

University of Illinois Student Life 1928-1938
Oral History Project
Barbara Bischoff Patten – Class of '36
Palatine, Illinois
May 1, 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 Barbara Bischoff Patten, an alumna from the class of 1936. We are at Mrs. Patten's home in Palatine, Illinois and the date is May 1, 2001.

Could you start by stating your full name and birth date?

Barbara Bischoff Patten: Barbara Bischoff, is my maiden name, Patten is spelled P-A-T-T-E-N. And my birth date is August 17th, 1914.

ES: Tell me a little bit about growing up, where you grew up and what your parents did, your brothers and sisters.

BB: Well, I'm an only child, so that eliminates that, and I grew up in essentially Oak Park, that's where I was born. And, a year in Salt Lake City, my father having been transferred there to open an office and get employees and then he came back to Chicago. Then I went to school in Europe in 1925, 26 and 27 in Geneva, Switzerland, in the international school. And, which made me a isolationist for the rest of my life; it did not make me an internationalist. I enjoyed that experience. I was a day student, because I lived with an aunt and uncle and had cousins who also attended the school. There were only 35 students, 17 different nationalities in the school, it grew while I was there. It now has, 3600 students and 3 campuses, but it was started by the League of Nations, for the children of League members who were sent there for maybe a couple of years and then they were going back to their own countries. And now, of course, I came back to Oak Park then finished 8th grade in their system and then started Oak Park and River Forest High School, which I enjoyed very much. Which, prepared me for college completely, that was the way it was geared. And their grammar school had been geared to the fact that you were going to high school and they prepared you, nothing was a shock. Nothing was hard to get used to, everything was the same. And, well and then along, what's the next section?

ES: What did your parents do?

BB: Oh my father worked for the Chicago Northwestern Railroad, and my mother was a volunteer, you know, in the community. Well, then of course we went into the Depression, and around after 1929, when that happened, it was all the very wealthy people at the beginning, but then it started to filter down into the rest of the population. So by the time I was ready to go to college in 1932 things were very stringent, very stringent. I had planned to go to Northwestern, but of course it was very expensive, with those prices at that time. I thought I'd go to the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and commute, you know just go. We didn't call it commuting,

just take the El and go into the city. At a dinner dance at the Oak Park Club, a friend of mine, whom I've known, she was older than I, asked me where I was going to college, and I said, "I can't afford to go." And, she said, "Well, if I can afford to go to college, you can." And I knew that her mother was a seamstress and a single parent, a widow, and she said, "I know Barbara, that you can afford to go." This was Champaign of course. And it was \$35 a semester, which no one would believe today. Absolutely will not believe. I had a lot of fun with that, with my son's generation of mothers who bemoaned the cost of college, when the time came for their children. I would ask them after they discussed this, they were in committees with me and so forth, asking them to guess how much it cost me to go to college, and I would tell them it was \$35 a semester. And they would look at me, and I could tell they thought, well she's pretty old she really doesn't remember. So then I would say, "And it was only \$30 for a boy." Then the feminine movement comes up, "Why, why was it only \$30 for a boy and \$35 for a girl? Now can you imagine, that's \$5." And I'd say, "Well, I'll tell you in those days I didn't care, and I never asked." And I didn't, it wasn't of any interest to me, whatsoever.

That's why I was able to go, my father sent me my house bill, at the Kappa house, and a check once every month. Whatever was left over was my allowance which was never more than \$5 ever. Because there was always something special, you know, that was a little more. But everybody else was in the same boat. I'm sure there were people who were more affluent, but we were all in the same boat, and we weren't allowed to have cars. So if no one has a car it isn't so bad, you know? Of course I did a lot of walking, and because I wasn't allowed to wear high heels in high school, I wore high heels everyday. Going to the Kappa house was a lot of walking, believe me. Are there any questions you want to ask about it?

ES: You mentioned the one friend was going to school. . .were other people going to college during that time that you knew?

BB: Well, not a lot of my friends. Some of them went East to school because their mothers had gone East to school, if that's the type of thing that you're asking about. My beau at that time was at Yale, in the graduate school, in Architectural School. Well I tell you, it didn't matter, I was so wrapped up in the University of Illinois, I didn't care about other people. But not a lot of my friends went. The tragedy of the thing, there were no jobs. I was fortunate. The same person who had insisted that I could afford to go the University of Illinois, she recommended me to Charles A. Stevens on State Street, to work in the college wardrobe. They were reluctant to take me, because it would be in between my freshman and sophomore year, but they did, and I had that job, all through college and the summers. That was quite a bone. Nobody else I knew had a job. They just were not available.

ES: When you were in school, during the school year, did you have a job?

BB: I worked at the department store, is it Robeson's? On Saturday's, until my parents found out, having visited me, and they told me I was too thin. My mother told me I was too thin, and said, "I don't want you to do it, because you're just wearing yourself out." And I was in sense, but I didn't care, you see, it didn't matter. I don't remember what I got but it wasn't much money.

ES: Did you work as clerk?

BB: Yes, a clerk. That was my experience from Charles A. Stevens, which was a wonderful department store, and especially Charles A. Steven's himself. He was a senior, you know he was senior, he was the one who started the store. He was a wonderful retailer. Well he taught us a lot.

ES: Was education important to your parents? Did they want you to go to school?

BB: Well, my father had to start working at 14. My mother had gone through college. She'd gone to Western Female Seminary, which was the sister school of Mount Holyoke, at Oxford, Ohio, which is now part of Oxford—

ES: Miami.

