainly not the way banners have been carried in the last, whatever, twenty years – fifteen, twenty years, but in our own little way, yes.

Q: Do you still classify yourself as a liberal, left, or in parentheses?

EB: I do. I think the older I get, the less certain I am of anyone's position, including my own, and I choose to consider that a process of maturation. But whether it is or not, I don't know. But basically, the answer is yes.

Q: Well, you know what is often said, that if you're not a liberal at twenty, you haven't the heart. If you're not a conservative at forty, you don't have a head.

EB: I'm still finding the head.

Q: Well, you made reference to political activism. Was there a politically active group then?

EB: There was.

Q: Only on the left?

EB: I don't know. Really, I would not have known. Well, no, I shouldn't say that. I think I would have known. But if that group existed, then it did not exist to the point where I was threatened or made aware of or whatever.

Q: Weren't there any political clubs, like a Democratic club or a Republican club?

EB: There probably were.

Q: But it didn't concern you.

EB: It did not concern me.

Q: Now the other –?

EB: I spoke before – coeducation clubs were not.

Q: All the clubs at Radcliffe were strictly –?

EB: I think so. I'm not sure, but I think so.

Q: Just to put it in your words, a bunch of women.

EB: A bunch of women, right. And I think there was no [inaudible]. I think, very frankly, that would have made a difference in my participation. I always had and always will enjoy many company, not to the exclusion of women, certainly. But enough of a good thing was enough, and that makes you a very normal human being. It's very interesting. I've never thought of it in those terms. This is a good psychiatric session. That probably my non-involvement had a great deal to do with the fact that one had to be involved strictly with Radcliffe.

Q: What about the McCarthy era, though? Were people conscious of his machinations? Was there an element of —?

EB: Well, most of it happened after [inaudible]. It was — what? — '55, '56, I think. Because I remember [inaudible]. It's a good question. My awareness of that era, I don't associate with college. Now, there may be a reason for that, and it may be that it was in my senior year because I do remember watching hearings.

Q: That's what I was referring to.

EB: In my senior year, I was emotionally out of Radcliffe. I was married and going to school, which is very different from living at Radcliffe. No, you are right. I knew of some people who got negatively involved from the Episcopal theological school. I did not know anyone specifically from Harvard or Radcliffe.

Q: So, amid the faculty, there wasn't any kind of activism?

EB: Not of which I was aware. Now, I say again, I had emotionally moved [inaudible].

Q: Would you describe your years at Radcliffe as happy years?

EB: Yes, I think they were happy.

Q: Did Radcliffe offer you what you anticipated?

EB: I think yes again.

Q: Any disappointments there?

EB: I think the lack of what I sense, at least, as a community, was something of a disappointment. But things happened, actually, while I was there, in which I had a part, which felt good. We did away with some of that. We started –

Q: Tell me all about it.

EB: – an affiliation of professors with dormitories since, in fact, Harvard, at that point, did have masters and did have associate fellows, or whatever they called them, and we did not. We had our house [inaudible]. I think it was my junior year that that program was begun. It was quite successful. I think I held some position in my dorm where I was really responsible for developing [inaudible] procuring of professors, if you will. That filled a need because that way, Radcliffe and Harvard were different. There was more access to the professors who –

Q: At Harvard?

EB: At Harvard [inaudible]. It was one, proximity, and two, I think Radcliffe certainly was, at that point, still semi-suspect because it was a bunch of women. And that was good. That helped.

Q: What was the framework?

EB: The framework was that once every month or every two weeks, one – well, I think we had two or three people who were directly connected with Elliot House, which is where I lived. Ed Reischauer was one of them, as a matter of fact.

Q: He was very receptive to doing things for the students [inaudible].

EB: Yes, he was. The next time I met him was in a train station in Kyoto. [laughter]

Q: That's a logical place for him.

EB: [inaudible] at that point, he was ambassador. My husband and I took his [inaudible] from Kyoto to Tokyo. Fun sort of experience. But anyway.

