

**University of Illinois Student Life, 1928-38:
Oral History Project
Florence Mary Hood Miner '29
Castle Rock, Colorado
November 6, 2000**

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 Florence Hood Miner an alumna from the Class of 1929. We're at Mrs. Miner's home in Castle Rock, Colorado and the date is November 6, 2000.

Could I ask you first to just state your full name and your birth date?

Florence Miner: Well my name was Florence Mary Hood, and my father was a doctor and graduated in ought three from medical school in Chicago of Illinois, so I'm a second generation Illini. And I grew up in and went to Morton High School there in Cicero, Berwin the two at the time and I always wanted to go to Illinois to school. And everybody tried to talk me into doing different things, and somebody said, "Whatever you do don't go to Northwestern, because there aren't very many men there and you either have to be very rich or very beautiful to get a date." So I decided that that was not for me. But, I heard that Illinois there were three men to every woman when I went to school. So that sounded like pretty good odds, because I'm sort of tall and skinny and not exactly sexy at the time and didn't have all those, the short, cute girls always had the dates. So I thought, boy three for one. Well when I got there I discovered that one of the three couldn't afford to date, another one you wouldn't care to date, so that put you down to one on one. So wasn't as easy as it sounded, but I'll tell you, once you're in the sorority there you can have blind dates up to your eyeballs, because fraternities always called up, "We need three guys, we've got three guys here that need dates," and you got dates, blind dates for everything, so you couldn't miss.

ES: I see, so that's why you wanted to go to Illinois, because of that [laughter]?

FM: No not really, I don't know why I wanted to go to Illinois, but I always wanted to go to there.

ES: Did your father have good memories of Illinois? Did he talk about his school days?

FM: Well, no because you remember he went to medical school there in Chicago.

ES: I see.

FM: And it was hard stuff. He had to work his way, he worked at night for the Bell Telephone Company, and luckily, he got started buying AT&T, and I'm living on it right now [laughter]. So he was pretty smart about that.

ES: Did you have brothers and sisters?

FM: I had one brother, and he went to Illinois for two years and then went, came back to Chicago to medical school.

ES: What is your earliest memory of the University, do you remember your first day there?

FM: Oh yes, it was terrible because I went at the last minute. I was going to go a Junior, the local Junior college, and then at the last minute, a friend of one of my classmates was going, and she persuaded me and her family persuaded my father to let me go. So we just sort of went, you know, without any clothes, without anything. The thing I remembered getting was, I wanted lounge rope and pillows for my bed and that's all I remember having, so we had to go down and register at the last minute and luckily my high school grades, I was a student in high school I could take anything, almost anything I wanted to take. So I took a Liberal Arts course, took twenty hours, my freshman year. Imagine. But I thought I was pretty smart. Well I discovered that everybody who came there thought they were pretty smart.

ES: What was registering like? Where did you do that at?

FM: Oh it was, oh God it was terrible you had to stand in line out at the Armory and the gym and various places. And you'd have to line up to get the professors you wanted, of course I didn't know anybody my first year I just took anybody that I could get. After that you got real fussy and you prayed that you register early so you could get the ones you wanted.

ES: How did you find housing?

FM: Well, then we went to the believe it or not the YMCA, YWCA and they had a list of places, and so my friend and I run around and looked for you know. In those days there were a lot of boarding houses where you could sleep and eat and everything. So we went there and I met a lot of great gals there.

ES: So you lived in a boarding house?

FM: Yes.

ES: For your first year.

FM: Yeah.

ES: I see.

FM: And then, in my gym class there were two darling Delta Zeta's and they, we had more fun, they were actually the cutest girls of the whole house. One of them was a real beauty, and they invited me over, and I was rushed informally. So I joined, in those days you couldn't sign up for anything, they had to find you. And as I tell the sorority girls now, they have it so lucky, because they get a list of everybody, but there you had to know somebody, and that's how you found.

ES: I see.

FM: But even, in those days though, the only reason you weren't in a sorority was because, one, you couldn't afford it, or two, you hadn't been asked. Because we had forty sororities there at the time, would you believe it? And over a hundred fraternities when I was in school.

ES: What, what was that like, what was sorority life like? You said you were rushed, what did that involve?

FM: Oh they'd invite you over for dinner, mostly dinners for informal rush. But for regular rush they'd have breakfast, and lunches and dinners at the houses. Everything of course was always at the house.

ES: Did you go to a number of them--?

FM: No, I just went to the Delta Zeta's and they asked me to join. In fact this, Elizabeth Crew grew up in Minneapolis, was the one. We met on a rainy day up in the parlors of the Bowlin's Building, that was the big thing, it was always open. So they invited me there, and they asked me to join.

ES: I see, when did you, did you live in the house after that?

FM: No, the next year.

ES: The next year?

FM: This was spring. So then I lived in the house.

ES: I see. How did the Greeks and the independents on campus get along?

FM: Not very well [laughter].

ES: What was the conflict?

FM: Well I guess the Greeks thought they were better than anybody probably, and they had the women's groups that were groups that you could belong to and they had Greek names like Io and Euriticy and that type of thing and you would be asked to join one of those and, so you met quite a few people.

ES: I see. Did you get a sense of how the school administration viewed the fraternities and sororities? Were they in favor of them or--?

FM: Well they kept hands off pretty well because of course when you realized that fraternities and sororities were the ones that did things for them, they could call on them.

ES: What types of things did they do?

FM: Well, just like when Maria Leonard wanted something, she'd call and ask one of the soror--, and see we were very big with having them over for Sunday dinner all the deans you know.

ES: Oh you did?

FM: And faculty members. You always, you know that's the way you got brownie points, because I can remember my Political Science teacher was, became, we had patrons too, and patronesses, and he came, and we had to have chaperones for our dances. So you had to have two faculty members, so that's why you always, you know, you got them to come to dinner and then you got them to chaperone your parties.

ES: I see.