BB: Miami of Oxford, I guess they call it. Yeah. Then she came to Chicago and went to the Academy of Fine Arts after college, and was quite unusual I know because I have a picture here, in the room next to us here, that it was given to my grandmother, by the girls in her graduating class as a wedding present. I know people here, in this town, when I'd say, "That was a wedding present to my grandmother from some of the girls in college graduating class," they look at you aghast and say, "Did your grandmother go to college?" So that was quite unusual. I had never stop to think about, you see. I hadn't even thought about that. But, yes I guess maybe it was unusual. I don't think a lot of my friend's mothers had been to college.

ES: So your parents wanted you to go to school?

BB: Oh definitely, definitely yeah. I'm very glad that I did in many ways. I had a wonderful time, and I hate to say that. I want to say, "I had a wonderful education," but I think college you get an education in so many different ways that you're academic education sort of pales, because you can't point your finger, oh I learned that, or this and that. When you think of the whole experience, you know that I think I told you over the phone when we talked, that volunteerism was pushed by the sorority, and I spent more time on the campus then there. I didn't spend much time in the Kappa house, except to study, because I was always on the campus doing something, other than my classes, or in between my classes and that sort of thing.

ES: When you went to school did you have a career goal in mind?

BB: No. Absolutely not, there were no jobs. I mean, unless you wanted to be a veterinarian, or something very extensive like that. I had no intention. This was the Depression. I had no great goal like that.

ES: It was just to get an education?

BB: Just to get an education and whatever came with it, you know? I started out taking geology, which I enjoyed enormously, and now this is something I'm sure the University found out later. The department asked me, after having straight A's, in all the geology that I was taking, if I didn't want to go deeper into it, and they said, "Take this one course and see," it visible reading

maps, geology and maps. Well, I didn't find it very exciting, so I dropped it. If they'd had advisors like they do today, I'm sure they would have pointed out a lot of reasons why it would have been advisable to go on with it, but they didn't, and took the required subjects and what I thought was interesting. But, that's one point right there, if I had had someone really point out to me, that that could be a career, not necessarily be a geologist, but maybe a secretary or an assistant to you know—

INTERRUPTION

Later on I thought about that, I wish someone had pushed me into that more. I had had some of it in Europe in French. I mean the geology in French. This school was mostly in French, there was some English. We had Francis Parker teachers who came over there. Are you familiar with Francis Parker?

ES: No.

BB: That's a private school here in Chicago. They would go over and teach a year, and I don't know they may have sent somebody over here in Francis Parker to teach. Most of the classes were in French. I had to take geometry in French, but mathematics is very basic, you know. And an English girl, when I would get really stuck, she would translate for me, because it really got tough. But, well anyway, I'm sorry that there had not been someone there to point out to me the advantages of majoring in geology and possibly carrying on with a career. But there wasn't a lot of that done. Remember there was one girl to 19 boys, when I was there. I don't think they paid a lot of attention to the women necessarily having a career, possibly if they wanted to be a school teacher, they might help you a little there, but there wasn't a lot of career. Just think of it now, what careers, there weren't many that were open to women. So no, I just went for the education, and come what may afterwards.

ES: What did you end up majoring in?

BB: History.

ES: In history.

BB: I'm still very interested in it.

ES: What was the relationship between students and faculty members? Did you know faculty outside of classroom, did you have a—?

BB: Well the only time I knew faculty outside the classroom was in private homes, some of the town girls might, their parents might know some of the faculty, and that's really the only way. No there was very little socializing. Of course if they were, you did volunteer work and they happened to be part of. . .which I don't remember the faculty taking part in. I don't remember any running into them. There was something we called Woman's League and I think Dean Leonard had kind of tea or something every Wednesday. And, it was very boring. I finally volunteered rather than stand in the receiving line, I volunteered to wash dishes, in the kitchen.

It was [laughter], and met a lot of people I would have not have met otherwise, which I found very interesting because they were girls that were entirely different than anyone I socialized with on the campus. Now, I don't want to, I'm not making any class distinction here, but they were not the kind that I had associated with, and I found them, I couldn't figure out whether they were enjoying life or not, but anyway, it was better than standing in Dean Leonard's receiving line, so—

ES: Could you talk about here a little bit and Maria Leonard and what your impressions of her were and what her role on campus was for students?

BB: Well, I knew you were going ask me that, I just had a feeling. I dealt with her assistant more, and I'm sorry, I can't remember her name, she was a good deal younger. She and I worked on getting women from Smith college, this was, I think my Junior year. To come and speak about careers. Now this is the first inkling we had about it. Unfortunately, I did not hear, I had made all the arrangements, all the correspondents and everything, and I never got to hear her, because I went to the Yale Prom. So, I was gone that weekend that she came, but Dean Leonard of course was a matronly, can I say that, women who—Now the one thing I remember, and this awful, other than those teas, is, you see we weren't allowed to have cars. And sometimes, our beaus would get a taxi and we would double up, quite a few in one taxi, because the weather would be bad, and we would have an evening gown on or something. She didn't think it was proper for us to sit on boy's laps, so she wanted the boys to bring a *Collier's* now *Collier's* is a magazine, I know it's not your generation, but it was very popular, it would be like *Time* magazine today, see. She wanted them to bring a *Collier's* and that was the one she mentioned, and put it on their lap before the girl sat down, which poor soul, she never should have said it, because it was used for humor, throughout the whole time I was there. It was just made so much fun of it. I don't know what else she could have said, as a substitute, I've never stopped to think about it that much, but it was not the thing to have said.