Q: What actually did that accomplish in concrete terms?

EB: It allowed some intellectual conversation at dinner. It allowed us to feel that the Harvard professors cared, or at least were given the opportunity of caring, and it turned out that they, in fact, did. I think it gave us a much stronger sense of belonging to that community.

Q: That you developed a greater esprit de corps between the students and the professors.

EB: We felt more a part of Harvard.

Q: Actually, it's [inaudible]. You speak about – it felt more a part of Harvard, yet I remember your saying very recently that you did not want Radcliffe to become totally conjoined with Harvard.

EB: I think mostly because I have the feeling that it is probably financially an impossibility.

Q: How?

EB: Well, I think if I remember reading things correctly, Radcliffe endowment is set up so that – which is really what is happening now. Some form of identity will have to be maintained. And I feel that if some form of identity is going to be maintained, that maybe I'd like it to be a little bit more than just the fact that that endowment can't be transferred from Radcliffe to Harvard. I may have said that. I may change my mind about that. One of

the things I have said very strongly is that I believe it was in the '70s that Harvard wrote to all Radcliffe graduates of X-number of years back, saying, "Would you like a Harvard degree?" And I wrote back, "No, thank you. I'm very happy with what I have. I don't see how I can be improved upon." Now, in that respect, my loyalties are to Radcliffe.

Q: Then your objection was essentially on financial grounds.

EB: I really don't know what I'm talking about, but what I think I've understood is that the charter of Radcliffe and the endowment of Radcliffe is set up so that, at least at this point, without a lot of legal hassle, certain things have to remain Radcliffe. But I'm not certain of that, and I may well be wrong.

Q: But it has not gone any further.

EB: No, it just seems not to have gone any further.

Q: Well, you [inaudible].

EB: I see. That's true. Now there's another side to this picture, and I think that the good self-consciousness of Radcliffe in the last eight or ten years is spectacular.

Q: Explain it, please.

EB: Bunting Institute, women's archives, et cetera, et cetera. And I am not convinced that that same kind of attention would have been paid to women at Harvard even today.

Q: What you're saying is that if Radcliffe did become incorporated with Harvard, then you don't feel that there would be that autonomy for the women as there is today.

EB: That's right, and I am totally contradicting myself to a large extent, and that's okay. I have no problems with that.

Q: Now that we've established that your years at Radcliffe were all right, they weren't great.

EB: Fair.

Q: But you would say it was all right. Didn't answer all your expectations, I assume, or did you have any –?

EB: Well, I think that was going to be the next part of the answer to the question. I'm not sure I had any expectations. I did not have career expectations. I did not particularly have finding-a-husband-and-marrying-expectations either, though I think a number of women did. A number didn't. I mean, there was probably, for that day and age, a reasonable percentage of women who went on to really work and/or graduate degrees and what have you.

Q: I'm rather curious that you didn't have any career orientation. Do you think that could have been instilled by your mother?

EB: Very possible. I had none. I mean, really, none.

Q: It seems so contrary to your personality. You're more goal-oriented.

EB: I've changed a lot. I've changed a great deal [inaudible] various things. No, and I would not even begin to guess as to what I would have done because I certainly would have done something in terms of working, but I have no idea what. I've regretted it.

Q: What do you value most of your Radcliffe experience? Got to be something.

EB: I think it was intellectual stimulation. I did receive that.

Q: That's a great deal.

EB: That's a great deal, and that does stay with one.

Q: Let me see, how do you think Radcliffe affected your life? Well, I know you got married from Radcliffe.

EB: Yes, I got married from Radcliffe.

Q: But aside from that.

EB: I think it has allowed the continuation – I mean, I'm back to intellectual stimulation. Most of the time, I'm quite lazy, but I know how not to be lazy.

Q: Such an enormous achievement.

