

**University of Illinois Student Life 1928-1938**  
**Oral History Project**  
**Louise Kenyon Molitor – Class of '33**  
**Arlington Heights, Illinois**  
**April 30, 2001**

START OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

**Ellen Swain: This is an oral history interview for the University of Illinois Archives. The interviewer is Ellen Swain, the narrator is Louise Kenyon Molitor, an alumna from the class of 1933. We are at Mrs. Molitor's home in Arlington Heights, Illinois and the date is April 30, 2001.**

**I wondered if we could start by just telling me your full name and your birthday.**

LM: My name is Anne Louise Kenyon Molitor, and I'm usually called Louise. I was born November 20, 1911.

**ES: Where did you grow up?**

LM: In Elgin.

**ES: In Elgin. Were you from a big family?**

LM: No, I'm an only child.

**ES: What did your parents do in Elgin?**

LM: My father was a lawyer and my mother was a nurse, but not a practicing nurse at that time.

**ES: Did you go to Elgin High School?**

LM: No, I went to Elgin Academy.

**ES: What kind of school was that?**

LM: A private, private prep school.

**ES: How did you know about the U of I, or how did you end up going?**

LM: My father said, "If it's run by the state of Illinois, it should be a good place to go." And, so that's why I went [*laughter*]. I had had a cousin who went there for a year or so, and my father also had a protégé, who had been in the Law School at Illinois. He thought that was the place I should go to get a good, solid, general education.

**ES: Did you ever want to go anywhere else, or was that your first choice?**

LM: No, no. I just thought that was fine [*laughter*]. I was very green.

**ES: How important do you think education was to your parents?**

LM: Very! Because neither one of them had gone through grade school. My mother went to school until she was 16. And my father left school when he was 14. He studied law and passed the bar on his own, and was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the class. I mean they did very well, but they wanted me to be educated, by other people [*laughter*].

**ES: What year did you enter school?**

LM: '29.

**ES: In '29.**

LM: Yes.

**ES: So that was right as the Stock Market was crashing?**

LM: Yes, after I got there.

**ES: Do you remember anything about that?**

LM: No. I guess I remember but, I can't say what I thought about it really, because people were kind of protected then. I mean families protected their children, they didn't tell them everything that was going on. I knew that we didn't have much money anymore, coming in hardly because my father didn't like to send out bills and that sort of thing, but he always would have money for my tuition and necessities, but not much extra. Sometimes my mother would send a dollar bill in a letter, and Valentine's Day it might be \$2 if she could scrounge it up. I mean you were living from hand to mouth in those days. But I never felt it on a house bill or anything like that. I mean it wasn't that bad. He just never knew when his next \$5 was coming in.

**ES: Did you feel they had to sacrifice to keep you down there in Urbana?**

LM: Yes. My mother belonged to a little bridge club, and they had prizes for the person who spent the least on the luncheons, you know that sort of thing. I mean it sounds ridiculous now days, but that's the way it was. Of course, I wasn't around at that time, but she would tell me, in letters about things what she would fix for lunch, and how she was under the club's budget, or whatever it was [*laughter*].

**ES: Do you remember your first day at the University, what your impressions were?**

LM: Yes.

**ES: Or your first couple of days, you know, what were your impressions?**

LM: Well, that I always thought it was big. I don't remember, really but I was excited about starting on a whole new life. I came from a graduating class of 12 from the Academy and go down to Champaign and it's huge, and they have beautiful trees. That Quadrangle was beautiful, and I was impressed with everything.

**ES: How did you find a place to live?**

LM: Well, this protégé of my father's, as I call him, had a girlfriend who he eventually married, and she told my father where, or probably told Raymond, I don't know, but anyway, we found out about the...I think she wrote me a letter as I recall and said that I should apply for a room in the residence hall and I can't remember the name of it. That would be the place to be. In fact, I think she had a room there too, come to think about it. She would have been a junior, when I was a freshman. And so she sort of steered me around.

**ES: Did other classmates in high school go to college? Was that unique for someone to go off to school?**

LM: Not very many went. Of course, at the Academy they all went, because it was a college prep school, but the high school, I don't know what the proportion would be because I didn't go there. But my friends went to college, and my cousin went to college, but beyond that, why, I don't know as I was very worried about it. It's hard to remember things that you didn't think about way back when. [The Academy was a dormitory school – students from everywhere – even overseas and South America. They allowed a few day schoolers like me.]

**ES: Sure. Did other people in the Academy go to the U of I?**

LM: No [not in my graduating class. Other years – yes.]

**ES: They went elsewhere?**

LM: They went all over, different places [California to Massachusetts.]

**ES: When you were going to college, did you have a goal, did you want to be in a certain career, or—?**

LM: No, because I was just there to get a good general education. That's what I had been brought up with, looking forward to, from my father and my mother, but mostly my father, and so it didn't occur to me that I might have to earn my living some day. You know, it just didn't occur to me. I just took the courses that I was interested in [*laughter*].

**ES: Now what did you major in?**

LM: I majored in English, and I took things like anthropology, bacteriology and chemistry and solid trigonometry, and all sorts of weird things. [I also had a minor in French!]