ES: When did she tell you? Did she have meetings or something?

BB: No that was in the paper. That was in the paper. Of course they just ripped it to pieces, humorously. Of course people would call out on the campus, "Don't forget your *Collier's*!" You know? Oh dear. But we did have a good time, as I told you, nobody had anything. We didn't have any money and there was no fast food. We couldn't have afforded fast food, if it had been there. You ate what was on the table, what your parents had paid for, at least, this is my experience. If you didn't like it, there was almost always peanut butter and jelly on the table [laughter].

ES: What were some of the rules on the campus? You couldn't have cars. Were there other things that students couldn't do?

BB: Well, you know I really don't remember any restrictions other than what your parents would have taught you, and you certainly didn't want to put your sorority in a bad way. Or you know, you wanted their reputation intact. Of course, I didn't drink. Now, my one personal experience with Dean Leonard was this weekend that I had arranged for this women from Smith College to come speak to us, waiting to have my interview with the Assistant Dean, to finalize

everything. A young woman and her mother came out of Dean Leonard's office and this girl was sobbing, and of course her mother just looked, I don't, I did not recognize her. Her mother looked very unhappy. It was no way to go into a Dean's office, I mean, have an interview afterwards. I thought, oh good heavens, what happened? It was Prohibition remember. I walked by Dean Leonard's office to go to the Assistant Dean's office. And Dean Leonard said, "Barbara, I want to speak to you!" Well of course, [*laughter*] I can't think of another time in my life when I had been that frightened in one spot, like I was then, and of course I went into her office and she said, I've never forgotten this, she said, "Barbara, how is it that everyone you date drinks, and you do not?" I was absolutely horrified. I mean, I didn't realize on a campus, I think there were 5,000 students when I started there, that she could keep track of me. I was just horrified, so when I got back to the Kappa house, I called everybody and said they've spies out there [*laughter*]. "You've better be careful!"

But I didn't drink. I didn't care to drink. I had not had anything. My father had asked me please not to do so, simply because he had said, "You will not know, unless you are in someone's private home, what you are getting." It didn't interest me. I was having such a good time. I didn't need any stimulant of any kind, but there were a lot of girls who made some really bad mistakes with drinking. The boys drank spiked beer. Boys that wouldn't even look at you at 8 o'clock in the morning in a class, they were so timid and shy, and they would drink this spiked beer and they would become wild men. I mean you've heard of people climbing the walls, back, you know with acrobatic feats, how do they do that, well this is the way they acted. They were wild, all their inhibitions were gone and everything. And then yet at 8 o'clock the next day, at an 8 o'clock class, they would keep their eyes down and they wouldn't even look at you. I always thought that was very interesting, that it certainly shows you what liquor can do.

ES: Right. When would they drink? Would this be a weekend thing?

BB: Oh yes. No I don't think so. You know we had rules that, sorority had rules, you couldn't be out of the house after 10:30 and during the week. What was it? Was it 1:00? I don't remember. There were certain big dances on campus they let you come in a half an hour later, something like that. It didn't matter having rules, everybody had to do it. When everybody has to do something, rules don't matter.

ES: You didn't feel put upon?

BB: No.

ES: Over regulated, or—?

BB: No, not at all.

ES: Was smoking a big deal on campus?

BB: Well, I—yeah. Someone had asked me about whether I had ever smoked or not, and this is just yesterday. They asked me, and I said, "Yes, but I'll tell you the reason I started smoking was to keep awake studying." I said, "I'd pull my pajama leg up, and put the lighted cigarette

next to my knee.” Then if I went to sleep I’d burn myself. I still have some scars on my knees, that it would wake me up you see. Oh, that’s dumb, I’m sorry to have to tell you.

ES: No, it’s interesting.

BB: But, well, I hadn’t smoked now for 45 years. But at any rate.

ES: Did a lot of the women on campus smoke?

BB: Yeah, there was a lot of smoking.

ES: That was fashionable, or—?

BB: I never thought of it as being fashionable, and when I had stopped at the doctor’s suggestion, I had a neighbor, two houses down, who kept pestering me, kept asking me how I had done it, because I just stopped. She had a very hard time, and he said, “The reason is because,” now you talked about it being a social thing, or, I mean, what was the word you used?

ES: Fashionable.

BB: Fashionable, fashionable. Well, she was also a patient of this same doctor, “Would you please help her,” I said, “I don’t know what to tell her and she keeps questioning me how I stopped.” He said, “Well there are two types of smokers. There are those who are addicted and there are those who it’s just a habit and something to do with your hands.” That’s the only way I missed it, it’s something to do with your hands, you see. But I was not addicted to it, it was, suppose you might say, a fashionable thing, because everybody was doing it, and I, well my father always told me I should sit on my hands, and tell him the same thing all over again, because I use my hands too much. So this was something with my hands [*laughter*]. That’s all it meant to me. If it was going to keep sinus and throat in better shape not to, I was not going to do it. But I guess it was fashionable, yeah.

ES: Did you study—?

BB: They weren’t as expensive as they are now you remember. We never could have afforded to do it.

ES: Otherwise.

BB: Uh-huh.

ES: Did you study late at night a lot?

BB: Oh yeah.

ES: Because you were so busy with other activities?