EB: Well, yes, but I think it was all part of the learning process. I may read mystery stories during the summer, but I can pick up something else and absorb it and talk about it, or do whatever it is, or absorb it into my life. I am capable of doing that. I know I am, and that just makes a tremendous difference. It's like having the BSO next door, and you may only go three times a year, but you know it's there.

Q: You don't have any guilt feelings about reading a mystery book, doing something that seems frivolous?

EB: No, none whatsoever I got over – I'd used to, and occasionally, when I read the Radcliffe notes, news, whatever it is, alumna magazine, I have twinges of guilt, because the only people one ever reads about are the people in your class who made it professionally in the, again, quote-unquote, "real world," which I used to resent a great deal. I resent it much less now. I think maybe I'm growing up again. I resented it because it all began at a time when I was not in the real world, and it was a very pure personal [inaudible] envy, whatever. Now that I am, it doesn't matter as much. Also, there was a great deal of that at the beginning of the feminist movement, when everything else was denigrated or swept under the rug. And I do remember that period very well. I was on the wrong side of the fence, so that I would have felt it even more strongly. The wrong side of

the fence, as far as that group of women was concerned, that I am eternally grateful to them because one cannot have – I feel that great sociological change cannot be made without some form of revolution, albeit how minor – it may be a minor revolution, and that was a minor revolution, and revolutions, I think by definition, are extreme. Again, it's hindsight, but I think it's legitimate hindsight, and I think they [inaudible] –

Q: Did you feel an empathy with them?

EB: I did feel an empathy, very much of an empathy.

Q: Although they made you feel guilty at times?

EB: Although they made me feel guilty. That is correct. [inaudible] time of reading mysteries in the summer, when the fact that I was still basically plodding along with my life and children, even though I was a professional volunteer and the chairman of every PTA that any child ever attended, and [inaudible].

Q: [inaudible] Well, if you enjoy something, why do you think back now with a sense of guilt about it?

EB: I think I was given the potential of being given that sense of guilt existed at that time because it was very important to put forward the women who had achieved or were in the process of achieving, the kind of thing that the Feminist Revolution was talking about. And housewife was not an acceptable word, and I could understand the rationale, and I could empathize with the cause, and I still resented like hell that anybody didn't like the fact that I worked eighteen hours a day, no matter what I was doing. So, it was all [inaudible].

Q: Did you get literature from Radcliffe during that period of the Feminist Revolution, in quotes, as you put it, that would have sort of [inaudible] your resentment about not being part of that kind of milieu?

EB: It was, in fact, the basis of it.

Q: It was?

EB: Yes.

Q: Explain it.

EB: I never wrote the letter to the editor – a lot of people did – but it was the class notes and those who were featured in articles – the featured in articles, I could understand a little bit more, but the class notes became a table of contents of professional activities. I think my feeling was that fewer and fewer women who were not involved in those activities communicated with Radcliffe because they were not – I keep doing this.

Q: They were not achievers.

EB: They were not achievers; they were not interesting. And then that turned around to a certain extent.

Q: When?

EB: I don't know. At least, I think it has turned around. I would say, perhaps, maybe four or five years ago, beginning of the '80s, where I think there was a great turn of events in feminism, as well as a number of other things. It became more acceptable; therefore, one did not have to push it as hard.

Q: In other words, it was a more balanced viewpoint.

EB: I believe so.

Q: You claim you wanted to write a letter, which you never did.

EB: Which I never – other people wrote [inaudible] another form in which I'm [inaudible]. No, but it would be interesting, and sometimes, perhaps I will do it. There was a period, I would say, probably between '75 and '80, when I was aware of what other people were writing, which was saying, "Hey, you know I exist, too." [inaudible].

Q: But I do have some value.

EB: [inaudible] And you're making me very uncomfortable.

Q: Well, in your case, would you say that you married too young before you were really aware of what you were doing?

EB: In retrospect, there is no question in my mind at all that that was true.

Q: So that the feminist movement was not the precipitating factor in your divorce.