**ES: Just to try to get a broad range of—?**

LM: Well, I just was interested in those things. I took art. I took drawing, and I took, what do you call it, when you're making a statue?

**ES: Oh sculpture?**

LM: Clay modeling, and things like that, that I was interested in. Because I didn't think, "Oh this isn't going to help me get a job," nobody thought that. I mean I don't say nobody thought that. Nobody *that I knew* thought that. Most of the girls in the house took things like business and PE, and education, was a popular one. Also, well I had a list of them here. The Music School was popular too. They had a very good Music School when I was there. And business, Home Ec., Liberal Arts, and of course the Liberal Arts and the group of people who were taking chemistry and things like that for a living, I mean, intended to graduate and be in that business. So—

**ES: Were there many women in those fields, in the scientific field?**

LM: Well, the proportion of women was about 5, I mean about 4 to 1. I mean 4 men to 1 women. So it's pretty hard to judge. When I took that Solid Trig, I accidentally got into an engineering section, and here I come, and the room was filled with engineers and me. I was the only girl and I was petrified the whole time. I sat there and tried to keep out of his eye sight, so that the instructor wouldn't ask me a question or anything. I suffered one whole semester in that engineering course [*laughter*]. You can I believe I was more careful when I registered the next time. Not only that, but it was so far away from everything. I had to practically run to class everyday. I don't seem to recall anything else of that nature.

**ES: Did you have favorite professors?**

LM: Yes people would tell you, "Take this course, if you need a pipe course, you take this one from such and so." And if you're going to take Spanish you take it from Dr. Alayos.. I can't remember for sure what her name was. The chemistry teacher I had was, I think I got him accidentally, but he was really one of the ones that people liked. There were several English teachers, but I can't remember any of their names now. I hadn't thought about them until now!

**ES: Did students and faculty have relationships outside the classroom? Did you get to know your professors?**

LM: [*Laughter*] Yes. After you turn that off, I'll tell you about one of them.

**ES: [*Laughter*] Okay. But what I was interested in is if you had social outings? If you went over to their homes?**

LM: Yes [My chemistry teacher. Another Phi Mu, and a member of the Catholic sorority whose letters I can't remember. I became good friend of his and his wife and we were invited to their home several times.]

**ES: Or if you got to know them?**

LM: Yes.

**ES: Okay. Let's see, what do you think the main strengths, the weaknesses of your education were?**

LM: Well, the weakness of course, was that I had nothing I could earn money with. [I did work at a few jobs here and there before I married. After marriage I stayed home. I was always busy – we remodeled homes and I did a *whole* lot of volunteering.] I mean I kept house, you know, and then when Margie, that's my oldest girl went to Illinois, of course, I decided that I would get a job. I wanted to do something, besides just volunteer work, which of course, I did up to here. And so I got a job working for Borden's, in their control lab. I'd taken bacteriology and chemistry, so I knew what sulfuric acid was [*laughter*], and so forth. After I graduated I did work for a doctor, the Elgin city physician. They had a lab that I took care of, but other than that, that's the only thing that I took that helped me, except just to broaden your horizons, you know. I mean that's what it did. As far as being practical, it wasn't very.

**ES: And you think most women who went to school were going to get that broad education rather than to get a job or—?**

LM: I don't think so. I think they were probably doing it to get a job. I mean they weren't all as green as I was. I was very green.

**ES: I wonder if you could talk about some of the rules that were in place, for students. What you could or couldn't do when you were a student.**

LM: Well, you couldn't leave the campus without permission. And if you wanted to leave, you had to have written permission from home. I mean if you're in an organized house that is. If you were living in a room somewhere, none of these applied. Of course there were hours that you had to keep. The doors closed at 10 o'clock, and Friday and Saturday night, I think it was 12:30 There were quiet hours and I really don't think there was anything more. I can't remember anything else that we had to worry about.

**ES: Was drinking a problem, I know Prohibition—?**

LM: No, it was Prohibition time so if you went to a fraternity party, you might expect, you might not expect it, but you might not be surprised if the punch was spiked. But that didn't happen every time. You know just once in a great while, you'd come across a situation like that. But, other than that, there wasn't any drinking. Well I don't know, because living in a sorority house, you don't really know what goes on. So, I mean in our house, we didn't have anything, and I don't know of any sorority house that did. But fraternities, you know, they're boys. They get out. They had no rules, and so, you'd expect it.

**ES: Were you aware of that when you were in school, that there were different rules for boys and for girls?**

LM: I think so, but I don't know if it bothered me one way or the other. It was just that's the way it was.

**ES: You didn't feel over-regulated?**

LM: No.

**ES: No?**

LM: No. I didn't.

**ES: What role did smoking play on campus, was that a big deal?**

LM: Everybody smoked, and I learned how to smoke because I hated to be sitting at a table with people at Prehn's or Kameron's, and everybody smoking but me. You know, you feel out, like an outsider, so I learned how to smoke. I smoked when I had to, you know, maybe 3 times in a month or something like that. Just as a situation called for it, but I never smoked other than that, and I mean I haven't smoked any, ever, and that was the reason for that.

**ES: So it was mainly a social thing all off the campus?**

LM: Yeah, yeah.