BB: Yeah that's right, and then I crammed. Now there were girls from girl's schools, girl's prep schools and high schools, who found the 3 hour exams and the assignments for papers and so forth given, 6, 9, 8 weeks ahead, they were just floored with, and they had never had 3 hour exams, and that's where I a credit Oak Park High School. We had all that, it was nothing new to us. But they had a really tough time, getting that.

ES: Making that change.

BB: Meeting that change. It was very difficult, and they panicked. It was panic more than anything.

ES: Were your classes set up with a midterm and final exam, is that how—?

BB: Well, we had a lot of lecture classes, and then they would break up into, you know, if they were five hour classes, we would have a lecture twice a week and then 3 discussion, is, if that's the proper term.

START OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

ES: You said you had lectures and then there were discussions.

BB: Big lecture halls and then we'd have, 3 days a week, like psychology you would have a big lecture, and then you would break up into smaller to discuss what had been discussed and so forth. I did not like those courses, that psychology course.

ES: And then you would have a big final exam, and that would be the 3 hour?

BB: Yeah, uh-huh.

ES: Was religion important when you were a student on campus? The foundations, were students involved in?

BB: Well, I wasn't. The only thing I did, was one time, one beau I had, we used to try all the churches. It was cheap date. Now I'm talking real hard times here. You'd go to church and we'd try a different church every Sunday [*laughter*]. I don't know what his religious leaning was, I don't know. He ended up one of the Vice Presidents at Northern Trust. Well he was ahead of me in class, and then he went to Law School after that. So I don't know what his persuasion was. I dated him well we'd have a date during rushing, because you know a lot of law students don't date, but they didn't, I don't know what they do today, but they didn't then, you saw them at the beginning of the year and that was the end of it. I mean, they were in the library from then on.

ES: Did students on campus have any contact with the President of the University?

BB: No. I don't even know who was the President of the University. I can't see any reason why I would, you know?

ES: He wasn't a very visible—?

BB: I went to, and don't ask me about that Indian, because I'm very strong on that. I used cry when he came out onto the field. I don't understand this I wrote a letter to the University, that was one thing that just absolutely shook me to the roots. Why anybody, I don't care what culture they are, would think that the University was making fun of the word mascot never entered our heads. I'm sorry, but it was a thing that I felt very strongly about when it came out. I do not understand this. We are a product of our history, you can't erase that, it's what it is, and so we revered them as Fighting Illini, and what's wrong with that? Those young men were never did anything disrespectful about that, on the field, ever.

ES: Do you know how Chief Illiniwek was chosen in the 30s?

BB: No, I don't really know anything. You know why would I bother about that, why would I care? See, everybody gets so specific today about every little detail. We just enjoyed it. Like the \$30 and \$35, \$35 for, but that feminine movement see, never, why were boys able to go for \$5 less? Now you see, that's ridiculous. I don't know, I haven't a clue.

ES: Could you tell me, where did you live when you first moved down to Illinois?

BB: Well I went right into the Kappa house after I was pledged, if that's what you mean. I went into some, oh where did I, it was a private home in, I think, Champaign, where she rented out to girls during rushing.

ES: Now when did you rush—before you got to school, did you come down early?

BB: I went down in the summer. This beau from Yale, he drove my mother and myself down and had my physical, you know. Now let's see, had my physical, and then I went to a party at the Theta house. Well, I was there, and this was a summer rush, they called it or something like that. Then I went through rushing. That was an experience.

ES: What did you have to do?

BB: Just be entertained [*laughter*], just be entertained. I know there is a lot of discussion about sororities, and I, frankly, when they start I keep out of it, because my daughter-in-law and my granddaughters did not go to a college where there was sororities and they feel that this is terrible, and they don't like them and so forth. Well, they have a very funny attitude about them, and what it is consists of is misinformation. I mean they don't realize, their aim, they don't realize what their goal is. They have a goal and it is a religiously based, do onto others as you would have them do onto you. Do you understand what I mean? We had to change roommates, I think it was every semester if I'm, yeah every semester, so we would learn to live all types of people. And my daughter-in-law had the same roommate in college 4 years, you see. And she couldn't understand, because, why they got along so well, why, but I said, "Yeah but Susan, I had to learn to live with all types of people and there are all types of people in this world." Of course as I told you, I didn't spend a lot of time, I didn't bother my freshman, you know, as

roommates, because I was over on campus doing YWCA and then StarCourse and well that Dean Leonard's tea, you know. I can't remember all the stuff that we did. But sororities have a, I know there's discrimination in a sense, but there's a lot of people who wouldn't be good sorority material. That I learned because they don't want to be told what to do. They just don't want to be told what to do. In order to be able to live in this world, you have to conform to a certain extent. We'd all be tearing each other's throat out, you know, if we didn't get to do exactly what we wanted to do, and that—

ES: What kind of things did you do as a sorority? What did you do in the house? Did you have activities? You said you did a lot of volunteer work, was that organized?

BB: Not everybody in the sorority did this remember. Not everybody is oriented toward volunteerism. I told you it set the pattern for my whole life, after that. Well, they just said get involved in activities, and I'm glad they did, because I got to know a lot of people, especially the ones who are washing dishes [*laughter*]. People are not, weren't necessarily, now you asked me another interesting question, did I know what was going on in the rest of the world, while I was there? No. I didn't have time to read the paper, really. I stood on the curb on, oh what's that main drag there?

ES: Green Street?

BB: Green Street, when after being in the library to look up some stuff, or with a friend, and there was a big parade. And, I said to my friend, "Who are these people?" I didn't even know what they were demonstrating. They were demonstrating. They were demonstrating against Japan.