EB: I don't think so. My awareness of myself as an individual who might be interested in making contributions other than the ones I've been making could have come out of the feminist movement. Interestingly enough, I went to work at age forty-five for almost the first time in my life. Certainly, the first full-time job because we needed the money. And then the [inaudible] on that would have been ten years ago. That was a volatile time, so I think it was a combination of a number of things.

Q: Do you think your husband was ready for marriage when you got married?

EB: No, I think probably not. I think no. We both lacked some things that are now – to be very specific, he never had an adolescence, and I was never self-sufficient. He was too self-sufficient, and I perhaps had too much of an adolescence [inaudible] taking care of daughters in those days could go on forever. So, I think the answer is no.

Q: [inaudible] Will you tell me what you did after graduation? You went to Japan.

EB: Went to Japan for seven years, and then lived in New York for seven years, during which time, basically, my children and I lived in New York, and Don traveled a hundred thousand miles a year for about four and a half to five years [inaudible].

Q: Was that difficult for you?

EB: Yeah, it was very difficult for both of us, and I'm sure difficult for the children because I'm not the world's most patient person. But it was a good place to live. I loved New York. I lived in a marvelous environment, lots of support, lots of people whose husbands weren't quite doing what Don was doing, but they were gone, and they were at the beginning of the career ladder, and they worked every night. [inaudible]

Q: Did you belong to the Radcliffe Club at any time when you were traveling?

EB: No, I didn't. I did not.

Q: Did you think about it at all?

EB: I think I vaguely thought about it. The last year and a half in Japan, when we lived in Tokyo, I did belong to the university women's – something or other. I don't even know if there was a Radcliffe Club or not. They might well have been by then. No, it probably [inaudible] because this was early '60s. So, no, and I have never been active here.

Q: You don't attend any of the forums that they have.

EB: I look at them every month, and I get the literature because I make the contribution. No, I haven't. And I might. The interest is growing. It's not quite there yet, but it's growing. And I think Radcliffe has something to offer to me. Tell you what I have used at Radcliffe, which is the Career Services.

Q: I was going to ask about that. Have they been helpful?

EB: They have really been very helpful. I've taken a couple of courses there, and I spoke for the Career Services once, but I wasn't quite what they were looking for. And there were, fortunately, some other people on the panel, so that it was all right.

Q: Do they have a placement [inaudible]?

EB: They do, of sorts. You have to work for it, and you basically do your own research. But it's pretty well organized. For instance, if someone's interested in post-secondary school administration, I'm on file. Somebody can call me.

Q: In other words –?

EB: And vice versa.

Q: I see. So, they have a record of the interests of various students [inaudible].

EB: They have a record of what alums are doing, then the student or the alum can go and research that information.

Q: I see. Is this a paying position?

EB: Oh, yes, they have a paying outfit over there, which I think is now reasonably active. When I first really wanted to use it, which was about ten years ago, it was just beginning to get off the ground, and I had – I mean, you're there, I was forty-five year old, not wanting to know what I wanted to do when I grew up, and not knowing how to go about finding a job, and I didn't get quite as much specific help as I might have wanted to. But it has grown, and it has grown well, I think, and it makes good use of resources.

Q: Would you say that too was part of the women's movement?

EB: I think so. I believe so,

Q: So, when you got your first job at forty-five, it was not through Ratcliffe.

EB: No, it was through a cocktail party, which, since I lived in Chestnut Hill, was still, at that point, the best way of getting a job.

Q: Living with someone that was a Protestant for so many years and living in that milieu for all that time, did you encounter anti-Jewish feelings at all?