FM: Very good. And in those days being caught in a fraternity house when it was not chaperoned was instant dismissal. Can you imagine? And only time you could go was when it was a chaperoned affair, if they had something, they always had a chaperone.

ES: Could you talk about the dances the fraternities had?

FM: Oh they were wonderful. You see you had two places you could go on Fri--, well outside the movies. You could always go to the movies. But, every Friday or Saturday night you could go to a fraternity or sorority dance, and you went not only to your own, you'd go to your dates and you'd have friends and they'd invite, we were across the street from the Kappa Sig house, so I had friends there, you know. And, we'd always go to their dances and you'd trade around. And then there was Illini Hall where you could dance, you pay to go there every Friday or Saturday night. You went to the movies. But the dances were the big thing. So if you were lucky you got to go to dances Friday and Saturday night.

ES: Were the fraternity dances open to everyone or were they just for the--?

FM: Oh no, oh no, oh no, just your friends.

ES: I see.

FM: Like for instance my roommate would be dating a fraternity and she would be going to their dance and so they'd invite me and my date. So that's how you could—and sometimes you made two or three a night. You'd go around, just have a dance for one and then you'd go to somebody else's.

ES: Did these dances have food or--?

FM: No, no, it was just—

ES: It was just—

FM: They'd have punch and cookies kind of and that's as far as it went. And, but you always got a, but unless you were dating a member you didn't get one of the darling little—

ES: Programs?

FM: Programs, that's it.

ES: How did you get one of those?

FM: Well they, your date would have them, and your sorority you'd have them. And in those days you were allowed to have four dances a semester. And you had to go through the dean's office and register them, and register the chaperones, all very perfect you see. And I was Social Chairman, and the only reason you couldn't have four was because you couldn't afford it. So the big expense was always hiring an orchestra, and luckily one of the boys on the Illini had a small combo and he wasn't very expensive, and so I got him to play for all but our regular formal. So that's how we go to have four dances. But then if we had a formal, usually it was a dinner too.

ES: You talked about rolling up the rug?

FM: Oh yes because nobody at campus and in those, I mean, nobody had the lay down carpets in those days, so your rolled up the rugs and danced, you know. Somehow where you'd go through the living room, the dining room or it depended on how the house was built. So that's how you danced, and in most of the houses, they sort of all ran together. They'd have a two living rooms and a dining room that all sort of ran together so you could get a lot of people to dancing. And look, fraternities and sororities weren't as big either. We were one of the bigger houses, but we only had forty in our chapter. And I think now they had 150, so of course they have to hire out now.

ES: What was rooming like in the sorority house? Did you share rooms?

FM: Oh yes, you had the rooms. We had 200-room usage and they were small and you slept in the dorm. And you would sleep together to keep warm in the winter, because it was cold, and you put your coats, put coats all over as covers too to keep warm. It got cold! But I always remember the chimes, because that's how you could tell what time it was in the middle of the night.

ES: Where was Delta Zeta located?

FM: Well at that time they were across from the Kappa Sig house; 810 South Third Street. We bought the house from the Phi Kappa Sig's who built a new house. And then after I was out of school we bought a house that, one of the Jewish sororities had gone kaput, so we got to buy it, and when I think how little we paid for this big gorgeous house in those days of course this was tough. This was the Depression, so things were cheap.

ES: But when you were in school it was on Third street, that's right, that's where you lived?

FM: That's right. And the favorite thing was, you'd get a telephone call and of course in those days pledges had to always answer the phones. Now that's hazing, you can't do that. And you can't do anything now, they've taken all the fun out everything. But the favorite telephone call was, "Hello, does the Third Street run across, or before you?" And you'd say, "Yes." "Well you'd better go out and stop it before it gets too far away." I mean the boys thought of all these crazy things, they thought that was fun.

ES: Did you have serenades then too?

FM: Not too many, no we didn't have serenades particularly, that came a little later.

ES: What other kinds of things did you do?

FM: We had lots of things, the only time a serenade [happened] was if it was a pinning or something. Not like now, they do it all the time I guess.

ES: What is a pinning?

FM: When you got engaged—you know, you got your fraternity pin. Either that, or they did it at, your, their house dance or your formal, one of the two. And the tradition was that when you got pinned, he had to bring a five pound box of candy to the house and that's how you announced it, with the five pound box of candy [laughter]. And I know they don't do that anymore.

ES: No, no. Do you have any stories about things that happened in the sorority, or people you've dated?

FM: Well, I don't know, sorry to say, all my old beaux now are dead. I've out lived all of them, and only in my dreams do I get to dance again. But I was very lucky, I had a blind date with the captain of the football team. Andrew, I mean captain of the baseball team, who was darling because my roommate was dating some of his fraternity and he didn't have a date, so I got to date him. And he was a very nice guy. And then I also had a blind date with Russ Crane who was the captain of the football team, who's also in the Glee Club, and then he invited me to the Tribe of Illini Dance, where the, all of the men wore their I-sweaters and it was quite a coup, so I was very lucky as I say. Nothing serious came out of either one, but it was something I could brag about.

ES: And you were involved in a lot of other student activities. Could you talk about what you did for the *Daily Illini* and how you got that position?

FM: Well I started my sophomore year just as a reporter. And then when you got to the big thing in the *Illini*, if you were a sophomore and they picked you to be a Junior Assistant then that was great and that got me into Torch, because all the Junior Assistants also made Torch. And, then that was that year, you did that your Junior year. Then your Senior year you got one of the top jobs, and I was the Women's, in those days, the women had one side and the men did another. And the women got to do society news and church news and women's activities and never the twain shall meet. And the men got all the big jobs. So, we met, our editorial things were down in the basement of, what did I say?

ES: University Hall?

FM: University Hall, the one that, I can remember the day that the ceiling fell, so that took care of that. We had a terrible time. And then the commercial part of it was over in the Union. That was when the Union was in the basement and that's where the presses were. And of course only the men did that. Later, after I was out of school, even the women got to be editors. In my day, you know, the line was drawn. Right there. You all worked in the same office, and you all did things together, you just wrote different things. Except once in a while they'd let the women do features, and then you'd get on the front page with a bi-line.