ES: Do you remember what year this was?

BB: Well I suppose it was 33, 34 around in there. Because when they didn't want any women to wear silk stockings. They had invaded Manchuria, hadn't they or something like that? Well, I didn't know that they had invaded Manchuria.

ES: Were these students?

BB: Oh yes, so I said to my friend, "Have you ever seen any of these people?" I didn't recognize any of them. And then seriously looked at them and said, she was a Kappa, she was a Phi Beta Kappa material, and she said, "Yes some of them are in my creative writing." Now see this would be another, this was not my, my niche. I was not interested in that type of thing, but, and now she would not have been interested in volunteerism, you understand, there's all kinds of people in this world.

ES: Right.

BB: But we enjoyed each other, she was town girl. We enjoyed each other. So, well we just enjoyed each, and our parents. Her parents were delightful to mine when they would come down to see me and so forth, so it all worked out really nicely. But they were demonstrating about

Japan having invaded Manchuria. Well of course that was the last thing that I was interested in. I told you, having gone to an international school, with all different nationalities, I am an isolationist. My mother had to buy me new shoes when I was over there in Geneva because I was outgrowing my shoes, and I stomped through that shoe store and I said, "I won't wear these, they're European looking and I don't want anybody to think I'm a European." I had lived among a lot of people by that time, and I was an American and I wanted to be an American, and I didn't want to be mistaken for anything but an American, and I still feel the same way. I'm sorry, that isn't political now, that's human being feeling. And, I'm proud of my history. I know there's a lot of people who think we've all done wrong, but you and I have nothing to do with why the slaves are here, and the English brought them to begin with, and so why get all hot and bothered about it. Anyway, I did not know that Japan had invaded Manchuria, and I don't think a lot of people did, but these people who were demonstrating did. Now they may have been reading the newspaper, because it had been in the newspapers, because I went back to the Kappa house and read the *Tribune* and read about it. But I didn't know it before that.

ES: How big was the group, do you think?

BB: Well, nothing like you see on TV today, but it probably would have been from the, let see that would have been the library up there, down to about the Theta house, going down the street. And I know a lot of people were standing on the curb wondering, "What the dickens is this?" You know?

ES: Were they carrying signs?

BB: Yes, they had, about Japan. And a lot of the Eastern schools, a lot of the girls in the East would not wear silk stockings because of this. Well, I didn't have any money to buy anything more than what I had so, I had to wear what I had.

ES: So that's your only memory of that kind of thing?

BB: That kind of thing, that's the only thing I remember. I happened to know a lot about at that time, not through the University, but through the uncle, with whom I had been living in Europe, that Hitler was in the offing. I knew that. I didn't know how serious it was, but I did, very shortly after getting out of college, because he kept warning us that it was coming. And in '39 I met the boat in New York, that he got off of. It was a Dutch boat, because everybody had rushed to a neutral port, neutral steam ship line, because Holland was neutral, and to get out of Europe. Of course, that weekend, Chamberlain declared war. He had brought us postal cards to show us the different leaders in Germany and so forth, so he knew what was coming. But, well, those were different years, not really much different then now, except that we did have that Depression. It colored a lot of stuff. I mean, we didn't have the money, you see, that we have now to spread around.

ES: How did you feel that in school? Did you know what was going on with the Depression?

BB: No, uh-uh. Oh, the Depression?

ES: Uh-huh.

BB: Well, no, it was never discussed. This was a very personal thing, that you had financial problems. I mean you just didn't spread that around.

ES: You didn't discuss with other people?

BB: No, no, uh-uh. No, it would be embarrassing you know, I mean to discuss that. I remember having found 75 cents in a trench coat that I hadn't had on in a while because of the weather conditions, and I was thrilled there was 75 cents. Then at the same time, I stopped and thought, how careless of me to have left 75 cents in my pocket. You see how different it is today? It's all in the time in which you live. Of course, I being a history [major], you know, I knew there were bad times in history, but they didn't emphasize the Depression because everybody was in the same boat.

ES: How did it affect, this is kind obvious, but how did it affect what you did on campus? What kind of things did you have to forgo because you didn't have the money to do them? Did you make your own clothes, or—?

BB: Oh heavens—

INTERRUPTION.

BB: What was the last question you asked me?

ES: How the Depression affected what you did?

BB: You don't think about it. You didn't think about it. I'm wondering today, the economic situation today how that's going to work out. I've been very interested in that, I've been watching this approaching whether I don't say that this is going to be Depression, but there is definitely a recession, and I just wonder we've had such affluence. You'd be surprised, if you've lived through a depression, you never get over it. You just never do. It rules everything that you do. Never go overboard, never go overboard, because these things can happen over night. But, no, it didn't. Now like I told you before, we had the first ice skating rink, I don't remember what that was in. We had dances on it, when they didn't have ice on it. Students from Northwestern, girls from Northwestern would come down, from the Kappa house, and stay with us because Chicago was warm that winter, and they loved to ice skate. They knew we had this ice skating rink, so they came down and stayed with us. That night we had a Shi-Ai, do they still have that? It was a campus, well, it was an organization, you had to be involved in volunteers to go to the thing. It was quite a night; it was wild. Well I hadn't thought of this in a long time, at any rate, when we got back to the Kappa house, and we had all dressed in kind of a costume, well those from Northwestern thought that we were quite ridiculous of course the way we were dressed and everything. I had a flannel night gown that I had stuffed with toilet paper, up in the front here, and I had a hat on that I had gotten from the World's Fair. Now see we had the World's Fair here in Chicago in 1933, and I had red gloves on, way up to the elbows and so forth. When we