EB: Yes, I did. Don, interestingly enough, got into a couple of very violent arguments with people who were expressing antisemitic thoughts. I remember one in New York, and I remember one here in Boston, though – I mean, defending not only his wife, but his wife's right to believe whatever, because I did continue to express, at least my belief in who I was in the midst of that half of Chestnut Hill, which is Episcopalian. Now that's probably a third of Chestnut Hill – third Episcopalian, third Jewish, and third Unitarian, as far as I can figure. But I did get directly involved once or twice in generalized conversation. I was looked at skeptically when I discussed my background and my belief, not my physical background, but my religious background. It was, interestingly enough, the opinion of some of my Protestant friends in Chestnut Hill that, yes, in fact, there was some antisemitic feeling about me as the wife of the rector, never expressed directly to me. I don't know. I think it might well have been overactive imagination or perhaps hearing someone else whistle dirty songs or whatever. I was never certain.

Q: It was not a church policy.

EB: It was certainly not a church policy in any way. No. But when I was growing up in St. Louis, most of my friends were Jewish. Here, most but not all of my friends were within [inaudible]. But Don was, as I said before, very much involved with Yale and spent a lot of time there, and was chairman of its entire Alumni Association for a while, and so forth. And that was certainly becoming a pretty mixed crowd, and I think no one ever thought twice of anything.

Q: That was a healthy atmosphere.

EB: Yeah.

Q: Being graduated from Radcliffe, in this area, particularly, it has great prestige. Did you find that this was an immediate plus for you?

EB: It certainly didn't hurt. It was a plus, and you could see that their view changed immediately. And it was, frankly – I mean, Don as a Yale was quite acceptable, and as a matter of fact, it was fun because it was a primarily [inaudible] Harvard group, and it turned into a fun, kidding kind of thing that went on all the time. But there were many fewer women who had either graduated from college or graduate – lot of Smith people in Chestnut Hill [inaudible] or quite a number, but comparatively not that many. So, yes, it was extremely helpful. It was one area in which one could sneak in without having to prove oneself. It wasn't [inaudible].

Q: That's what I was referring to, that indeed it is, and it still is.

EB: And it still is. It still is.

Q: Do you think that your present position –?

EB: No.

Q: No?

EB: No. I think my present position is not.

Q: How did you get your present job? Tell me something about it. [inaudible] Radcliffe, was it?

EB: What? No, it was not. No. It started. I work at New England Conservatory. I'm now, I guess, in my third and most serious and most interesting job there. It began through the cocktail party circuit [inaudible]. I worked there for a number of years, involved primarily

in sort of lower levels of development, which I decided I did not like. Then, anyway, my marriage was breaking up, and I decided I'd stop working, and I did for about a year and a half, which certainly didn't help the marriage.

Q: Did you think that working was tantamount –?

EB: Well, it was certainly a bone of contention, or I thought it was a threatening thing to Don, and it may have been, but certainly my not working was not going to ease the situation. And then I left Chestnut Hill and sort of settled myself in here. And then two or three months after that happened, I began to job hunt again. I may have tried graduate career services. I'm not sure. I did a couple of “what do you want to do when you grow up” kind of courses over there and so forth, all of which always showed the same thing, that there was practically nothing that I wouldn't be capable of doing, and there were no specific real [inaudible]. I should have learned by then. I've done this a number of times. But then I was called by the New England Conservatory to come back to the job, which I now do, which is director of financial aid. That means I'm responsible for the administration of several million dollars of institutional and federal aid to our student body every year.

Q: Do you have much of a staff?

EB: Not as much as I need. I have one and a half people and some students working [inaudible].

Q: So that you really have an enormous responsibility.

EB: Yes, in large part because I am – very simply put, I am a compassionate, caring person, and I spend a great deal of time [inaudible].

Q: Perhaps this is, in part, you're probably compassionate by nature, but in part because of your experience at Radcliffe.

EB: Yes, it may well be exactly that. I think it's a combination of things. I was going to say something else. I think it is that. And I think really in most institutions, it's very hard to find a person that is non-threatening, though I am basically potentially a threatening figure. Yeah, I mean, I have – most of the kids know by now that I don't really have the power, but I have the beginnings of the power, and that's fairly important, and we're badly endowed, so there's very little money. So, it's a real mess. But I think it had a great deal to do with my treatment by my adopted family.