**ES: And that was—**

LM: No, I remember about on campus, there was no place on campus to smoke, that was all off campus.

**ES: And it was men and women who did?**

LM: Oh yeah. If it had been just the men, it wouldn't have bothered me.

**ES: What are your impressions of Thomas Arkle Clark, the Dean of Men?**

LM: Well, I only knew him from my friend talking about him. He practically worshiped him. I mean he was so impressed with him. I never had any dealings with him or anything, but that was the impression that everybody had of him, that he was pluperfect.

**ES: Do you think students admired him or they feared him?**

LM: No, I think they admired him. I don't think they feared him, no.

**ES: Did you have any contact with Maria Leonard, the Dean of Women?**

LM: Seems to me, I went, one time, to her office for something. I can't remember what it was. Maybe I had a cold or something [and needed an excuse for some class so I wouldn't have to use one of my cuts.]

**ES: What was her role campus? How did she get involved with students?**

LM: I remember her but I don't remember what she did really, at all.

**ES: Do you think religion played an important role in student's lives? Were students involved in the foundations, or in local churches?**

LM: Not, not the ones that I was associated with. I don't know about the rest of the students. I can't speak for the students, only the ones that I lived with. There were some that went, I had a roommate when I was a freshman, and she was Catholic, and so she's, if she'd miss church, she'd say, "Well, *I have* to go to church tomorrow." She was always out on Saturday night, and she liked to sleep Sunday morning. She had an awful time getting up to go to church but she used to go pretty regularly. And outside of her, I don't recall anything. [Several in our house attended courses at the Hillel Foundation on religion.]

**ES: Did you have any impressions of the President of the University? Did students know who he was, or have any kind of contact with him?**

LM: It would depend on what they were doing, at the University, I would imagine. I mean, what the student was involved in. I can't ever remember being involved with the President, except to, it seem to me, to attend teas or something like that, going down a line and shaking his hand. Other than that, I had no contact with him, and I don't know of anyone that did. I mean close contact, but I'm sure there must have been a lot, because there were a lot of people who were active on campus that would need, I would think, to have contact with him.

**ES: He wasn't somebody you saw walking down the Broadwalk or—?**

LM: Well, no. I don't think so. When we walked down the Broadwalk, we walked fast. And [laughter] I would have a hard time recognizing friends.

**ES: Is that because there was—**

LM: In passing—

**ES: It was in between classes?**

LM: Yes, everybody was going to classes, it was full. I don't know how many abreast, ten or twelve abreast, each going a different direction [laughter].

**ES: So that wasn't a meeting place [laughter]?**

LM: No.

**ES: The Broadwalk?**

LM: No, it wasn't a meeting place.

**ES: Where did you go to meet your friends during the day?**

LM: Oh, well, the library would be one place. We spent a lot of time at the library, you know. You would have an hour between classes, so you don't go back home when you live where we did. And, so you go to the library to study, and lots of times you would meet people there, but of course, most of your friends didn't go to the same place you did. I mean, if they're studying something else, they could be in a different part of the library. But that was one place. Then, if it was just a meeting, you'd go maybe to Prehn's or Kamerer's, or someplace like that. But that's the only place that I can think of. There wasn't any Union Building. I mean there was one, but nobody would go there to meet anybody, you know, it was a really bad place.

**ES: Is that right?**

LM: It was terrible, do you want to hear a story about the Union?

**ES: Sure.**

LM: [*Laughter*] Not about this U of I building. Well, we always thought it was so bad, and why didn't we have a good Union building, and so one Saturday one of my sorority sisters and I decided that we'd go to take the train to Purdue. It was a football special train, and you could go for a dollar. You could have a round trip to Purdue and back. It didn't include your seat at the game of course. So we decided to do this and we did. Of course we couldn't go to the game, because we didn't have money enough for a ticket. So we ate lunch in the Purdue Union and walked around and looked at the campus, and had a wonderful time, and then went back and got on the train and went home, and I don't remember who won the game [*laughter*]. We had a snitch because you weren't supposed to leave town without permission from home, and neither one of us thought we could convince our folks that that was a necessary thing to do. So we let one person in on the secret, and so when people wanted to know why we weren't at lunch, why, "Oh they're just down in Champaign shopping or something," you know, and so we successfully pulled that one off [*laughter*]. I mean those were really wild things we did.

**ES: But you thought the Purdue Union was much better than Illinois?**

LM: Oh it was beautiful and huge it really was, it was new. See, we'd heard it was new and we wanted to see where it was.

**ES: What was the Illinois Union like? Was it just a meeting place for student organizations?**

LM: No, the *Daily Illini* was in the basement, and the Illio business office, and on the first floor, gosh I can't remember. Nobody ever went there that didn't have to. It was on is Wright Street the one that goes along the campus along—?

**ES: Along the side of the Quad.**

LM: Yeah.

**ES: It comes down to Green.**

LM: Yeah. Oh, well it was on Wright Street, about a half a block from Green, on the other side of the street of the campus, and it was big brown bricks, or stones or something. I think it's probably still there, but it's not the Union anymore or course. I don't know what's there now. But when my daughter was down there she was news editor of the *DI* and they worked in the (I think) basement of that. I mean that's where they were. I was in there once, when I was down visiting there and it was still bad [laughter]. But it wasn't the Union anymore, you see, by that time.

**ES: Was there anywhere you could go then, that you could get together, other than the library, or on campus?**

LM: I can't think of any place.

**ES: There was no real central—?**

LM: No, not that I know of. The Women's Building had, seems to me had something in, I just can't remember. There were meeting rooms and I think the Women's Building is where they had the teas, once a week. Dorsey Connors was one of the entertainers down there, when I was in school. They used to have entertainment of all sorts and I remember her very well because she would, every time they didn't have anybody to entertain, I think she'd pitch in and do her thing. She was a great person. [She had a TV show in Chicago (her home) for years – sort of a “How to” show – very popular. She had a sad life – her daughter was murdered *supposedly* by her husband – her daughter's husband – but it as never proven. A mystery still.]

START OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

**ES: Now you said you lived in the residence halls your first year.**

LM: Yes.

**ES: And then you pledged a sorority?**

LM: Uh-huh.

**ES: Why did you choose to do that? Why did you want to belong to a sorority?**

LM: Well because they convinced me that I wanted to belong to the sorority, I guess.

**ES: This is Phi Mu?**

LM: Yes, and I never was sorry.

**ES: Did they approach you, or how did the contact work?**

LM: Yeah. You know I never figured that out. I, one night was invited to the Phi Omega Pi house for dinner and I was a little early, and so I walked up the street and they must have been having a party or something going on at the Phi Mu house, and there was so much laughing and fun sounding people over there. I thought, gee that would be a nice place to go. And then finally, shortly after that they invited me. I don't know, I can't remember who, who it was that I knew, I don't recall knowing anybody. But there must have been because that's how you got your pledges, usually by word of mouth, in between the formal rushing. I can't understand how they must have just gotten my thoughts or something. So that's how I became a Phi Mu.

**ES: What did you have to go through rush then at all, or you were invited?**

LM: No, they just invited you for dinner and that was all, several times, two or three times.

**ES: What did you do for pledging and initiation?**

LM: Well, for pledging they asked me to meet them at Prehn's for a coke. So I did and they told me that they'd like to have me be in their sorority, and they put a ribbon on me, and then you had formal pledging afterwards.

**ES: I see.**

LM: And you got your pledge pin and they took the ribbons off. Did you ask me about initiation?

**ES: Yeah, yeah.**

LM: Well they had what they called hell week then, but it wasn't much of a hell week. We had a stunt every night at dinner. I can remember that because I always was trying to figure out something different to do. Then they had some stupid thing that you had to...every time that you saw one of the actives you had to do something and I have forgotten what that was. Then, initiation week was a week long, and that's called, hell week, but it wasn't hell week. I mean I had to polish some silver I remember, and then I had to iron some robes, and that's all I can remember doing [*laughter*], neither one of which bothered me a bit. And then we were initiated and that was it.

**ES: You said you lived in the house, during that time?**

LM: Yeah, oh yes.

**ES: Phi Mu had at that time a very big pretty house. Did they have trouble with the Depression finances?**

LM: It wasn't a very big house, it held 40 girls. It was on Ohio Street. You know where the Kappa house is?

**ES: Uh-huh.**

LM: Well, it's up that street where the Kappa house is and I don't know who is in the Phi Omega Pi house now. Then there was a Jewish sorority on the other side of the street but I can't remember which one it was. There were three Jewish sororities. I used to know which was which but they're long gone. I can't remember.

**ES: How was the house able to stay together during financial problems?**

LM: Well, we cut out coffee at dinner, except for guest night and Sunday noon when a lot of people came, had families come in as guests. They cut corners. The house manager would cut corners wherever they could, and I don't remember any other, anything specific that we did. We used to get those G-Washington aces and go up and get the hot water out of the tap in the bathroom, and have coffee while we were studying [*laughter*]. I don't really recall cutting out anything really.

**ES: Did any of the members have to drop out, because of—?**

LM: I have a suspicion that probably one did. I mean I am not sure that that was the reason.

**ES: How much did it cost, how much were your dues?**

LM: I've been trying to figure that out. I have a vague feeling, vague idea that it was \$100 a month, but I'm not sure what that was, or if that's what I paid for one of my girls. I can't really separate the two things so I'm not sure what it was, maybe it was \$50, that sounds more like it. So, I don't think it was less than 50, because that included your house dues, and your board and your room, and so I think, it might have been \$50.

**ES: And were you able to manage that without having to work at a steady job?**

LM: Oh yes, yes. I didn't have a student job, but many did.

**ES: Did many sorority women?**

LM: No, no. But we had students that worked in our kitchen. We had a regular cook and boys waited on tables and some were washing the dishes and the pots and pans, and that sort of thing.

**ES: And you had a house mother?**

LM: Yes. We had a very nice house mother.

**ES: What was it like living there? What kind of atmosphere was there? What kinds of things did you do together?**

LM: Oh, we had a lot of fun. After dinner we'd roll back the carpets. We had no television of course, and we rolled back the carpets and danced. We had a victrola and records. Sometimes we'd get up a bridge game or something like that, and that is if, I mean, not to take from studying, maybe somebody was having a break. Otherwise we studied and then we had a Phi Mu whistle and if we'd see each other walking to and from school, we'd catch up, whistle, and they'd stop in their tracks and wait until whoever it was came, caught up to them. You know that kind of comradery. We didn't really have cliques or anything like that. That I can remember. I don't know, we just had all kinds of good times.

**ES: You said you did change roommates every so often.**

LM: Oh yeah, we changed, yes.

**ES: How many did you share a room with?**

LM: One. Then we had a dormitory -- that's where we slept upstairs, and nobody slept in their rooms.

**ES: Oh okay.**

LM: There was a bed there, but that was just if you were sick or you had guest or something.

**ES: So they were more like study rooms?**

LM: Yeah.

**ES: I see, I see. Did independents students and Greek students intermingle or socialize at all?**

LM: It depended on the person. You might meet somebody in a class and socialize with them, bring them home with you for dinner, or to study. Lots of times there was, I know, that's how I remember that Jewish sorority so well, because I used to go over there and study for, what was it, German? I believe so. For tests and things, and I would invite her over, but she didn't want to go that far. She'd say why don't you come over here, so she didn't have to walk way out to where we lived. We lived way out on Ohio, past Lincoln. You know, further out than Lincoln, about a block and a half.

**ES: Do you think it gave you social prestige to belong to a sorority as compared to just being—?**

LM: No, I don't think so, I never felt that. It was just a place where I had a lot of friends, good friends, you know that were always there if I wanted to talk to them, because I was an only child. So I was really anxious for that type of living and I enjoyed every minute of it.

**ES: Were you active in the Panhellenic or some of the organizations—?**

LM: Oh, not I personally, but we did belong to Panhellenic and all that sort of thing.

**ES: Were the Jewish students and the black students part of that too, part of the Greek system? Were there fraternities and sororities part of the—?**

LM: Oh I don't think there were any black fraternities or sororities, yet, when I was there.

**ES: There were a few but they were north.**

LM: They did have? I wasn't aware of them. I can't remember whether the Panhellenic allowed the Jewish or not. I think they did. I think there was a Catholic one there that wasn't part of Panhellenic, but I'm not sure about the Jewish ones, I can't remember. I'm not even too sure about the Catholic. I can't remember what the name of it was either. In fact, I haven't thought about it until just this minute, after all these years. I had a friend that belonged to it.

**ES: Were you involved in other student organizations? Were you in the Woman's League, and—?**

LM: It seemed to me that we all had to belong to that or something. I worked on the *Daily Illini* as a reporter for 2 years.

**ES: What was that like?**

LM: Not much. I had a beat, and it was one of the church women's, Women's Society, that I had to write an article for their...they had a meeting every two weeks or something like that, that was my beat. Then, of course, you'd get other little assignments. It was mostly over the telephone.

**ES: Did the women have certain roles on the *DI*, and men have others, as far as the stories went?**

LM: No I don't think so. Two Phi Mu were running the *DI* as women's, gosh, what did they call them? Women's editors something. I can't remember. They sat at the horseshoe table in the...but I can't remember, what their title was. I don't think they did the sports, but they were in the news, you know, as far as I can remember. I was a sophomore and they were seniors. They both were Mortar Boards, and that's how they happened to be Mortar Boards was because of the *DI*. They didn't call it the *DI* then, they called it the *Daily Illini*, and I get *DI*, because that's what they called it, when my daughter was running the paper. Anyway, she got Mortar Board by being editor of the *DI*. They had a fire at the Union Building and it burned up all the records for a certain number of years for the *DI* for the people that worked there and everything else. They

were looking around to find out if people could fill them in on certain years. Well, my daughter got a letter for that, and she answered them, and she happened to find a picture of me reading the *DI* as I was going up the steps. We had a patio in front of the house and, I mean, walled in patio, and then the outside steps. I was going up these outside steps reading the newspaper and she sent it to them, not for anything, except that here's a picture of my mother and the date, and reading the *DI*, in the morning, I was coming home for lunch or something. So they put it on the cover of this new anniversary directory, and they sent it to me. I open up this thing and I see myself [*laughter*]. I looked at that picture and I thought where did that come from? Because I had worked at the *DI* way back when, you know and so then it was my daughter, and her son worked there also, he was a sports editor or something like that. No he was a photographer. So I mean we've got sort of a history there. I was flabbergasted, and I thought I could find that picture, but I think that I sent it to my friend in Denver a couple years ago, so—

**ES: How did you get that job? How did you become a member of the staff?**

LM: You just apply for it, and they'll take anybody. I don't know what they do now but that's the way it was then.

**ES: So you just had an interest in that with your English background?**

LM: I wanted to see what it was like, so that's what I did.

**ES: You talked a little bit about this, but what kinds of things did you do for fun, you went to Prehn's and—?**

LM: Oh we roller skated in the spring.

**ES: Is that right?**

LM: And you know when the library was built, they had a lot of nice new sidewalks and stuff over in that area, so we'd go over there and roller skate.

**ES: Did you have to buy your roller skates or could you rent them?**

LM: Oh we'd just ask our mothers to send them to us. These were the ones we had when we were kids [*laughter*].

**ES: Oh I see.**

LM: And we also asked for our ice skates. When I was sophomore, they built the ice rink and we were over there every night that we could possibly go. There were about five or six of us who went over, regularly. We just loved that place.

**ES: Did they place music while you skated there?**

LM: Gosh, I don't think so, I don't remember. I really don't remember, I don't think so. Of course, we went to all the football games and watched the Chief. I've got three personally autographed pictures of the Chief, that's *personally* autographed. I was at, have you seen that video that they put out?

**ES: Uh-huh, yeah.**

LM: Well you see, you saw him jump up on the army mule at the beginning of the show. I was there that day. I was always telling my girls about how I saw him hop up on, we beat the army you know and so, he hopped up on the mule and road it off into the sunset, and they always looked at me, you know, like that. When I saw that, I said, "Now see, I told you so!" [Laughter]. I was always a big fan of his, and also basketball, and let's see, it was Doug Mills was the one of the stars when I was there. I always said that he was the most graceful basketball player on the floor that I ever saw, and I still think that goes. You see these boys now, great big six foot, seven foot men and they aren't very graceful.

**ES: Yes, it's more of a power game.**

LM: Basketball, baseball, I mean basketball is much different than it used to be. We used to go to baseball games. The baseball diamond was over beyond the engineering school. It's probably still there, I don't know. We'd go over there on a May afternoon when we could. Track in the Spring. They always had a track meet that was fun to go to, and then they would have a lot of intramural things.

**ES: What was the Interscholastic Circus? Do you remember anything about that?**

LM: Oh yes. And by the way, I don't think they had beanies anymore, by the time I was in school.

**ES: You don't remember that?**

LM: I don't remember any freshman beanies, I think they didn't have them anymore. I'm not positive, but I don't recall seeing any. And, what did you just ask me.

**ES: The Interscholastic Circus.**

LM: Oh yes. That was in the stadium where they'd have it. It was on a Saturday, probably in May, when it was warm, and they'd have clowns and all kinds of, I can't remember anything specific, but I remember one clown coming up to me and sitting down next to me and upsetting the young man who had asked me to go with him [laughter]. But I don't remember any of the things that happened on the field. I have an idea that it was probably PE classes that did most of it, because it would be jumping and acrobatic stuff.

**ES: Was that something that everybody went to see?**

LM: No.

**ES: It wasn't a fraternity thing?**

LM: No it was, it was regular University thing (I think). I can't remember how many people there were there. I know I sat right down in front, I can remember that [*Laughter*] I don't suppose there was anybody behind me, I don't remember. I'm having a senior moment, as they say. [This was in my freshman year – I didn't know if they had any later on. I didn't go to any.]

**ES: Were the sporting events well attended? Did it cost a lot of money to go to the—?**

LM: Yes. No, we had a coupon book. We bought it when we enrolled. Somehow I've forgotten, just where we got it, and it had coupons they took out when you went to a sporting event, and it included football and basketball and, it wasn't baseball I'm sure, but maybe just those two. [I seem to remember the coupon book was around 20 dollars for all the games all year.]

**ES: Did you participate in any of the women's intramurals?**

LM: No but our sorority was in one of the intramural track meets and I remember we were paired with the Betas. I was somehow involved. I probably couldn't think of good excuse to get out of it, and I had to be in that, and so this Beta did the running and I stood there and I had a needle. I can't remember whether ran, he must have run with the thread, not the needle. He would run with the thread. I'd have to thread the needle for him and then he'd run back again, and we won. I don't know how that happened, but anyway, I'm a fast needle threader. That's what I remember about the intramural sports [*laughter*], which isn't much. [There was a picture in the *Illio* – a group of snap shots and we were in it.]

**ES: How do you think the Depression shaped student activities on campus? Did it hinder things, or affect the dances or, do you think people were as able to be involved in student activities?**

LM: Well you see, I was there at the beginning of it, so I don't know what went on ahead of me. I don't have anyway of knowing what was going on. I just sort of was in there. At the beginning of the Depression and—

**ES: What was it like in the early 30s? Did you get a feeling that people were hit hard by the Depression at school?**

LM: I think so, yeah, but no one threw money around, like they do now. I mean, nobody did. I mean you were never...the dining room table was always full. It wasn't a case of maybe 3 coming for dinner today, the others being late and eating someplace else. You know that didn't happen. If you ate out it was a rarity, and that sort of thing. I mean it was just a different world. It's not like it is now, where people do whatever they want at the drop of a hat. You planned ahead. I remember two girls were trying to let their hair grow, and so everyday I would do it up in the back for them, with bobby pins and one thing or another and try to make it hold until lunch you know. I did that for about a month, until they had it grown out where they could do it

themselves, just two of the girls in the house, because I liked to do that sort of thing. Afterwards they said, “Oh we were going to,” get you a present because I had been so diligent with her hair, and what would you like,” and I said, “Oh, I would dearly love a certain kind of lipstick.” And so we went downtown and they bought me this lipstick and I think it cost all of a dollar and quarter, you know, Lentheric, that’s what it was, that was the brand name. That was a big deal. I had that lipstick for years, you know, I couldn’t get rid of it, because it was such a big thing to me to have them buy me that lipstick for a dollar and quarter (maybe less). That was a “dollar and quarter” I didn’t have to spend or I wouldn’t have spent it. That type of thing was the norm. You don’t see that anymore.

**ES: Did you make your own clothes or—?**

LM: Oh yes, oh yes, I made all of my own clothes. My mother made some of them and vacation time we’d make more. I did that. Coats also.

START OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

LM: May Fete was the first weekend in May, on Saturday. They’d have a may pole, and girls would dance around it in costumes, and I think those girls were probably in dance, or in activities, I mean PE. I think they probably were PE girls, although I don’t know. Maybe anybody could do it. But I always thought that’s the way it was—and then they had, at the same time, they had flower show for the Mother’s Day weekend because that was the day that the mothers all came, because the regular Mother’s Day is the second Sunday, so they would come down on the first Sunday, and that was Mother’s Day weekend.

**ES: So those two events were planned for mothers more or less?**

LM: Yes, yes, and they had this flower show inside. I’m trying to remember where it was and I just can’t, but it was in some auditorium or another. Then there was Shi-Ai sing, and the stunt show (that weekend). Those were sorority things, and Phi Mu incidentally won two of those, the stunt show and Shi-Ai Sing, while I was down there.

**ES: Where were those held?**

LM: In the auditorium. Oh the stunt show, no, the stunt show, what is the building next to the auditorium to the right, if you face—?

**ES: You mean Folienger Auditorium and if you’re looking towards it from the Quad, to the right would be Gregory and Lincoln.**

LM: Lincoln Hall, that’s it! Gregory wasn’t there when I was, it was Lincoln Hall. They had a theatre and that’s where the stunt show took place. And Shi-Ai sing, I’m sure was in the auditorium.

**ES: And who attended those, a community thing?**

LM: Anybody that wanted to, yeah, anybody that wanted to. You didn't sell tickets or anything. The thing that we took first prize in was "an evening in a night club," and we had our members, we had a quartet, and Dick Cisne, is the band that played for all of them. When it came our turn, we had a pianist in the group and she took over and she played the piano in the Dick Cisne band, for us to do our thing on the night club. We had a drunk and she was so good. Then we had couples dancing, you know, I mean I wore a tuxedo [laughter]. We had a lot of fun. And what else was it that I was going to tell you?

**ES: You said there were band concerts?**

LM: Yes, the concert band played, every Wednesday at 7 o'clock, and we got to walk on the grass. If you wanted to, you could take a blanket and sit on it, but most people didn't just sit on the grass.

**ES: That was on the Quad?**

LM: Yes, right in front of the auditorium. They were on the auditorium steps, and then they'd end up with a Sousa march, that would be their final thing. "The Cassons go Rolling along," I can hear it yet. Oh I didn't tell you about the ice cream store in the Ag Building?

**ES: No.**

LM: Well, there, in the old Ag Building, they made ice cream, and you could go in there and for a nickel you could get the greatest, biggest most wonderful ice cream cone you ever had. So when my daughter went down there I said, "Don't forget to go in there and try their ice cream," and she said, "You're really out of it!" She says, "No one knew what I was talking about." So I don't know how long that went on. But it was wonderful ice cream. I guess that's about it, I think. Every Sunday night we'd have to go out for supper because we didn't have anybody in the...I mean we didn't have Sunday night's supper, so we'd go to Kamerers, every Sunday night and have chili and hot chocolate. That was just a block and a half from where we lived. The one on Lincoln. I guess that's about all. Oh I was going to tell you about the big bands. Robeson's roof, that's what I was going to tell you about. Okay, well we had bands like Duke Ellington, and Wayne King, and Paul Whiteman, and Kay Kaiser, and all those big bands. They'd come for different dances they'd have, I don't know, can't remember where they had them, but they weren't school, they were contracted for the Senior Ball, Military Ball, etc. They also had star, what did they call it, Star Course – these were big names in entertainment. They probably still have that, I imagine anyway. They had a lot of dance halls and Robeson's Roof was open in the summer time, and they had dances on the roof, Friday and Saturday. I don't know if they still do that or not. I would imagine they would have some codes, that would not allow any such thing to go on anymore. I can remember dancing the Clyde McCoy, he was playing the "Sugar Blues," and I thought, oh, isn't this wonderful. The stars are all out, you know. And the blossoms fragrant, it was really something.

**ES: Was that a dress up affair?**

LM: No, that was a public dance hall, that wasn't a college dance hall, anybody could go to that.

**ES: Did you have to get dressed up?**

LM: Oh yeah, we all wore long dresses then and high heels. The boys wore suits. I mean it was summer dress up type stuff. I think I've got everything covered here that I wanted to tell you.

**ES: Do you remember black students being on campus when you were in school?**

LM: Very few, very few, there weren't a whole lot of them. But I don't remember being surprised by it or anything. I mean, by having black students there, because we'd had black families in Elgin that everybody thought very highly of, you know, and I never gave it a thought of black or white. We had a lot of Indian students (from India) at the time that I was there, I seem to recall. Not a lot, I shouldn't say a lot. But if I was aware of them, there were probably more than 12 [*laughter*].

**ES: Were you aware of any kind of discrimination, or any problems they experienced?**

LM: No, no. I never saw anything, any discrimination, but I'm sure there probably was. But if you don't know what it is, you don't see it, and I didn't know what it was. I had never heard of discrimination. It was, "so the people are black," you know, for me they were the same as we were.

**ES: Did Jewish students have a problem with other students on campus?**

LM: I don't, I don't, I shouldn't think so because with my close acquaintance with this Jewish girl, she never seemed to have any problems. I didn't know the difference. The only difference was that she was a Jewish girl. I didn't think of her one way or the other except that was where she lived. I told you I was green. I could have seen things and never noticed it, and never realized what it was. So I don't, I just can't say about that. I never saw any, or heard anybody talk about Jews with, you know, a derogatory manner.

**ES: What about Catholic students? You mentioned there were Catholic students in your sorority?**

LM: Well, yeah, same thing there. We had me and it was just that she was Catholic, that was all.

**ES: I know I mentioned this to you before, I'm interested to know if you were aware of things going on outside in the world, politics or what the Depression situation was like? Did you keep up with the news through the radio or—?**

LM: Well we had the *Tribune* every morning, the *Chicago Tribune* and we had the *Daily Illini*, so what news was in the paper, we had it. I don't remember discussing it. I'm sure I thought about it, to myself, but I can't remember ever talking about it to anybody. [Radios were mostly for music.]

**ES: Do you remember much about campus politics? Were students interested in running for politics?**

LM: They had a lot of politics for student affairs. But I never saw any politics for national, that I was aware of. But they had had a lot of to do over the elections and also they had a lot of beauty contests, where the different sororities would put in a picture of their, of what they thought was their prettiest girl, and it would be in the windows around campus, and then people would vote. I've forgotten who voted. I don't remember ever voting but I suppose I did [laughter]. And, they'd have those every year.

**ES: What did the winners receive?**

LM: A plaque probably. I don't know [laughter]. I haven't any idea.

**ES: Was she queen, or was she—?**

LM: No, well I can't remember that. I suppose that we had those too, but I don't remember any queens. But I remember we had these beauty contests because we'd have the pictures around that we'd see. Then you voted as to which one was—

**ES: Was that mainly in the sororities?**

LM: Yeah, I think so, but independents would do it too. They'd just be at a different time.

**ES: Oh I see. Did you go through Commencement ceremonies?**

LM: Yeah.

**ES: Did your parents come down for that?**

LM: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

**ES: Do you remember anything about that?**

LM: It rained [laughter].

**ES: It rained [laughter]?**

LM: No not very hard, but it rained a little bit while they were outside, because it was outside. They had it in the football stadium. I can remember my granddaughter's more than I do my own.

**ES: What did you do immediately after graduating. Did you try to find a job or—?**

LM: I don't think so. I just don't recall that period, that summer. That was the last summer I spent with my best friend, who took off for San Francisco in September, and then went to Hawaii and was brought there during the War, because no one could get out. So she was there for about

8 years. But, she and I doing things together seemed more important than anything else and besides it didn't cost anything, you know, I mean we would go for walks and play tennis, that type of thing. [She went to Northwestern.]

**ES: So you stayed on campus that—?**

LM: Oh no not on campus. I was home. I went home.

**ES: I see.**

LM: But, I don't remember anything about that summer. But later, my father had a friend that took me on as a, I don't know what I was, a sort of reporter or something for some little paper that he was trying to get started. Well of course, nothing came of that. I mean people were trying all sorts of things those days.

**ES: This is back in Elgin?**

LM: Uh-huh. But I don't recall anything earth-shattering that happened.

**ES: What did you finally end up doing?**

LM: Well, in the fall I went to the school of fashion – Ray School of Fashion Art -- on Michigan Avenue in Chicago for a year and studied dress design and I thought I was going to do that. But I couldn't, the recession was still on, or Depression, and so, I couldn't get a job. Nobody would hire me. I would go to these big design places in Chicago and they would say, “where did you *work* last,” you know? That type of thing and so I gave up on that. Then it was shortly thereafter that I got a job with a friend of my father's who was the city physician, and his right hand left, so I took her job and stayed there. Then I got married and moved to South Bend, and time went on [*laughter*]. I had two girls that went through it again.

**ES: And both of them went to the University?**

LM: Sure, they didn't have any choice. They were brought up on “Oske-wow-wow.”

**ES: How do you think your education has influenced your life?**

LM: Oh well I would say it has made me what I was, what I am. I sound like I didn't get anything out of college but I really did. It wasn't all out of books, you know. So, I couldn't say enough for what my parents sacrificed to put me through school, and it was their idea. I was brought up that way from the beginning. When I was little, they would talk to about me going to college. So, because they hadn't had the opportunity and I was going to be the first one, my mother and father were 40 and 50 when I was born. So they were elderly by the time I got through, and the world was different for them, as well as for me.

**ES: Well, thank you do you have anything else that you would like to say?**

LM: I'll probably think of it after you've gone.

**ES: You can always write me [*laughter*].**

END OF INTERVIEW.