got back to the Kappa house, we formed, in the entrance, we formed a pyramid. Well those girls from Northwestern thought that this was. . .because of course they wouldn't do anything like that. I got a kick out of it, I really did. But, we did things like that. Now see that didn't cost a penny. That type of thing. That weekend, I went home and my mother saw me and screamed because I was black and blue from knee to hip on both sides, because I had been the end of the, what's the thing where you line up and go around the circle and you're the end guy? A whip, you know. And I hadn't even taken time, in the bath, you know. We didn't have showers, the bathtub to look at myself and I'd forgotten and she saw me with all of this black and blue all the way up. But I had been the end of the tail. It was that kind of stuff, you know. Of course now there was drinking, but I was not drinking. I don't know what they were drinking.

ES: Some of the women did?

BB: Oh yes. I did not drink at all. I'll tell you now, I will be 87 this summer, and I still do not drink. Oh I like some wine, but I want to hang onto my driver's license, so I never touch it now. But, if someone else is driving maybe I might, but that's it. That was just fun, you know. There was no money involved. They brought your invitation while you were at dinner, in the sorority houses, and in a tin can, and they apparently must of found out where your room was and they put it on your dresser. That was the way you knew you were invited to this party. It was called Shi-Ai. That was an Indian name, but suppose the Indians would have a fit. I don't know what it stands for but that is what it was. But that party was quite outstanding. That particular one, they never had another one, so. I don't know whether they have that organization anymore or not. But you can do a lot without money.

ES: Without money, uh-huh.

BB: If everybody else is in the same boat.

ES: What was it like living in the sorority house, did you eat your meals together?

BB: Oh definitely. As I told you, that was paid for.

ES: Right.

BB: And you didn't have any money to eat anywhere else, so you ate there. Definitely. Yeah.

ES: And that's where you did your studying, as well, in the house? Or did you go to the library?

BB: Well, when you're a freshman, you study downstairs in the dining room with someone supervising you, an upper classmen. They would answer questions too if you had any. Then you had to be in bed because I learned to put my hair up in bobby pins in the dark, because I was never ready to get up there when I had to be up there, at the dorm I'm speaking of, and so I did it in the dark. I can do it in the dark now a lot of practice. But, then of course, when you're an upper classmen you can study in your room as late as you'd like. But freshman had to get their rest and they had to be—and then if you didn't have a class, now this is sorority, this not the

University, if you didn't have a class, you went to the library, because there would be an upper classmen, and she had your schedule, and she knew you did not have a class and that you should be in the library.

ES: Is that right?

BB: And you got black marks if you didn't show up. Three and you had to break a date or something like that. They really watched you. They set a pattern for you.

ES: What was your house mother's role? You had a house mother?

BB: Yeah, well I can't say enough for the house mothers, I can't say enough for them. They had their problems. They saw to it that you were in. And that you did what you were supposed to do in the house, and they were there if you needed them too.

ES: But I didn't realize the older students took it upon themselves too to kind of—?

BB: In the sorority absolutely. Now I can't speak, this is how many years, 60, 70, how many years ago was that? Let's see, this is 2001, subtract that from—

ES: 65, 66 years.

BB: I think 65 years ago. What they do now, I haven't a clue, I just have not a clue. No man was allowed in the house until 4 PM. You had to be fully clothed after that. Because see, the Kappa house was an "L," was on a corner and we could study out in . . . I would take my typewriter out in the lawn, and type my term papers, out there. I could be in a shorts and halter top. But, no men could be in that house until after 4 PM. I don't, when it was snowing, I don't suppose that, but I meant that type of thing. There were rules like that, but that was strictly the Kappa. Now I don't know what the Theta or the Pi Phi house did, but I know they had similar rules.

ES: How did you interact with the other sororities?

BB: Well I got to know them through volunteerism. I can't emphasize that enough. I had a lot of good friends, when I went to the Junior Prom, walking through, in between dances, this girl came down the aisle looking at me and she was a Pi Phi from Illinois, and she, had gone back East. Her dad had been a middle westerner and wanted her to come see the middle west you know. So, she looked at me and said, "I can't believe that you're here!" Well of course that's the East you know. They think we just are hicks and that is it. Every time I would see her that night she said, "I can't believe that you're here." Well, you know, this country is a big country and there are a lot of different areas, and there are misconceptions about it. But, I dated a lot of boys who's fathers were middle westerners and insisted they come to the University of Illinois. They were living in New York, Florida, and they wanted their sons to see what middle-westerners were like. The girl I had gone through, let's see, from second grade on with, her children, I saw her at my high school reunion, my 25th, and she said that she'd begged her children, they lived in Florida, to come to this part of the country to go to college and they

wouldn't do it. She said, "I wanted them to see the ingenuity and the," oh just the, "energy that is in this part of the country," because she said in Florida they just are so, this is my expression because we didn't have it 25 years ago, so laid back, and it's, "Oh well I'll do it tomorrow," attitude. I wanted them to see how industrious the middle west is. There's just a difference, there's a difference. I'm glad I'm a middle westerner, and an American, so—

START OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

ES: So you knew other sorority people very well?

BB: Oh yes, oh yes.

ES: Were you in the Panhellenic Council at all or?

BB: You know, I don't even remember anything like that. Isn't that funny, I don't remember anything like that. Maybe you just. . . I was in politics, I remember that. That got very heated but, at times. I mean, not that I got up in arms about anything.