Q: What do you mean?

EB: Well, there's a lot I learned. Well, there was a lot of compassion and caring.

Q: You gravitated towards some kind of musical position indirectly.

EB: I think that truly was happenstance.

Q: Because you mentioned your mother's [inaudible].

EB: Yeah, and unfortunately, it certainly skipped my generation. I think that's happenstance. I took the obligatory piano lessons and hated them, and can't sing anymore because of my smoking and all this other thing. But I love music. I love music, but that was pure happenstance that I did end up there. I did drift toward the not-for-profit, and I did that at the beginning because I needed flexibility in my time; I still had kids, and one was at boarding school, but the other one was at home, and now I find I probably will not leave that. I may want to change jobs, but I like the not-for-profit ambiance.

Q: It suits your sentiments, your personality.

EB: It does. It really does.

Q: Yeah, I can see that.

EB: As much as I'd like to make more money, unfortunately, it does. I think more money would not make up for it.

Q: Not for you. The little I've known you through the fellowship and so forth, I would not assume that that would be part of your makeup.

EB: I think you're right. It's not.

Q: I would like to hear if there is anything that we have omitted that you think is significant, particularly about Radcliffe.

EB: [inaudible] the area which I was thinking. I think, rather than adding, I'm probably reiterating that I did not have a complete, or what I would consider a complete, four-year Radcliffe experience, and perhaps at the time when I was growing up, to the point where I might have made better use of even that time, I left the institution, because I really left it in the middle of my junior year, which is when I first began to date my husband and my interest became his –

Q: Became confused.

EB: – and they became confused, and I certainly maintained my academic responsibilities, and hopefully, something beyond the responsibilities. But that was it. Then, I think my marriage to him had a great deal to do with it, because he was such a very strong Yalie that we were only here for, I believe, together for two football games, and they were difficult. Then we left the country.

Q: What do you mean they were difficult?

EB: Well, I mean, it was fun, it was ridiculous. I was very strongly Harvard at that point, and he was very strongly Yale. And then we left the country, and he was class agent for his class, so that communication –

Q: Did your [inaudible] change?

EB: I beg your pardon.

Q: Did your allegiance have to change?

EB: It didn't have to change, but it very naturally changed, because my interest and my participation was minimal at best, whereas his was maintained. So, it was a perfectly natural kind of –

Q: Movement [inaudible].

EB: – movement.

Q: Eva, if you were to recommend to Radcliffe what you know now, since you've been out for so long, how they could have made your stay there or your studies there more interesting, more valuable, more meaningful, what would you say?

EB: I would say that that part of me, which is [inaudible] – I think I'm talked out.

Q: You feel that you've given me a view of your experiences at Radcliffe.

EB: I think I've done considerably more than that. Thank you. It was a very holistic interview, beautifully done. But I think again, I will make my point using this interview as the focus of the fact that the whole person is, to me, very, very important, and the bits and pieces have to be melded, and all have to be taken into consideration. I suppose, if there's any place that I would find fault with the institution for me, excuse me, that is an area where.

Q: I want to go back for a moment to the program, or perhaps I'm using the wrong word, that you started with the professor. Do you know whether that continued after you left?

EB: I think it did. As a matter of fact, I think I found out from Ed Reischauer in Japan that it was still going on and that he had continued it for a while and knew that other people were doing it and so forth. Now, since the more complete merger, if you will, of the two schools, Radcliffe has her own academic deans and all the paraphernalia that had gone on at that point in the houses, so that things are somewhat, I think, the same between the two institutions, and the specific program –

Q: Is no longer needed.

EB: – is no longer needed. And/or something else has certainly taken its place.

Q: What did you call that program?

EB: I can't remember. [laughter] Absolutely can't remember.

Q: But you started it?

EB: Well, I was one of the people within a group of people.

Q: How large was the group that started it?

EB: Well, my guess is that however many houses there were at that point –

Q: They were all included.

EB: Yes, everyone was included. I think there were one or two of us in each house who, for some reason or other, took some responsibility, at least, in finding the [inaudible] to come over and have dinner with us.

Q: Well, that is really concomitant with you. I mean, what you did then is quite in character of what you do now in your life, practically, and you're trying to get a greater understanding for the individual.

EB: I thank you for that comment, and I will go on to say that I can also thank Radcliffe for the opportunity to allow that part of my expression to be noticed.

Q: That's right. Yes, that's quite true. They didn't have to concur with it –

EB: That's right.

Q: – and they did. And not only did they concur, but you were able to get the most worthy professors to participate.

EB: And the atmosphere allowed for whoever it was who was thinking of doing this program to do it, and there was nurturing. I mean, certainly there was nurturing, and there was listening. I think there was probably quite a lot of nurturing and listening, perhaps more of that than initiation.

Q: So that actually it was the students, the students, if they had initiated, they would have gotten support for it.

EB: And they did, and they did. When they initiated, they got support.

Q: Well, that's pretty positive.

EB: I think that's extremely positive. It was. It was a very positive – very positive, and I said before, happy experience. I think my non-participation in the later years had much more to do with extraneous forces presented with what did or did not happen in [inaudible]. I'm glad I went. [laughter]

Q: Oh, I'm certain of that. I'm glad you did, because I got to know you.

EB: It's nice. Thank you.

Q: Well, thank you ever so much, Mrs. Bitsberger. This was a taped interview with Eva Friedman Bitsberger, class of '53, as part of the Harvard Semitic Museum Oral History

Project for the Harvard Radcliffe Jewish experience. If you choose, you will have an opportunity to close any information you consider confidential. Do we have your permission to use the material that we recorded today, 17 June '86?

EB: Yes, in total.

Q: Thank you again. This is an addendum, because Mrs. Bitsberger had called Harry Wolf, meaning Harry Wolfson, and she's going to give a few more comments about Professor Wolfson.

EB: Harry. I never called him Harry, I assure you. Professor Wolfson was a friend of my father's, somehow, though, I think he probably was around in the early '20s as a young something or other when my father was here at Harvard. My father was class of '22.

Q: Yes, he was.

EB: And it is a relationship that continued. And my father, who was a marvelous man and not a great intellectual, had –

Q: What class was he?

EB: '22 – had considerable respect for the intellect, particularly Professor Wolfson. As I said previously, he was not practicing in the religiosity sense of the word Jew, but he was very much a Jew, and also very much admired, therefore, what Harry Wolfson was doing. Somehow, I think, related with his 25th – no, I think it was later than that, with some –

Q: Reunion?

EB: – reunion of his, there was begun the first department of Judaica in the university. I think that is quite recent, and I am sorry, I'm very vague on my history, but I remember his talking and saying there is not a chair, or is not a department, and one of the things that I'm working on in terms of fundraising is this something. My guess is that it would

have been in the '60s, after I came back from Japan.

Q: Now, did you say that it was Lee Friedman that gave the chair, endowed the chair?

EB: He might have and/or it was given in his honor, and I am not sure which, because I think Lee Friedman, in fact, was involved with the Semitic library collection –

Q: At Harvard?

EB: – at Harvard.

Q: Was he a Harvard graduate?

EB: He was a Harvard graduate, I believe. It must have been in aught-something. I am on that library mailing list that I've never done anything about because when my father died, donations were made to the Judaica library. I should know that term better, but I don't. It's not the Semitic Museum.

Q: No, no, I understand that.

EB: And then half to Washington University in St. Louis, and as the local family representative, I'm on the mailing list, if you will. And there are, in fact, books there with his nameplate in it, all of that, which is kind of neat.

Q: Yes, that's very interesting. I'm glad that we corrected that Wolfson.

EB: I'm glad you brought it up. I apologize for that.

Q: Well, thank you again.