ES: Do you remember some of your stories, some of the things you wrote about?

FM: Well, it was always a joke that I was the fashion editor, and any time there was anything to be done about fashions, why then I'd write those, and it was always a joke. Of course it was interesting enough that years later I got in the fashion field and was a fashion coordinator and did fashion writing too. So it was sort of a precursor. One time I had this brainwave that there were all these cute men on the campus, and I made out a questionnaire and took it around to the different sorority houses and they would fill it out, who was there dream man, and who was the handsomest, and who would they like to

date? And then I compiled them all, and wrote these up. And of course some of the men were very flattered, and the ones that were left off were not flattered, and some of them were embarrassed [laughter], but it was fun. [See attached]

ES: How did, how did you get that job? You were Associate Women's Editor?

FM: Yes. Well see they felt that they needed another assignment, so they had a women's editor, just, that's all before. So then they had that, and they also had a senior assistant, with the Junior Assistants, because we were getting bigger and bigger, and of course this was the only paper, morning paper in town, so it was a town paper as well as a campus paper. But of course I graduated and got talked into getting out of Liberal Arts and joining, because the Journalism department was just new, and I was one the first graduates, and so they talked me into joining in. But you had the same kind of a thing, your prerequisites were the same. Now days you have to have special grades to even get in the Journalism School, I guess, Juniors, but yeah those days, they were happy to take anybody. And so we had a great time because as I say, I sat with men who became quite famous. And at graduation, one side of me was Verne Heath, who was the Heath candy bar people. He was President of that and the other side was Harold Hatchings, who became the Managing Editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. So as I say, maybe I didn't do that fancy, but my friends did, and of course, following in our footsteps on the *Illini* was Hugh Hefner, and Roger Ebert. And lots of times I'm listed between the two of them, so I said, "I'm certainly in great company [laughter]."

ES: How did you get into Journalism, how did you choose that major?

FM: In high school I was on the paper always, on the high school paper. So I always had the writing bent. And I wrote you know, in high school I wrote everything.

ES: I see. So, when did the Journalism School start in this --?

FM: Well this was, I think, my Junior year.

ES: I see.

FM: So that would be 1928 when that, yeah.

ES: What kinds of things did they teach you, do you remember your classes?

FM: Oh sure, we had a Printing and Publishing class and Stew Howe, I remember, sat beside me. Howe and Hood you know. And we learned how to, course in those days, it was line the type, and we learned how to line the typewriter. And I can remember we had to set up type by hand, and one of our test was, they gave you the () thing, and you had to type in so many minutes, and that was pretty fancy when I think. Now of course those type trays are collectibles, everybody's dying to have them. In those days they were

used. And then we had Reporting and we had, we had, even a teaching of Journalism, we had one woman that taught. And so it was probably the same thing. Except now of course, this is before we had radio and television. We had radios, but they didn't have station there.

ES: Do you remember some of your professors?

FM: Yeah, Charlie Allen, taught Publish, Printing and Publishing. He taught all the gritty stuff. And Lawrence Murphy, who was the head of the department. He taught, oh, writing classes. And then there was somebody by the name of Barlow, I didn't like him though, so I don't remember what happened to him. But of course now they have such a big staff.

ES: And you've mentioned before, or we talked before we started the tape about the Ax Grinders Ball, or something that was put on by the Journalism Department.

FM: Oh that was the thing. Sigma Delta Chi was the men's honor--, well professional, it really wasn't an honorary as much a professional, like Theta Sigma Phi was the professional for women's Journalism. Now that is Women in Communication, and they even take men, and of course, everybody takes men and everybody takes women now days. It's another one of those rules, laws that they put in, you have to do both. Thank goodness we did not have to have men in our social sororities. But I can remember when there was a push in for that, and we all of us had to write our Congressmen. Oh we had quite a time, and we defeated that one. Congress tried, but they didn't get very far. But that would have been the death of them. How we got around it was, we were social, we were not affiliated with the universities, so of course that's how they got around it. But I can remember what we went through, an awful lot. That was after I was out of school.

ES: But—

FM: But the Ax Grinder's Ball was given by Sigma Delta Chi, and they invited only prominent people on campus. And it was quite a thing to be invited. And, if you were a member, cause I know I had all sorts of boys wanting me to be their date, or they'd be my date to go, so they'd get to go, because they, you know, they were not in. And the same way with the boys, they could have no trouble getting dates for that because everybody wanted to go. And it was a fun thing, and they put crazy skits on, and they called people up and had you do crazy things and so it was, and as I say it was a very prestigious thing. Even though the whole thing was a joke when you got there.

ES: And did you dress up?

FM: Oh yeah. I can remember one time I went as a tattooed lady and I had spangly costume and they drew pictures on my arms, and my legs, and things. Everybody wore. . . a lot of hobos, that was mostly hobo's stuff.

ES: And you say only the Journalism students could invite people, is that the way it was? Just the men--?

FM: Only, no, no, the people of Sigma Delta Chi.

ES: I see.

FM: It was, they put it on. And then later there was the, I forget the name of it, but the Alpha Delta Sigma, which was the Advertising fraternity had some kind of a fancy dance, ball. And they followed the same things, they listed in the *Illini* ad, if your name was there, cut the coupon, and get invited to come. It was the same thing, their list was only prominent people. So it paid to be in a big activity. Of course all the women were in Women's League. In Women's League the freshman had orange and blue feathers, sophomores had gold feathers, and you just met. Sort of, you'd have programs, but mostly it was kind of get to acquainted, another one of Maria Leonard's ideas.

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

ES: Okay you were talking about the Women's League on campus, could you--?

FM: Every women belonged to the Women's League, and you just belonged, but a lot of people didn't go. But the best way is that in the Women's Building, do they even have a Women's Building anymore? I don't--

ES: No, it's—

FM: It's either gym used to be there, and the swimming pool and everything. But in the parlors, the upper parlors on the second floor, every Wednesday was open house and they had Women's League Tea, and they had the different groups take turns being hostesses. And you served, actually served tea and cookies, and if it's your group, you provided the cookies, and made the tea and served it. And everybody was invited to come and the Deans were always there, and all the officers of the Women's League. And it was a very pleasant thing, especially in the bad weather, because you could go in, in the afternoon and have a nice hot cup of tea and see all your friends and you just went. And if you were a member of Torch, which I was, because I was, from the *Illini* job I had, you had a scarf, and you wore it only on Wednesday afternoons. So you always had to buy, I remember I had to go home and buy a couple of dresses that would go with the orange and blue scarf, because it was pretty gaudy, and you wore that on Wednesday up to these teas, because you were sort of hostesses too. And so it was really a very nice thing. And the Women's League had, they'd have an annual fashion show and then they also had a, oh kind of a stunt show thing that the different groups would do, well you could petition to be in it. And I can remember we did it a couple of years, and then you got prizes, cups and things. And the fashion shows they had different students, and they, I don't know where we got the clothes, probably somebody in town, one of the towns. But they did all sorts of things

like that, so that women were made to feel part of everything. So unless you were just a mugwump, you had lots of things to go to.

ES: Now you mentioned some of the groups within that organization, Orange and Blue Feathers, and Gold Feathers, what were they--?

FM: Orange and Blue were freshman, and you could belong to either orange or blue. And they'd have weekly meetings, and they'd sometimes have speakers or they would have amateur people to do things. And then Gold Feathers you joined, that was a little fancier, you had to be asked, kind of asked, but they asked anybody and that was for sophomores. So that by the time you were a Junior, you were into everything. I mean if you wanted to join things, why, you could it didn't cost anything. But they had initiations and, then the Literary Societies were big too, and they remember as a freshman I belonged to Jamesonian. There was Jamesonian and then they had Ired ones Ioians and different things when you were junior, senior, and of course. The joke of it is they had lots of times programs were musical, () I don't know what I do with musical. And the Men's had Literary Society too, and went on the junior and senior level they competed. They had debates. Not so much a debate as they would send their best people, so it was a nice program. Another thing, you go to so many things free in those days.

ES: And these things are mainly on the weekend, or did you do things throughout the week?

FM: No, no these were during the week. Yeah. Now the weekends were pretty free, those were football games, or basketball games. So weekends were always pretty free and or course the churches were very big in those days, so they had things on Sunday. But this was during the week.

ES: And you were also involved in the Athletic Association?

FM: Well that, oh yes I had a roommate that was very big with it, and you had to belong to that, you had to have points. You had to play on certain teams. And you could, no problem, because they would have first, second, and third team. And I, because I remember I, of course being tall, played basketball, and hockey, field hockey, that was horrible, but we played that, and we played soccer. And also, my sophomore year, you could take interpretative dancing, so you got points for being in all these, and when you had so many points you could join the Women's Athletic Association, which I did, because as I say my roommate practically forced me to do all these things. But it was another way of meeting people and having fun.

ES: Did you have social meetings?

FM: No. But you see that was intramural sports because in those days you didn't compete with other schools. My granddaughter's on the rugby team and she goes all over the state playing, rough stuff.

ES: How were women sports looked at, then by other people, did you have people come watch you play?

FM: Well, well, not much, no. Unless it was intramural, or your group would all come to watch. And you were all, it was just sort of, just played your heart out for fun.

ES: What about May Fetes?

FM: Oh that was another thing that the Women's League put on. And you had try-outs to be a part of it, because every year they had a different theme. And I remember one year I was a judge, and we, anybody who wanted to be in the May Fete had to come and do a few dances or something, you know just steps. And then they assigned you to different things. I remember we did *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*, my one year and so we had all of the little fairies and the bucks and everything, and the costumes were a little weird because everyone had to make their own. And that year they had to pick the leading role and there was one of the girls who, very ballet dancer, and she was going to be Queen Titanya. Somebody said, "Oh your tall, we can have her." And they made me, the rest of my team, they just made me try out. And I said, "Come on you know," because I was big with the interpretative group, and we had Orchesis which you go to join, you were asked to join that. And I was in that too: the dance group. And so I was chosen to be Obran, I knew I'd never seen *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*. I didn't have any idea, and our costumes were not right because I had a king's costume and of course I didn't know that Obran was practically nude, and Titanya was in a ballet tu-tu. But it was nice, it was Mother's Day of course. It was at the stadium, so you all took your mothers to that. That's about all it went. I don't think any of the men were caught dead there.

ES: Another activity I wanted to ask you about was Inter-Scholastic circus.

FM: Oh now the men did that. Of course the women all went to that, I can only remember going to one of them so must have not lasted and the different fraternities did different acts on that. Of course, mostly gymnastic things or stuff that they'd have some of the boys doing things. I don't remember going, but I had a program so I must have gone.

ES: And it was a campus activity, everyone went to that?

FM: Oh yeah, that was and you could go to that. And any group could put in, you know, to do a skit if they wanted to.

ES: What did you do for fun, where did you go to hang out?

FM: Well as I say, it seems we ate all the way through college. We'd have three meals where we lived, then around, after school, in the afternoon you would have Prehn's or one of the other places. One of my dates that took me always in the afternoon was kind of

poor and he would always say, we'd go and he would say, "What kind of a Coke do you want?" Because in those days they were a nickel, you'd have fountain Coke. And, I remember that's how I saw Red Grange. I went to Prehn's on Green. And you'd have, you'd eat, God I'd have malt and a sandwich, and this like 4:00 in the afternoon, and then you'd rush home to eat at night. And then at 10:00, someone would come around to the houses with a basket of stuff, sandwich or apples, or ice cream bars or something. So you actually ate your way through college. Oh, I gained weight. But, you had to walk so much. You know you never had a class in the same building twice. And you'd have to go maybe from Illini Hall all the way down to campus, to the library, or to the Commerce Building, and Ad class there. So you walked a lot.

ES: What did people wear?

FM: Well if you could afford it, you weren't in unless you had a raccoon coat; that was it. And I'll tell you when you had a date, and the boys, men wore them too. And my date had one, and when you got in the back seat of a car, you filled it up, I can tell you, with two raccoon coats. But it was interesting. I can remember going to classes in a silk dress and high healed shoes. Imagine walking along the campus in high-healed shoes and a hat.

ES: Just to go to an everyday class? Wow.

FM: Yeah, just to classes, and I mean, you know, they didn't, in fact you never wore pants because in skirts, being tall I always had to take the male part. And I had to borrow my brother's or my father's pants, because one of them didn't wear pants at all. Pajama pants, that's the only pants that you had. We had to wait for Marlene Dietrick to make them famous, before we wore pants to anything.

ES: You'd mentioned meeting Red Grange at Prehn's, what happened with that?

FM: I said one afternoon I was there at Prehn's and he was there with his date, having something to eat. And of course everybody just . . . you didn't ask for autographs in those days, but everybody would make an excuse to go past their booth, you know to see him.

ES: Was he pretty visible on campus?

FM: No, not a lot. He wasn't very social particularly. He belonged to a fraternity, but he didn't date a lot.

ES: I wanted to ask you a couple more questions about the School of Journalism. I wondered were there a lot of women in that school, it was just getting started, were there many women students?

FM: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

ES: What you want to do with that degree? Did you have plans to--?

FM: Oh yes and it was interesting, when I got out of school, Theta Sigma Phi, in Chicago had an employment sort of an agency like. And they could find jobs for you. And so the first job that I had a chance to do was writing for the Sears Roebuck Catalogue. And I had to present, write up some stuff. And they paid \$25 a week, and my father wouldn't let me take it because I had to go down to the old, original Sears place in Chicago, and it was a terrible neighborhood, so he wouldn't let me do it [laughter]. But it wasn't easy, women had a hard time getting jobs. You wanted to know somebody or do something.

ES: Uh-huh. What was the relationship between students and faculty in the department. Were they fairly close or--?

FM: Oh yes very close yeah. Because they would invite, remember we were small, and they would invite you over to their house and they would have maybe a tea or something. And then you'd invite them over for Sunday dinner, your faculty members. And then they would--, if you were lucky you could get them to chaperone your dances, because chaperones, you couldn't go into a fraternity house, unless it was a function with chaperones. If you were caught in a fraternity house at any time without, if there were not chaperones, you were instantly expelled.

ES: This kind of brings us into rules, what rules were on campus and--?

FM: Well of course you had to be in on a weeknight at 10:00, and midnight on Friday and Saturday, and then only different ones were the big things like the Junior Prom and Senior Ball, and those, and you could stay out until 1:30, image. Your Housemother was there at the door, you know, and turn the, flickered the lights at 10:00 or 12:00, so we had a lot of rules like that.

ES: Did many women smoke on campus?

FM: Oh no, no smoking was terrible, that was next to having an illegitimate baby, practically because they, a lot of the sororities had rules that you were not supposed to smoke at all, so you didn't.

ES: And that was for men and women?

FM: No just women.

ES: The men could smoke?

FM: Yeah, oh yeah, oh Heavens yes. And my husband said that's how he learned how to smoke, when he went to join a fraternity.

ES: How about drinking, was there a lot of drinking with Prohibition?

FM: Well remember there was Prohibition.

ES: Oh sure.

FM: So of course anything you drank was . . . we used to always laugh about the Phi Deltas in the summer making gin, bathtub gin, but then the fraternities of course they found a way around it. Girls didn't unless, unless your date did, very frowned on. But with Prohibition it was not easy, you couldn't go any place and get a drink.

ES: But it was in the houses on the sly?

FM: The fraternities yeah they--.

ES: Fraternities?

FM: They drank this horrible gin, and they put in ginger ale or something [grunts].

ES: Were there rules about cars?

FM: Oh and no cars, you couldn't have a car unless you were a town person. And if you wanted a car for special occasion you had to go to the Dean of Men's office, and get a permit, that you had to have and show.

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

FM: Well he—

ES: Did you deal with him at all?

FM: Well you didn't, you mostly, went to the Assistant Dean, it's like with Dean Leonard, you didn't talk her, particularly, unless you had some big problem, or she called you in for something. And I'll never forget one time, I had a call at the Illini Office that Dean Leonard wanted to see me. And the men took, one of the boys took the call, and everybody in the office was upset. What did she want, calling me in for? Well all it was, was that she was having a tea and wanted to know if I would help with it. And two of them went and waited outside her office for me, and just scared to death, because they sure it was something horrible. So when I came out I looked very grim, so they worry about, and () that was funny.

ES: What did people get called into her office for?

FM: Well I suppose if you had done something horrible, like gone out, if you were caught in a fraternity house of something. The men, if you were with a woman, they would tell the dean.

ES: Now you knew her personally?

FM: Well yes, she liked me for some reason. Well she was always asking me to do things, and you know me, I was always available, and being darling, I knew which side our bread was buttered on, and so of course, when anybody wanted anything they'd have me go and do it. And so she, even after years later I met her, she introduced me, she was at an NPC meeting and I was too, and she introduced me to her friends and she says, "Florence was one of my pearls when she was in school." And of course they never let me live that down, but she was a lovely person. Very pretty, and very interested, and very, her sorority, she was very interested in it.

ES: She, you said, gave freshman orientation speeches?

FM: Oh yes, all the freshman women had to go to it. Orientation session, and she told us how to act with boys, and that's how some of the famous things came up. And then Dr. Etheridge who was the head of the Health Department, she was would talk about the health part. And of course in those days, you know, things that were terrible like, I remember one of the scandals my freshman year, they caught some men out in woods where the cemetery is, with a gal who was a prostitute. And it was terrible because they made her make a list of every man she'd been with be--, for fear she'd had syphilis. And in those days it was, you know, the diseases, now they don't even talk about those things.

ES: Was prostitution a problem in town?

FM: Well that was the only time I ever hear of it [laughter]. Of course, you know, I was one of these goody-two-shoes, so how would I know, we never know about it.

ES: Were the rules protective of women, did you feel that there was double standard at all, between the men--?

FM: Oh yeah because the men could stay out all the time, and the rules for them, they could do anything they wanted. You know they didn't have to come in.

ES: Did they have an orientation as well?

FM: No. Heavens no, they didn't do that for the men. Just us women had to be protected.

ES: Another thing I wanted to ask you about was diversity of the student body and how groups got along, African-Americans on campus, Jewish students.

FM: There were a lot of Jewish fraternities and sororities, and never the two didn't mix, they didn't date each other. But they had there own fancy groups. They had their own rush for sororities and the fraternities. So you didn't mix, and we also had Catholic

fraternities and sororities, however, they mixed, they were not--. Although lots of times they were told to date the Catholics. But—

ES: The Jewish students didn't mix by choice or there just wasn't--?

FM: Well in those days, I suppose, we just didn't, you know. And we had no members who were Jewish, they had their own groups and we had our groups. I mean socially we did things together, but we didn't date.

ES: What about the Black students, I know () in fraternities and sororities.

FM: There were none, there were none then.

ES: There weren't many?

FM: I mean very few, very few. And they were so few, you know. Of course they weren't mixing at all, but there were so few of those students. In fact I only remember one couple. I met her in a class and then I met her boyfriend who was also colored. And as I say, of course, there were no, the Asians were very few, and they had one fraternity they called the International Group that took all of them in, the men. It was more of club then.

ES: Cosmopolitan?

FM: Cosmopolitan, that was it, I knew, but that was the only, there were so few. Now a days it just amazes me to go into group and see everybody. You don't know what you're going to see. There's no difference made any place, which is a good thing.

ES: How about the physical surroundings of campus, what did campus look like?

FM: Well of course there weren't, we didn't go so far out. The Library was built and the Commerce Building and the Ag Building, and those were brand new when I was in school.

ES: Where was Journalism, where was that held, the department?

FM: Oh that, that was in the same place we--.

ES: They did?

FM: Yeah. Well no, they didn't have a building, we just met in, our classes were all in University Hall, and it wasn't until I was out of school that they got, they took over what used to be, I think the English Building.

ES: Where your classes mainly on the Quad then?

FM: Oh yeah they were all in University Hall.

ES: University Hall?

FM: Yeah, everything was in there. It seems like you had every other class was in there.

ES: What was the Student Union, was that a meeting place for people?

FM: There wasn't, there really wasn't one.

ES: Sure, I thought there was a Union in the basement?

FM: Well yeah there was, but it was very small, and it was in the basement, just a few rooms. And the YMCA and the YWCA were very big there, those were meeting places. And of course they were real handy right there on the camp--, across from the campus you see.

ES: Where did you study?

FM: Well you could go to the Library and, or you studied in your room, I could never study in libraries that bothered me. But the library used to, is what the Law School is now, [Altgeld Hall] that was the library. So it was right handy, until they built the new one.

ES: Do you remember Commencement, what--?

FM: Oh do I, how could I forget my own because it was supposed to be in the Stadium, and it rained that day.

ES: Oh.

FM: So they used to have them out there. And so they had to have in the men's gym. And all graduates sat on the main floor, on the basketball court as it were. And then, all your relatives sat up in the balconies. But it was pretty crowded and we could only have so many seats, in the Stadium you could have all you wanted.

ES: Did your parents come?

FM: My mother came, and her best friend when she taught school, who I was named after came. But there weren't too many parents there, like they are now. Of course it's bigger, you know, you can have more people.

ES: What did you do immediately after graduation, this was 1929?

FM: Well now, that's another story [laughter]. When you get into the Depression then I can work that in there.

ES: Sure, sure. Do you want to go ahead and talk about that?

FM: Well now with the Depression, I was looking up dates and when I graduated that fall, my father was great for taking automobile trips; that was his hobby, always every year a new car, and a big one. And so we drove to New York, and this was 1929, of course the fall, and, or it must have been August and September, and when we were there, my mother and I bought, each bought a new fur coat. And we got reason that they're important. When we got back, my father had to pay for them, so he had to sell some of his AT&T stock, he did, to pay for the bills for the trip. And October of that year, was the Crash, and he always said, our fur coats were free, because he didn't have any stock after that.

And he was the director in the bank, and when Franklin Roosevelt closed all the banks, that was a very tense time in our family because my family, because my father, they, and all the Democratic banks got to open right away, but because all of our boys were, my men were rugged Republicans they had to go down, and my father was there past midnight, when he came home he was really beat and he said they went through every loan they had, they had everything they had, and they all had to come up with money, and here again he had to come up with some money, luckily he had it. And just like he came up with money for the Bears football team. And so we did that, and then, so then I can remember the Depression was so bad because we had somebody, my father was still doctor and they paid cash in those days, so we weren't hurting. He was always hiring people and we had somebody with, a man whether had been a school teacher and was a college graduate, and he was a handy man who worked for us, and then we redid our house, we added on to it, and we hired friends of his, because there was no building, no one had any money.

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

ES: Now you said your father was a medical doctor, but he was also involved in the Chicago banks?

FM: He, no. The Cicero State Bank was started by a friend of my father's, and he got the people in town, the business people, to put up some money so that he could start this bank. Well, there wasn't a bank in town, so of course we needed it. And, the Western Electric which was the part of the Bell system, that manufactured all telephones, was right across the street from the bank, so of course we thought that was great idea, my father did, I didn't know. So he put up some money and was the director in the bank. And did I tell you about George Halas?

ES: No.

FM: And one of the things, George Halas who was graduate at Illinois, wanted to start a pro-football team, but he didn't have any money. So he came to the bank, and asked if he could borrow money, no way could they figure out how that work into the banking rules of a loan. So some of the directors put up the money, of which my father was a director, and he put up some money to loan, and they loaned the money, to George Halas to start the Bears. And of course after they got Red Grange, they sold tickets like wild fire, and he paid back every penny that they borrowed, but George Halas was a great guy, and never forgot favors. And my father had a season pass at all the Bears games for the rest of his life, and then my brother got the season ticket. And they got box seats for any game they wanted to go to. So it just shows you, you throw bread on the water and it comes back cake. I wish I were so lucky like my father was. Because my father was pretty astute. And of course all the stock my father is just worth ten times what it was when I inherited it.

ES: So after, after the crash you said the Depression didn't affect your family as badly as--?

FM: No, no not at all because my father was a doctor and they paid in cash. And in those days doctors didn't have nurses or office girls, he just had himself so it didn't cost him, it wasn't like the doctors now days.

ES: And what did you do after you graduated?

FM: Well, you talk about not skipping the graduation, another friend of mine, another roommate of mine wanted to teach French and she couldn't get a job because she had to have foreign experience. So her family, her father was Vice-President of the Pullman Company. It didn't affect him either, he was lawyer. And so they wanted her to go to Paris, so they came out and talked my family into sending me too. So I went in 1930, I went, and this is the Depression, I went to Paris and lived there for a year, went to school there, and she did. And I studied dress designing and the I wrote some articles too. Luckily I had people I knew and they, in the United States who recommended people there, it's who you know, you know? Not what you know. So I was there a year, and then I came home, and I wanted to do that business instead of the Journalism.

ES: I see. What, where did you work when you came home?

FM: Well right there in Chicago, and I did dress designing. And then I went to Detroit, and worked there, for the big stores and that was the most fun. Of course that was the War, I really did think, in the middle of everything. And that was the World War II, and of course Detroit was the place to be because everything was made in Detroit and everybody came to Detroit.

ES: You mentioned that some of your friends in the Journalism department went on to do great things, who were some of those people? Who were some of those people, did you stay in touch with?

FM: Oh yes, well Harold Hutchings, () Hutchings we sat beside each other. He went on to be managing editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and Vic Sharless, who was only a reporter when I was in school, he was one of the campaign managers for Adlai Stevenson when he ran against Eisenhower and I can remember election night, watch--, listening to the radio and he came on and he said, “This is Vic Sharless and I’m for Adlai Stevenson and I’m conceding.” And I thought, Vic, of course, was a real handsome boy, all the girls wanted to date him. So a lot of the boys went on to do things, and of course Frank Schooley went on to be head of the TV—station, and the radio station first on that. And so many of them did very well. The men did so well, none of the women did, at all well. None of them did anything.

ES: They didn’t go on in the field?

FM: No they all got married and that was it, in those days you got married, period. Yeah.

ES: Did you get the sense that they wanted to go on, or--?

FM: No.

ES: They were just interested in writing.

FM: No, no, I don’t think they ever wrote anything. And some of them I was amazed, they never did anything in the field at all. But there weren’t a lot of jobs for women, so there you were.

ES: Did most of the Journalism students work on the *Daily Illini*?

FM: Yes. No they didn’t all. That’s all, I don’t know why they picked probably because in high school they wrote on the high school papers, that’s why they did it.

ES: You mentioned earlier about having to go through and interview for your--.

FM: Oh for the Illini job.

ES: Yeah, talk about that.

FM: Yeah, when you got to the senior jobs, they had a Board of Control, and made up of directors, and there were four of them. And you had to go and interview all four to tell them why you wanted the job, you know, and what, and there were students, there were two student members. And then the four, well they were faculty and towns people you know. And then you had to interview them, and they voted on, and they came out and gave the jobs.

ES: Was it pretty competitive?

FM: Oh terribly competitive.

ES: People really wanted work on the paper?

FM: Well yeah, because you see here we were, there were seven assistants, junior assistants and all of us were applying for the job. And so there was only one job at the time, and then they decided that the paper was so bigger that they needed another women, so I got that job, but the other four were out, you know?

ES: Was it a prestigious thing to work on the paper?

FM: Oh yes, very much so, not only that, but it was good because you knew what was going on. All the gossip came through there.

ES: Yeah? You'd go out and interview students and write about ()?

FM: Well and, or they'd come in. So of course you went to events you know.

ES: Was it a paid position?

FM: Well that's interesting. You got yearly salary and the men, of course, the reason Frank Schooley didn't want to be Editor, he wanted to be News Editor, is because it paid more, not I don't know probably paid all of \$500, and I was surprised when I got a salary, because I got \$150 for the year, but that was a lot of money.

ES: Yeah.

FM: Cause it only cost you like \$1000 to go through school, a year. So, I got the thing about the editor, I think it was \$150, either that or \$250, I think it was \$150 though.

ES: For the year.

FM: And they paid it in a lump sum I think [laughter].

ES: Oh wow, so you couldn't rely on having it throughout the year [laughter]?

FM: No, no, no, no.

ES: Well there are a couple of alumni that you knew that are prominent in our program, I was wondering if you'd talk about Clyde Johnson and Wilson Heller?

FM: Oh Clyde Johnson, no Clyde Johnson was the News Editor, that's the second in command to the Editor, the year I was Junior Assistant. And he was a tall, handsome boy, very nice boy. I think he went, didn't he work for Stew Howe? And Stew Howe

was a kind of Literary Editor, he did book reviews and things. And we'd get, well I got a couple of free books, you could review the book and you got the book free, and they had a magazine in those days, that they put these things in. And he was in some of my classes too, although he graduated the year before me. And he was Kappa Sig and lived across the street. And Wilson Heller, I'll never understand how you got his papers, he was a Pi K A I think or something and didn't go to Illinois. Wilson Heller was an entrepreneur of a first order, he had this thing where he, supposedly helped fraternities and sororities. And you paid him, and his, but his big thing, I don't know if you have any letters that he sent out to people, you paid to get his letters. And if you were on his good side, you were great, and if he didn't like you, that was it. And he would try to get secrets from people, he was pretty slimy about it. And he would come to your meetings, he'd find out when you were having your council meetings in the sororities, I don't know about fraternities, but the sororities, and I'd check with the Delta Gamma's and he did the same thing with them. And he'd just appear at your meetings and sit, want to sit in on them. And of course, we always knew that when he was there, don't talk anything but nice things, you know. And then of course, I don't think he ever got married, but he would come into your meetings and he would look around, and whoever was the youngest, cutest one, he'd go sit beside them. In fact I asked one of our gals, who became National President, I said, "Do you remember Wilson Heller?" "Yeah," she says, "I was the one of the one's that he came to sit beside and kind of oogled up to." So you know, so we were beware of him.

ES: And you also knew Stewart Howe?

FM: Well, Stewart of course was in classes with me, and he worked on the *Illini* my Junior year, and, I remember doing some books for him, they weren't very fancy. We didn't get Hemingway's or anything, like that, we got pretty louzy books to review.

ES: Were the fraternity members pretty prominent on the newspaper too, I mean were there a lot of Greeks?

FM: Well that was very interesting, if you didn't belong a sorority or a fraternity, you did before you got out because this, they were very anxious to pledge all of you. And—

ES: To pledge the people in the--?

FM: Yeah, oh yes, because I know another one of the Junior Assistants, was Olive Cox, and her uncle or aunt, I should say, was married to the Head of the Music Department, and she was there on a shoestring, she was working her way, but she joined sorority her junior year too, and all of the others were taken up, everybody. And same way with Carma Golden, she joined a sorority, because this was, they were considered prestigious jobs, so, and the same way with the fraternities, they took in almost all of them.

ES: Did the independents have a hard time getting involved in activities, if you weren't in the ()?

FM: No, no problem at all because you didn't, you know, a lot of the fraternity and sorority members didn't bother, it was very, just social for them.

ES: I see. Well I think asked you everything on my list.

FM: Well good.

ES: Do you have anything, [laughter] do you have anything you'd like to say?

FM: Now you know the minute, the minute you get home you'll think of something.

ES: Sure, sure, I know I will.

FM: But you can go through my scrapbook and anything that's in there that you want you can either take or make copies, because we've got a copy machine in the basement.

ES: Well that's great, well thank you so much.

FM: You're welcome.

RECORDER STOPPED AND THEN STARTED AGAIN

ES: I wanted to ask you one more question that I forgot, well, how did other students on campus, or you and other students view the deans, the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women?

FM: As pretty scary [laughter]. I mean you know, you only went to their offices when you were in trouble, or when you did something you shouldn't do. And you had to go there to get you, to get things, for instance, if you wanted to have a car for special weekend, you'd go and you got a special thing from Dean Turner. You didn't go to see Thomas Arkle Clark because he was sort of a father figure in those days, he was elderly and handsome man, white hair, and he did speeches mostly.

ES: So he didn't have much of a presence with the student body?

FM: Not with the students, and the same of Maria Leonard, you couldn't, she had two assistants, and you usually went to them for the mundane things. But, she was very big with the chaperones. And we had to have them, and she had to interview if you wanted to have a new chaperone. She had to approve of them. So she really kept her finger right in the pie all right. She knew what was going, she was the smart one, she knew what was going on, but of course she was so pure and simple you know, way above, because I can remember we had a girl who was President of the chapter that got married. And she, and I had to go on, I was out of school then, but I was an advisor and I had to go and ask her permission that she could still live in the house. And, well she didn't know that that was a good thing, but she said, "Florence if you'll vouch for her, why she can live in house."

Well of course now who cares about anything like that. But they were pretty sticky all those diff--, well the reason, and I said, "Why?" "Well if you have married women in the house, she might talk to—" she didn't use that word, but she might talk to the girls or something.

ES: And what did the girls think about that, what did they think about her?

FM: They didn't think anything about it, no.

ES: Did they think she was kind of uptight about--?

FM: Oh honey, they thought she was in a dream world. Yes.

ES: Kind of out of touch ()?

FM: Oh very out of touch.

ES: I see.

FM: When it came right down to it, she didn't know what was going on.

ES: You'd mentioned some of her little sayings before.

FM: Well she would, when we would have this orientation, I don't know that that's where it came from but, that's when I first heard it was, "Be careful, with, in wearing black patent leather shoes around your dates because it might reflect your underwear." And then, the one I liked best was if you had to go on a date and so often you'd share taxis to going to dances and things, "Be sure, if you have to sit on your dates lap, be sure to take a pillow along to sit."

ES: And she didn't like red dresses?

FM: Well red dresses she though excited the men. We've come a long way, haven't they though [laughter]? Well it was, you know though, I sometimes think that we lived in a golden era, because it was much easier on girls in those days, you weren't expected to drink, and you weren't expected to go to fraternity houses and sleep over like they do now, and the things they do now, we didn't have to do. I mean it wasn't a temptation, because it was just unheard of. So I think that I'm glad I went to school then, because it was so much easier for a woman.

ES: Why, were women going to college for careers, or what was the expectation, why were women in school?

FM: Oh, I went to get a further education, but of course my mother had a Doctor's degree too, so of course, there was not thought that I wouldn't go to college, but of all, in

my grade school class, I was the only one who went college. And out of high school, well high school was different, by that time, but really it was something that poor people didn't do. You had to have parents who wanted education for their daughters. I always remember when I was in Detroit, we had lots of Jewish customers. And one woman in particular, had this darling girl who was going to Illinois, and I said, "Well how come your sending her to Illinois, why would you go there?" And she says, "Oh because my cousin Hatty sent her daughter and she got such a wonderful husband." They were going for husbands.

ES: Was that true in the 20s too, do you think?

FM: Well of course almost, most of my friends married their college beaux. You know so many of them would get engaged before they left, and then their husbands, their beaux would have a job for a year. They, mostly the men would have good jobs, and then they'd be married, maybe a year out of school.

End of Interview