ES: Sorority politics or student government?

BB: Student government.

ES: Oh really, what did you do?

BB: Well I went to meetings, but there didn't seem to be anything that was pressing, you know. Nothing that I hold in my memory that I was all stirred up about. Of course we didn't have anything like that Indian thing. I would probably be walking with a placard for that because that's ridiculous. I mean we held that so sacred, the idea of it, I just don't quite understand why the Indians would be offended. It would never ever was suggested that he would be a mascot. Like, you know, a big, what's that thing, my great granddaughter, you know with eyes up on the top from Sesame Street. One of those horrible animals they had, anyway, nothing like that, I mean there was no. We didn't think he was cute, funny, or anything, he was just a symbol, that's all. I don't think we had a very good football team. I don't remember.

ES: Were athletics important, did you go to the games?

BB: To the games, sometimes, I thought that basketball games were exciting, if you could afford to go. I had a beau that would. He worked for the University. He was working his way through college. He would get tickets occasionally. He wasn't able to be with me, but he would get me tickets, and I would go. Oh, yeah, there was a lot of school spirit. There was always something going on. Then remember, we were there to study, we have to remember that. But, well—

ES: How did the Greek students get along with the independent students? Was there any kind of friction or—?

BB: No. No, I don't remember any friction with anybody, and you asked if there were minorities. I don't remember anything, I know that there was a young girl down there that I had gone to high school with and I would see her occasionally. But that's the only black student about whom I was familiar. I told you there were 19 boys to one girl, and everybody said, "Oh my goodness!" This was in Chicago of course. And I say, "Yeah, but remember I was from Chicago and a lot of those are farm boys." There was a lot of difference, what we had in common, so to speak. The farm boy might have become Vice President, President of a corporation eventually, but at that stage, they were farm boys. So, well—

ES: Were there Jewish students on campus?

BB: Oh my yes.

ES: Did they get along—?

BB: They kept to themselves. They were very, they were a revelation to me. I had never been with people like that before. Please don't get into that. Well, the only time I was really was conscious of them was on the train, the milk train coming from Chicago, and going home, going back. And then we had to hear everything that they had done and were going to do, and had done in loud terms.

ES: I've asked you this, but just one more time, what kinds of things did you do for fun? Did you remember the dances?

BB: Oh definitely.

ES: Can you talk about those?

BB: We had big bands play down there. I remember the dresses I had, you know that type of thing. Indeed I do. My mother had made me a red gingham dress, long. And it was so hot, and I wore it every 4 years, to this one dance. I don't remember it was the last dance. I think Hal Kemp played, you probably don't remember Hal Kamp, but he was very special. And I remember wearing that dress. It was red and white gingham, and it was long of course with a big flouncey collar, you know, no sleeves of course, long and a flounce on the bottom. Red sandals, no stockings, a pair of panties and that was it. It was so hot. I danced every dance, believe me. I loved to dance so I danced every dance. And I remember wearing that dress every year, because I would probably be with someone different, all four years you see. They would not have seen it. Oh the dances were special. They were something special. That's where I saw my husband dance, with a sorority sister of mine and I thought, oh gee, I would love to dance with him. We did not get along at all and I thought, gee I'd love to dance with him, because he was good dancer, always was. I remember, where that ice thing was, what building was that?

ES: The ice rink, it was newly built I think in the 30s, on Armory Street.

BB: Yeah, that way the girls came down to ice skate because Chicago was so warm. I remember hanging over and looking at him and thought, oh gee I'd love to dance with him. So when I had

the first date with him, it was during rushing, and his fraternity brothers were having dates with some Kappas and they asked him, said to him, "Why don't you get a date?" He said, well he didn't know anybody to date. So they said, why don't they call me? Most of the boys I had dated had graduated or were in Law School. So, he called me and we were talking over rushing, and I came back and told the girls, with whom I had a date and they said, "I don't believe you, because they knew we didn't get along." I don't know why we didn't get along. So we went out and I thought, I'm going to make him dance every night. This was a week night now, this is rushing, but we had a jukebox, so to speak, you know, some music, canned music, or whatever they call it, and I made him dance every dance. I had a date with him the whole weekend after that. But, yeah the dances were very important, they were something you looked forward to.

Then there were fraternity dances, then the Kappa house would have their Spring dance and then the Theta house would have theirs, you know that type of thing. I don't know what they do today. Down at Purdue, I used to go, when I was in high school, I'd go to the dances down there. Maybe the Pi Phis and the Thetas would get together and have a dance at the Union building and so forth. So, I had an occasion at one time, I don't know whether this is of any interest to you or not, to go to a luncheon in the Northern Trust, way at the top. It was beautifully furnished, it was the man who started the Northern Trust, it was all his furniture, there was a fire place up there. These were all women, I don't know, I didn't have a lot of money in it. All women had been invited to go to the St. Luke's Fashion Show and have lunch in there, and I didn't know until almost the end of the luncheon that I was sitting next to the woman, to the right of me, who was the, oh this is a word I don't use often, well something to do in the office, or the official of University of Illinois Chicago and she was from the office down in Champaign, and I said to her, "Oh I wish I'd known that," because we were all taken by limousine up to the St. Luke's Fashion Show after that. I said to her, "How is it that when those colored students," those black students, "were allowed to live in that dormitory," the brand new dormitories down in Champaign, in the summer for summer school, before they went to enroll at the University of Illinois, and when it came, the real term started, they didn't get to stay in those rooms, they had to spread them around of course, afterwards, give other students an opportunity. That they went and wrecked the furniture in the new Union Building and they were not expelled. I said, "If I had touched a piece of furniture in that Union, in the old Union Building," I don't know if that's still standing or not, "that would have been the end of it, I would have been out of there." They would never want to see me again. "Why did they allow that?" And she said, "You'll have to understand something. It's," she said, "the regents were the ones who permitted that," that was a difference of thinking. And I said, "Okay," that didn't satisfy me at all. She said, "They also decided that when they had their board meetings," down there in Champaign, "They should have students sit in on these board meetings." See this lady was in the office, she was a, oh the word, it's a word I don't use of course, but she had an office, and this is what she was doing up here in Chicago, at the University of Illinois in Chicago. And she said, "These students came up to me because they knew me, after these meetings, and said, 'I didn't understand anything they were talking about.'" But this was thinking, they thought the students should have a part of this, but she said, "These students were not ready for that, they were not rich, would almost be corporate decisions," you know in the Board of Director's meetings and so forth, and she said, "But that was the way they thought," compared to when I had been in college. Lord if I had touched the furniture in there, I'd either have to pay for it or, but they wrecked the furniture in that brand new Union Building which just made me sick. But they allowed them to stay in the University. You know there's something wrong. Somebody's gotten

off on the wrong foot here, why is it, people can't be disciplined? Why is it, I don't understand, if we're all going to get along in this world, we have to conform to some rules. And you asked about religion, religion can't go on if there isn't some rules; there's hardly any walk of life without rules of some kind. Or like I said, we'd be at everybody's throats. You must be sick to death of my voice.

ES: No, no I'm just looking over to see if there's anything I've missed. You talked about politics a little bit. You said you were on the student government—were you a representative?

BB: I don't remember that. I remember they're calling me and telling me there was going to be a meeting, but I don't remember who it was that called. I don't know that we had an official. There were boys and girls on this. You know you didn't segregate so much in those days. You know, we did not have a feminine movement in those days. Which, there is a lot of it I don't understand in this feminine movement, and I don't even bother, and I think, Lord I'm too old to think about that.

ES: Did you go through Commencement ceremonies?

BB: Oh yeah. Sure.

ES: Your parents came down?

BB: Yes they did, uh-huh.

ES: Was that an important for you or—?

BB: No, I just wanted to get it over with, you know. My life had to start, you know, and I had to go home and get a job. I did eventually. I started at Stevens, and they asked me to come and work full-time. I had to quit, and this may seem silly but was very important, there was no air conditioning in those days. They had installed fans, huge fans, and if you have hay fever into the fall, I could not stand that fan on my face, I just had hay fever, it just wouldn't end. And so I had to quit, and I went to work for Dennison's. Dennison's may mean nothing to you. You've seen crepe paper, well they were the ones who were the backbone of crepe paper, they were in the East. They wanted to have a middle western store, and it's now the spot were it is, because I've just been down to the, what we used have the library in Chicago and now it's called the . . . Cultural Center. Sitting down there to get an honor. I'll show you what I got—placard, with the mayor for volunteerism for seniors here in Palatine. Mayor Daley has now taken over the spot where Dennison's was, and that store was air conditioned with water, and of course, it was my savior, because they washed the air with water. It was a brand new store. It was supposed to be, it was a demonstration store, and they had their offices upstairs and so forth. Well, that's where I got a job, and that's where I worked until I got married. And I worked, I think about 4 years. Then when I got married I had to quit, because a women had to quit, because her job went to a man to support a family. That's Depression. So, you know, there was a lot, you know economics underneath everything is economics. And, but, no that was not what you asked me in the first place.

ES: Yeah, I wanted to know what you did after graduation.

BB: But the graduation, that was just get it over with, you know. Because as I told you, life was going to start then, and you had to kind of find out what you were going to do. Like you, now what you are going to do.

ES: How do you think your education has influenced your later life? What have you gotten out of your education?

BB: Well, I think everything I've gotten out of my education has run through everything that we've talked about today. People, because you meet a lot of people, a lot of different kinds.

ES: Have you stayed in touch with people from college?

BB: Listen, there's not many of us left, you'd be surprised, there's not many of us left. It seems sometimes when the phone rings, I almost hate to go to the phone if I'm expecting a call from someone because there's just nothing but bad news. No, my last really close friend died a year ago Christmas. She was the town girl down in Champaign. I have not now. But, you learn a lot about people because you see everything. I told you the sorority saw to it that you saw them all, that you got experience of all types and so forth. Then because they pushed you into volunteer, to represent the sorority you met other people from other than the sorority. Don't think you just sit in that sorority house, because you don't, you're out and about. Of course, the Kappa house was pretty far from the main part of the campus. So, well I don't remember wandering around the street or anything like that wondering what to do with myself. Because you could always go to the library and study. The only embarrassing thing I ever had to do was when I was initiated, was I had to walk all one day with one foot on the curb and one on the street. But no one made fun of you because they all knew what you were doing, why you were doing it, and they might have to be doing it to, and they wouldn't want to be laughed at. See do onto others as you would do onto yourself, I mean, do onto you, as you would have them do onto you. It was a wonderful time, believe me it was, and we were in a world all our own. That was a campus town, you know, and because you didn't have money, there wasn't anything you could strike out and do on your own, you had to do it within the confines of what the university said you could do, and what had been paid for in advance. It's not a bad system.

ES: Well, thank you for talking to me.

BB: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW.