

**University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives  
World War II at Illinois Oral History Project  
Jean Hurt Maury  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
March 28, 2008**

START OF TAPE ONE, SIDE A (original interview is a digital audio file dubbed to cassette tape for transcribing purposes)

**Chris D'Arpa: I am wondering first if you...I sent...I realized that I needed to get an interview agreement and consent form to you. I am wondering you got it yet. Probably not.**

Jean Maury: No ma'am.

**CD: Ok. Do you mind if we just take a minute for me to tell you what's in it so that I can at least get your sort of...**

JM: Approval.

**CD: Yeah. Over the phone and then once you get it in the mail we can go from there.**

JM: Ok.

**CD: So, I think probably the best way...part of the problem here is that whenever we are doing things for the University we have to go through something they call the Institutional Review Board.**

JM: Yes,

**CD: They review our application to do this kind of research and this is the interview agreement, which I'll read to you. Tape and digital recordings and transcripts resulting from interviews conducted for the Student Life and Culture Archival program at the University of Illinois Archives become part of the Student Life and Culture Archives at the University of Illinois Archives. And they are made available for use consistent with the University's mission regulating according to any restrictions placed on their use by the interviewee. Participation in the program is entirely voluntary. So, then we have, we the undersigned, that being you and me, have read the above. The interviewer affirms that she has explained the nature and purpose of this oral history research. The interviewee affirms that she has consented to the interview. The interviewee and interviewer hereby give and grant and assign all rights title and interest including copyright of whatever kind from the digital files and transcripts from the interview to the University of Illinois Archives. So essentially we are just saying that we are doing this for the Archives that it will be made available to researchers and not without your consent. So the process here**

is we have this interview and then it is on tape. I have, there is a history undergrad who is transcribing all of these interviews for us and he transcribes it, I review it, and then we send the transcript to you to make sure it sort of jibes with what you want it to say.

JM: I see.

**CD: So there are sort of checks and balances along the way.**

JM: Checks, um hmm. Sounds reasonable.

**CD: Ok. And the consent form, let's see, the consent form...the focus of the project is to document and preserve the memories of UIUC alumni who were students during World War II. Questions will explore the participant's academic and extracurricular activities. How the participant came to UIUC, where she lived, and why and how the participant and her fellow students experienced events of World War II on campus. That is the jest of the consent form. So do I have your...**

JM: You have my permission.

**CD: Ok. All right. Can you for the record...This is Chris D'Arpa I am speaking with Jean Maury. Jean what is your maiden name?**

JM: Hurt. H-U-R-T.

**CD: Jean Hurt Maury.**

JM: Right.

**CD: We are speaking via telephone and recording this from the Leap Studio at the library school at the University of Illinois. Jean is in...is it Greensboro?**

JM: That's correct.

**CD: North Carolina.**

JM: Right.

**CD: So Jean, could you tell me a little bit about yourself. Where you grew up? What kind of schooling you had before you came to Illinois? Let's just start there.**

JM: Yes. Well, I grew up in Fairbury, Illinois, which is about sixty-five miles from Urbana-Champaign. And probably my interest in journalism stemmed from the English teacher at the high school. She used to take me with her to seminars at the University of Illinois that were sponsored for the benefit of high school teachers.

**CD: Oh, interesting.**

JM: And for example, I vividly remember hearing Kerensky, the first president of Russia after the Revolution, talk one day.

**CD: So how did you guys get to Urbana? You drove?**

JM: Yes. Now, that was before the war. Probably the year before the war and I would have been a junior in high school.

**CD: And what year would you say that was.**

JM: Well, I graduated in '42 so that that was probably '40.

**CD: And what was your town like, Fairbury?**

JM: Oh, small. Small, rural farming community. Population about 2400.

**CD: And what about your family.**

JM: I have two younger brothers both of whom have graduated from the University of Illinois.

**CD: Was your family farmers?**

JM: No. My Dad had a store in the small town and Mother was a housewife, very active in the church. She grew roses. Was well known for her rose garden and very much a loving, caring, Mother.

**CD: So tell me more about this transition from high school were you had an English teacher who was so attentive and so encouraging to the University of Illinois. Was the high school teacher an alum also? And do you remember her name?**

JM: I don't believe so. I can't remember off hand remember her name, that is a shame, but also there was a money problem. No one...we were still recovering from the Depression.

**CD: Sure.**

JM: And Livingston County and I think every county in Illinois at that point had an examination and awarded scholarships. So I took the county scholarship examination and, much to my surprise, I won it. Now, that gave, in addition to a general knowledge scholarship, one for home economics and one for agriculture, so that there were three full-time scholarships and that included...well, it was fifty dollars, I believe, for a semester and that included the laboratory fees.

**CD: Great. And you...did you get the general scholarship?**

JM: I got the general scholarship.

**CD: And so what year did you come to the University?**

JM: I came in the summer of 1942.

**CD: 1942.**

JM: Thinking coming from a small high school, perhaps to start in summer school at a smaller situation, would be a good idea. And then there was the push from the war, you see, by that time.

**CD: Tell me more about that.**

JM: Well, this was the summer of '42 was the first summer that the University reorganized and we were able to get both semester's credit in the summer. And so that enabled me, because I went to another summer school and also one summer for just half the time, I was able to graduate in three years.

**CD: So what were your first impressions of the University? You certainly had been here before but coming as a student was that different?**

JM: Yes. At that point the sororities opened their buildings for girls there for the summer and I lived at the Theta house.

**CD: Theta, T-H-E-A-T-A?**

JM: T-H-E-T-A.

**CD: E-T-A yes. Ok.**

JM: Just Theta Rho I think and...

**CD: Do you remember where it was?**

JM: Yes. It was on Green Street. Is that right? Tell me the names of the streets. I've rarely been back.

**CD: Green sort of the main commercial drag through campus town.**

JM: Yes. Well, the one across that then at the edge of campus, coming from Champaign. In front of the old Y building.

**CD: Ok sure. Wright Street.**

JM: Just say a block and half from the Illini office when we were... The office and the linotype shop was in the basement of the Y.

**CD: Oh it was. And where were the editorial offices?**

JM: Yes. Were there too.

**CD: In the Y?**

JM: Um hmm, basement.

**CD: I didn't realize that. So tell me more about...you stayed in this sorority for the summer and then did you have to find housing?**

JM: Well, I did pledge a sorority that fall.

**CD: Oh, ok.**

JM: Housing was very limited because the army had taken over the dormitories ASTP. Navy V-12s had taken over some of the dormitories. And so there were really...if you didn't pledge a sorority few places to live.

**CD: So, that all the training that was going on on campus for...**

JM: Was given the first priority.

**CD: And tell me again what you called that, ASTP?**

JM: A-S-T-P. American, well it was preliminary army training and directed toward producing officers for the army. As the V-12s, the navy part, the same sort of thing, to produce officers. And these were young men frequently just graduated from high school.

**CD: Oh that young?**

JM: Um hmm.

**CD: And what kind of interaction did you have with them as a student here?**

JM: Well, they weren't in our classes. They had separate classes. They were taught by University of Illinois faculty.

**CD: Were there social occasions where the soldiers and the...**

JM: No, but of course they were on the same campus and we dated.

**CD: You did! Great!**

JM: Oh, yes.

**CD: Did you know people who wound up getting married? Students?**

JM: I did wind up becoming engaged.

**CD: Yes.**

JM: And he was killed.

**CD: Oh, I am so sorry!**

JM: I know. That's always difficult.

**CD: It is. It's just so sad and it's sad that people are still experiencing that today. That we don't learn. But it must have been very romantic to develop that kind of relationship when you're at this great University and away from home for the first time.**

JM: It's hard to duplicate today and I have three daughters. They'd never really been able to understand the thrill of patriotism. During World War II, the knowledge of the rate that Hitler was moving through and conquering Europe and threatening Britain meant that, you know, we might be living our lives under Nazi rule.

**CD: How did you get information about the war while you were on campus?**

JM: Well, actually, that first summer I started working on the *Daily Illini*.

**CD: Did you really? The very first summer?**

JM: As a proofreader...

**CD: Was it the kind of thing that you applied for or?**

JM: Well, actually, at the sorority house, I met Ruth Ann Swager, who lived only ten miles from Fairbury, and she was interested. And I had been editor of our yearbook and earlier had been, in junior high, which was the eighth grade in Fairbury, there was an old monthly newspaper and I worked on that. And so I had an interest in journalism but the two of us appeared and said, "We want to work on the *Daily Illini*." And they put us to work as proofreaders.

**CD: And do you remember who you spoke with? Was it another student or were there faculty?**

JM: Oh, no. No faculty supervision. It was whoever was, well, I suppose the editor because it would have been a very small staff because it was during the summer. But it continued to publish all summer.

**CD: Tell me more about what it was like working as a proofreader at the *DI* and taking classes.**

JM: As a proofreader you weren't allowed back into the newsroom.

**CD: You weren't?**

JM: Except...they brought out the copy and when you finished reading that copy you put it on a hook and somebody regularly came by and picked up the copy and took it to the press room where the linotype operators turned it into print. And these were unionized, veteran linotype operators.

**CD: So were the linotype operators students also?**

JM: Oh, no. No, they were men, in their forties. Seemed old to us.

**CD: Right. And what about your colleagues at the *DI* do you remember what the ratio at that point was?**

JM: Oh, it was mostly men.

**CD: It was mostly men.**

JM: All of them knowing that, probably within a year, they would be in the service. So for that first year there was a big turnover of editors because they were called up and that extended into my second year.

**CD: So '43.**

JM: That's right. There still... Posted in Gregory Hall they posted the list who had just been called.

**CD: Really.**

JM: So there was always a crowd first thing in the morning looking at the bulletin board.

**CD: How did the *DI* wind up...I guess at one point there were four women managing in the management positions of the paper?**

JM: Yes, we had all women at one point. We had a woman sports editor, Jill Drum. The business manager was a woman and then all the editorial staff were women.

**CD: And did you have a sense, since you were there when the editorial staff was men, did you have sense that things functioned a little bit differently or decisions or were decisions made in the same way about which stories to cover and how people were assigned stories?**

JM: Well, of course, we were the only daily newspaper in Champaign-Urbana and since the war was the prime thing and we were carrying AP...

**CD: You had the news wire?**

JM: We had the news wire and the news picture service and a columnist, Drew Pearson, for example, who was a well known columnist at that point. So the *Daily Illini* was really viewed by many of the townspeople and subscribed. It was all a subscription type thing. And they depended on the *Daily Illini* for news about the war.

**CD: And you had first access to it in some ways because you were in the newsroom.**

JM: That's right, we read it and a bell clanged. There were two machines and the bell would ring if it was a particularly important story. And it started sending stories in the afternoon, background stories.

**CD: And how would you decide which local stories to cover?**

JM: Well, we had usually about a hundred and fifty students volunteer for the editorial staff.

**CD: Wow.**

JM: And I would say the editor divided it up the best she could and I think if you said, "I am particularly interested in this or that." And, if she hadn't already given that beat to somebody else. I remember my very first assignment was the Jewish organization, Hillel.

**CD: Yes.**

JM: And the man in charge was very nice. I regularly turned in stories. In addition to your regular beat, the editor would also assign special if some one was giving a special talk. They headed the railroad union and I can't bring his name to mind just now but a very important man in the early civil rights movement.

**CD: Is this A. Philip Randolph?**

JM: Yes. Hearing him talk and for the first time, because in Fairbury, we had only one black family, I was exposed to the fact there were injustices, resentment. I was the only white person in the room that night.



**CD: Really? And do you remember where it was held?**

JM: Yes, in the journalism school in the auditorium on the second floor.

**CD: Was the journalism school still in Gregory Hall?**

JM: Yes.

**CD: Ok, yes there is an auditorium on the first floor. So were the other people in the audience with you all students, African American students or were there some servicemen?**

JM: Oh no. They were townspeople.

**CD: Townspeople mostly.**

JM: We had few, very few if any...I can't remember any black students on the campus.

**CD: Huh. Were any of the servicemen African American who were training here? Do you remember?**

JM: I don't... the service was not integrated at that point.

**CD: So there wasn't any special unit here.**

JM: No. Because Truman integrated the service.

**CD: But they had dedicated units especially during World War II. Didn't they?**

JM: Yes. However, I had several acquaintances who were in charge of black units. They would usually be in construction, building roads, building barracks. Really very, very few black officers. Very few black pilots.

**CD: That's true. So, do you remember anything particular that was said at this meeting with A. Philip Randolph? Anything stand out?**

JM: No, I don't. Other than the feeling that I got, that they had justified complaints and they are mad. And I'd never realized that before.

**CD: Did it inspire you to follow up on this in any way?**

JM: Did I become a civil rights worker? No.

**CD: Did you read more about it or?**

JM: It was not really a topic of discussion.

**CD: Interesting.**

JM: The Civil Rights movement came along much later than that. In my last year in college there was a young black man who came to the campus and said he wanted to start a magazine. And he came down to the *Daily Illini*. I remember the two of us went out for a cup of coffee and talked about it.

**CD: Do you remember his name?**

JM: No. And I said, "I didn't really know that there was a market." He was trying to explain to me what he wanted to do. It didn't seem to me a very likely venture. And then say a month later or so, the Dean of Students called me in, Dean Turner, and they thought he might be a communist.

**CD: Is that what they said to you directly?**

JM: That is what they called me in about. Did I have an indication that he was a communist? And that had not occurred to me at all.

**CD: Was there other conversations on campus or other talk on campus about communism?**

JM: No. Not as far as I know but obviously it was a topic of concern to the administration.

**CD: And so you said, "No, I have no idea."**

JM: Correct.

**CD: And they said, "Thank you."**

JM: That is correct and I never saw the young man again and nothing happened as far as a magazine was concerned, to the best of my knowledge.

**CD: So it sounds like much of your life really revolved around the *DI*. Do you have memories of other sort of...particular classes or?**

JM: Well, I was in my junior year when I entered the journalism school.

**CD: And before that you take kind of general education courses?**

JM: Yes I did. I've always been interested in politics. I took a lot of political science courses. Some of the journalism courses they gave me credit for, such as headline writing because I could practically do it in my sleep at that point. And a lot of the time

[laughter] I was doing things in my sleep because the paper...they rolled the presses about 4:30 in the morning.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: And someone had to be there when they rolled the presses.

**CD: Right. So when was the copy deadline?**

JM: You know I can't remember exactly. Like two o'clock maybe.

**CD: Really.**

JM: I think if we got a story in that we thought had importance we could remake the front page.

**CD: But you generally put it to bed probably before midnight right?**

JM: No. It was after midnight.

**CD: Really?**

JM: And I can remember so vividly being in the production room working with the chief linotype operator reading the copy upside down and backward when we had to cut stories.

**CD: You did this every night of the week while you were a student?**

JM: Well, not me. We had...the junior editors and the, lets see, my last semester, regular semester, the spring of 1945 when Roosevelt died, I've forgotten what I started to tell you.

**CD: I asked if you were talking about the editors. I asked...**

JM: There was an junior editor at that point. A young man named King. So the junior editors would also take their turn for a night.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: There were up to five junior editors. Four or five. They were named by the board that oversaw the *Daily Illini*.

**CD: And who was on the board?**

JM: Well, that was... A was a faculty person was the chairman and then there was student representation. There were other faculty people on the board. They selected the editor and the junior editors.

**CD: Were people nominated for those positions or was it more of...**

JM: Whoever was down there working.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: I guess you nominated yourself.

**CD: Yes. And tell me the various positions you held at the *DI*.**

JM: Well, as I said, I started as a proofreader.

**CD: Right.**

JM: And then gradually was given more outside assignments. I remember an interview with Norman Thomas. And he had beautiful blue eyes. [laughter]

**CD: So he was here?**

JM: On the campus. He came to the campus to talk.

**CD: And again what kind of crowd did he pull?**

JM: I didn't hear his talk on campus.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: I remember no one from the afternoon papers. The *Gazette*, is that still functioning?

**CD: It is.**

JM: And the *Urbana Courier*, which I know did collapse.

**CD: So you interviewed Norman Thomas.**

JM: Yes.

**CD: How was that?**

JM: Like I said, I was fascinated by his blue yes. [laughter]

**CD: Do you remember what you all talked about.**

JM: No, I haven't any idea. I remember being rather appalled that I was the only one there and I knew very little about socialism and we must have had a not very meaningful interview.

**CD: All right, I am going switch over to the campus itself and kind of what your impressions and experiences of the campus were. And the places like the library and the Union and whether there were dances or music that you remember. Or demonstrations on the Quad. Patriotic demonstrations or...**

JM: No.

**CD: Nothing.**

JM: No. You know a lot of the campus was taken over by the army and the navy and you would see those. But they were more or less segregated as I said. We never shared any classrooms or classes with the service people. The campus was never crowded because there were what ten or eleven thousand students at that point. Many of the professors had left and were in the military. So, many of the classes were quite good-sized, you see, they had to combine classes. They tried to continue the regular social activities. There was a senior prom and a junior prom and there was a homecoming queen.

**CD: Football games?**

JM: Well, and football games, yes.

**CD: I've heard that the Chief was a woman during the war. Do you have any?**

JM: Not to my knowledge. I don't remember. It seems to me we would have heard about that.

**CD: Did you have pep rallies during the war on campus for football?**

JM: No. I don't believe so. I never went to one. However, you had dates for the football games.

**CD: You did?**

JM: Oh, yes. You got dressed up and your date brought you a great big yellow chrysanthemum that you pinned on your lapel and it had gold and blue ribbons on it.

**CD: And would this just be students that attended football games or would service people be able to?**

JM: Largely, and some of the locals.

**CD: Local townfolk.**

JM: Local people and faculty people but you see there was gas rationing so it was difficult for me to get the sixty five miles back to my hometown.

**CD: Oh, so this was a football game in my own town.**

JM: No this was football game on the campus but you didn't have out-of-towners coming to the game because of gas rationing. In fact, on my trips back to Fairbury I took a bus and waited in Gilman, Illinois, for something like two hours.

**CD: Oh, really.**

JM: For the bus that headed on down to Fairbury.

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JM: So it was like a three-hour trip to get that sixty-five miles.

**CD: Dear. Where did you study for class, classes?**

JM: Not often. [laughter]

**CD: You didn't study.**

JM: Well, you know I had to study but I remember as a junior one of the classes in the journalism school was taught by the head of the journalism school on ethics, I think, and current events and so on. It didn't start until eleven o'clock on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**CD: That's good.**

JM: I frequently slept through that. Everybody at the sorority house had left for class and here was Jean sleeping the whole time because maybe I had gotten home at two or three or four or five in the morning and there wasn't anybody around to wake me up. [laughter] And I think I had a terrible grade midterm for all the classes I missed. But I ended up with good grades for the year.

**CD: So something changed.**

JM: Pardon?

**CD: Something changed.**

JM: Yes. I studied. I got credit for a lot of the basic journalism classes without taking them.

**CD: From your work at the *DI*.**

JM: That's right.

**CD: Yes. So you said you were on campus during when FDR died. Do you remember what the reaction was on campus?**

JM: The first telephone call was from a student wanting to know if classes had been cancelled for the next day.

**CD: They called the paper to find out?**

JM: Yes.

**CD: Interesting.**

JM: I thought that was rather disgusting when we should be in a state of bereavement about our president.

**CD: So classes were not canceled then.**

JM: Well, I believe they were.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: What struck me was the very first call, telephone call, was somebody wanting to know about classes.

**CD: Right, rather than what had happened.**

JM: Yes. And we did put out an extra.

**CD: Oh, you did.**

JM: We put out three extras while I was editor. One about the president's death, one about V-E Day. And a story about V-E Day. It had been rumored the war in Europe is going to be ending. It was going to be ending tomorrow. And at one point I was so convinced the war in Europe was going to be ending that we ran the paper and then they didn't end the war. [laughter] And they were rather... We had a man hired paid business manager who really I didn't have much to do with. The student business manager worked with him on ads and that sort of thing. But he really didn't have anything to do with the editorial end of it. We were totally without supervision as to what we ran in the paper.

**CD: Did you work with your assistant editors to discuss...**

JM: Oh, we met regularly.

**CD: Regularly.**

JM: And worked together, of course. Each of us...the junior editors were responsible for one column a week.

**CD: And you got to choose the topic?**

JM: No. They chose their own topics.

**CD: You chose your own topics. Yes. So how did you decide what to do your columns on? What influenced your decisions?**

JM: Well, they were frequently tied in with war topics.

**CD: Were they?**

JM: Uh huh. Not as far as battles were concerned. I don't know. We were always struggling. I was always struggling about what I was going to write about that week.

**CD: Did you talk amongst yourselves and sort of brainstorm?**

JM: Yes. We were friends. We were friends.

**CD: And who were your coeditors? Do you remember?**

JM: Well, like I said my last semester in the spring of 1945...

**CD: You were editor in spring of '45.**

JM: I was named editor-in-chief in September of 1944.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: And that meant I was editor during the Battle of the Bulge. Which students only got three days off for Christmas vacation because the United States, at that point, was transferring soldiers from the European theatre to the West Coast to get ready to go into Japan. And so we published, I think, all through Christmas. We had some townspeople and we relied on them when there was a vacation or you gave up your vacation and stayed on campus.

**CD: And so who else did you work with during that last year as editor, managing editor or editor-in-chief, I guess?**



JM: Well, Gene Shalit was the humor column editor. I don't know... For some time I was in touch with what Gene was doing. Glenn Roberts was the sports editor. We are still in touch.

**CD: Oh, how nice.**

JM: Also a sorority sister was a junior editor when I was a freshman. She also promoted my career at the *Daily Illni*. I am still in touch with her. She lives in Hawaii.

**CD: And what was her name?**

JM: June Boe B-O-E.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: I remember Millicent Sloboda. I didn't know her well. I was a junior editor when she was editor.

**CD: Ok. And what was...you must have been on campus for D-Day as well.**

JM: Oh, yes.

**CD: Do you remember how you all got the word and what was, sort of, the mood of campus once that word got out?**

JM: There weren't big rallies. To sell our extras we went to the train station. Isn't that interesting?

**CD: It is interesting.**

JM: That was the hub of celebration.

**CD: And the train station in Champaign?**

JM: In Champaign. Because the trains were always full.

**CD: Really?**

JM: You see at that time when the army, and I suppose, the navy too, depended upon the trains to move people around.

**CD: Right.**

JM: There was, you know, the ROTC was important on the campus. And they had a women ROTC-type thing.

**CD: Really?**

JM: And I was in that. We had uniforms and they taught us to march. And they taught us all kinds of other things that I didn't really understand, like airplane identification. And I was the guidon which means you get to carry the flag and you need to keep in step because you are right up in front.

**CD: Right.**

JM: Now, that didn't last very long. I'd say it was discontinued when the end of the war was foreseen.

**CD: How did you get involved in it? [loud crackling noise] (I am sorry.)**

JM: Yeah, I don't remember. I just thought it would be an interesting thing to do. And I thought, at that point, I must have been a sophomore or junior and my status as a student was always very questionable since I was off schedule. I started in the summer.

**CD: Yes.**

JM: And I almost didn't make Mortar Board just because they couldn't decide whether I was a sophomore or a junior. And I remember going in to talk to the Dean of Women, "Now this isn't fair because you are supposed to make it as a junior and I'm half a junior." Or was half a senior or whatever I was at that point.

**CD: It's sounds you know...listening to you it sounds like a great deal...sort of your focus and energy and thought while you were here as a student and working at the DI was really a bigger picture sort of more of a world picture than just the college experience.**

JM: Oh yes. For the first time I became very interested in world affairs. And I was a very poor sorority member because I was rarely there.

**CD: So did you participate in sorority house activities or?**

JM: Not anymore than I had to. And I do remember...I thought rushing and pledging was cruel, the way it was carried off.

**CD: They were doing it then too? Sort of demeaning.**

JM: Yes. And I wrote an editorial about it.

**CD: Did you really?**

JM: And I had a call from some of the upper ups of our sorority.

**CD: What did they say to you?**

JM: That that wasn't a proper thing to do.

**CD: Did they write letters to the editor that were published after that?**

JM: I think I was the editor.

**CD: So did you receive any did you print any...**

JM: No official anything.

**CD: No.**

JM: But reprimand. I was reprimanded.

**CD: By them?**

JM: Yes.

**CD: Yes. So much for free speech. What did you do when you left Illinois? You graduated in '44?**

JM: The summer of 1945.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: At that point, there were many jobs open but they were all open subject to the return of the serviceman who had held that job. So it was very...the *Courier*, for example, the Urbana paper, offered me a job but whoever had that job before the war was coming back. So, "You can have that job and maybe something else will open up when he comes back." So I took a job that was a new job. The University of Illinois had never had a Public Information office at the Medical Center at Chicago and they sent me up to open that. And I worked with the understanding that it was a new job. And I worked there, I started in the fall of 1945. I was twenty years old.

**CD: Had you been to Chicago before much?**

JM: Oh, yes. In fact, my parents insisted that I go live with my aunt.

**CD: Yes.**

JM: Which I thought...my idea had been to rent an apartment someplace with some other girls.

**CD: Right.**

JM: Apartments were difficult anyway. Then sometime that spring, so this would have been '46, it turned out that somebody who came back from the service was sent in by the Public Information office to take over that job. Well, he thought I was a secretary and I wasn't a secretary. I was terrible as a secretary. So seeing the writing on the wall, I made arrangements to go back to law school at the University.

**CD: Oh my goodness. At Illinois? So you came back down here?**

JM: I had a conversation with Dean Harno who was Dean of the Law School at that point. He said he would be pleased to have me. And I found a place to live and I was going to buy a car to get around, an old car, and I left the job at the Medical School.

**CD: Right.**

JM: Then along in all this I was home that summer. Among other things I detassled corn. Which was a big patriotic thing to do at that point. I was getting pretty bored with life in this little small town and Public Information Office, Joe Wright, who headed it for many, many years called me and said he had somebody coming in but in the meantime the Dean of the Medical School went to University of Washington as President. He took the PR guy with him.

**CD: I see.**

JM: So the office wasn't covered at all except when Jim Armsey was finishing his Master's at the University of Illinois he was going to take over. Well, I was going to be there while Jim was there, until Jim came. And then the University decided that they couldn't possibly accommodate all the servicemen who wanted to go to college at Urbana Champaign and they opened Navy Pier. And they made this decision, and sixty days later, we had forty-two hundred students at Navy Pier.

**CD: That's amazing.**

JM: It really was amazing and was almost around-the-clock work for the staff there. I remember two days before classes would start I said, "Who is doing the time table?" Which you don't have now, I am sure. But it turned out no one was doing it.

**CD: We do! We still have them. They are on the computer.**

JM: No one was doing the timetable. There were typists working all night.

**CD: Well let me take us back to Champaign Urbana. Were you here for Hiroshima as well?**

JM: Oh, yes. I was working on the slot that night. As we called it if you were at the paper.

**CD: How quickly did you learn about it after?**

JM: Well, it came right over as soon as the newspapers got the word.

**CD: Do you remember were you the only one in the newsroom that night?**

JM: Oh, no, we had the junior editors working. But I sat there and cried.

**CD: Really? Did you guys talk about it at all?**

JM: It was hard to understand.

**CD: It must have just seemed to be very hard to comprehend the implications of it.**

JM: Yes, the implications but this horrible, horrible weapon that we had used that instantly killed we didn't know how many thousands of Japanese. And of course the justifications were, that we were getting ready to land on Japan and they were prepared to fight to the last breath. That was what the American public was told. And we would have lost thousands and thousands. Many more than were killed at Hiroshima.

**CD: Right. Do you remember how...you all must have ran the next day probably in the paper. Do you remember what kind of story you wrote and how you decided to write about it?**

JM: Well, I am sure we used the AP copy.

**CD: The AP wire. Did you do an editorial the next day?**

JM: I doubt it.

**CD: Really.**

JM: It was evening when it came over the wire.

**CD: Do you have any recollection of whether there was in general student reaction or feeling being expressed about it on the Quad or as people were reading the paper in classes?**

JM: No. No, I don't. I don't remember any discussion at the sorority house. Which mostly I wasn't at the sorority house. And the pay for the editor-in-chief was twenty five dollars a month with the understanding that you were going to miss a lot of meals.

**CD: Sure. Yeah because of your schedule. Let me ask you a couple more questions and you can tell me if you don't want to talk about this but it's interesting part what we are trying to explore is what the campus community was like when you had**

**students and soldiers so busy, both of them so busy in this small area. And you said you were engaged to one of these soldiers and I wonder how you met? You met here?**

JM: Yes, on the campus actually and I don't how she met the young man she married.

**CD: Who is she?**

JM: One of my sorority sisters.

**CD: Oh, ok.**

JM: Met a V-12.

**CD: So a Navy man?**

JM: Yeah Navy. And they were dating and his best buddy he fixed me up with. I had a blind date.

**CD: Do you remember what you did for your first date?**

JM: Oh, I imagine went some place and drank beer. Bidwell's was the big beer drinking place down the street from the *Daily Illini*. And that was the usual Saturday night hangout. I had a key to the sorority house but I could only use it when I was working on the paper and then we called the same taxi company and the same cab driver every night take us home. And I had an interesting experience on the V-J Day, which was a big celebration.

**CD: On campus?**

JM: Well, you know we did an extra. I went to the train station. I remember taking a (by that time I had an old car) I remember going down to the train station the townspeople came out.

**CD: Sure.**

JM: The train was loaded and stopped there and soldiers came off. The buses, you know, everything was crowded. And I was staying at the Pi Phi house that summer and somebody had forgotten and double locked the front door. There had been quite a little celebration at the Pi Phi house, I think, because nobody would come open the front door for me.

**CD: Oh, no what did you do?**

JM: Well, I had this old car parked on Wright Street. Parked in front of the sorority house. I thought, "I guess I am going to sleep in the car." I didn't have any money. I had

maybe a dollar or two and so there was no such thing as going some place and hiring a place to sleep.

**CD: Right.**

JM: And I was sure the campus police were going to come by. And I thought, "Well, I am just going to tell them go try and wake up somebody at the sorority house." And I remember, when the sun came up, I went to a coffee and donut place and never heard anything more about it except the house mother apologized.

**CD: Now did most students or people, your friends, have relatives who were in the service?**

JM: Oh yes. And I remember my roommate's fiancé was killed. I must have been a junior.

**CD: Were there letters exchanged between?**

JM: Servicemen? Oh, yes, constantly.

**CD: Did you have correspondence?**

JM: Yes, but nothing very serious as far as I was concerned, but, fellows I had dated.

**CD: And was any of it...do you remember any of it as remarkable? Anything really stick out in your memory in terms of a letter you got from a servicemen about what the war was like or what he was doing?**

JM: No. As it turned out most of them...I remember one of them was in engineering in the University but he ended up in X-ray and then also somebody who was premed who ended up in engineering. I was writing to them.

**CD: And they were overseas both of them?**

JM: Yes.

**CD: Were they Europe? Do you remember?**

JM: Yes.

**CD: Yes.**

JM: I don't think I knew anyone who was in the South Pacific. I did date someone my last semester I did date someone who was in the South Pacific.

**CD: Who had come back?**

JM: Who'd come back. He had been a fighter pilot.

**CD: Did you all talk about the experience of it?**

JM: Well, he had been shot down and would have never made it back to the American lines except this young native boy found him and helped him get back. Had some dramatic stories to tell. And he also had very bad malaria. And so you never knew. You'd think you had a date and at the last minute he was laid up for a week or so and couldn't get out of bed.

**CD: Wow. Well, is there anything else you can think of that I should know and maybe future researchers maybe should know about what life was like here at the University of Illinois during the war?**

JM: Well, it was very much tied to the war because we all had relatives and boyfriends, hometown neighbors, you know who were in the service and were killed.

**CD: Were there funerals? Do you remember funerals? I ask this because...**

JM: They were in the hometowns.

**CD: They were in the hometowns. Yeah.**

JM: I think we got releases from the war department but I am not certain about that.

**CD: You think you got press releases from the war department?**

JM: I think maybe the *Daily Illini* published a list.

**CD: Of who was...**

JM: Casualties.

**CD: Right. In action.**

JM: But I am not certain about that.

**CD: Did you get press releases or information from the war department or was it almost exclusively from AP?**

JM: Almost exclusively from AP.

**CD: Did you run...I imagine you got photographs from the war.**

JM: Lots of photographs.



**CD: Did you print them in the *DI*?**

JM: Oh yes. We had at least one full page of war pictures everyday.

**CD: And how did you...I imagine you got many more photographs than you could print how was the selection made?**

JM: Well, I remember one page was sent out from AP, pertinent war pictures that we did automatically.

**CD: Ok. So it was a discrete number of photos that they felt that pretty much fit.**

JM: Local photos were complex. You know everything was harder than it is these days.

**CD: Right.**

JM: So we didn't...we undoubtedly did not do as many local pictures as we should have. I can't even remember who took the pictures. We must have had a photographer. I do know we used to have this great column by Gene Shalit who was funny. He kept us all in stitches when he was in the office.

**CD: Really.**

JM: And he was very like sixteen when he showed up at the *Daily Illini*.

**CD: That's very young.**

JM: He was very bright. He graduated from high school in Chicago at a very young age and came right to the University.

**CD: Do you remember when I spoke with Millicent Sloboda we were talking about an editorial that she ran that she was called into the dean's office to kind of defend it. I think the editorial was about how servicemen were treated on campus. Do you have any memory of this?**

JM: No.

**CD: Ok. Did you notice any conflicts between soldiers and students or animosity of any sort because of their presence?**

JM: No, we were all...the war was very important to us. I do remember, Willard, President Willard, the interim president at that point and the University was searching for a new president. And my family had insisted that I make a trip out of state with them to go see my grandfather. That weekend Sam King ran a front page editorial saying, "Bring

Rainey to Illinois.” Who was the disgraced president of the University of Texas. And I thought, “Boy are we going...” And Sam had never said a word about that.

**CD: He just ran the editorial.**

JM: Wrote the editorial and ran the editorial. I thought, “Are we ever going to hear about that.” I did not hear a thing.

**CD: So you really did have a great deal of autonomy.**

JM: Yes. Nobody told us what we could write editorials about and not. And I did go to the Board of Trustees meetings every time.

**CD: Really?**

JM: In Chicago.

**CD: While you were a student here?**

JM: Yes, but the trustees met in Chicago.

**CD: Tell me more about that. That sounds fascinating.**

JM: And we took the train up and I went with the *Courier* reporter and the *Gazette* reporter. And we had lunch with the trustees and got to know most of them, you know. And got to know... Willard I knew quite well and he was president when I graduated and all my relatives came. The graduation was at Illini Union because there weren't many graduating in August of 1945.

**CD: Sure.**

JM: '45, yes. And he kept saying this is another Hurt and this is another Hurt going through the line. And then I worked very hard on President Goddard's inauguration. Part of it, you see, was in Chicago.

**CD: Oh when you were at the...**

JM: This is when I was at Navy Pier. And really it is not anything for the Archives but I had a baby and I worked until just before she was born so they hired someone who had been editor of the *Daily Illini* to take my place. And I can't imagine how President Goddard got mixed up in it but they said, “How can you pay this young man twice as much as you were paying Jean Hurt?”

**CD: Really.**

JM: Well, because he is married and they have a baby.

**CD: They didn't sort of notice that maybe you were pregnant?**

JM: Well, I could imagine and they said, I wouldn't mention names but the gusy knew they were going into the service and they didn't pay any attention to their grades or anything of the sort. But he was a young man that had terrible grades as an undergraduate and you're doubling his pay. And that was very unusual hoop-de-do for someone as low level as I was.

**CD: Well, it is remarkable that someone took notice of it. That's...and challenged!**

JM: Well, I didn't.

**CD: Right but someone else did.**

JM: Someone did. And, you know, each editor, perhaps Millicent mentioned that each editor, had a project for the year.

**CD: Oh, no.**

JM: Jim Armsey, has his name showed up?

**CD: Not that I've seen.**

JM: He lives in Urbana Champaign.

**CD: Oh is he really? I should probably know this.**

JM: Jim Armsey. You should. He is in very ill health. I had a letter from him yesterday and he was in our wedding party and we've kept in close touch all these years. Jim, when he was editor, he had a campaign against houses of prostitution in Champaign. And we werer all...We'd look up the back copies and we were really intrigued with that. I came to realize how difficult the housing situation was. The University had practically no dormitories and I tried to get all the facts and say we have to have dormitories built right after the war. Where are people going to live?

**CD: That was your project for the year?**

JM: That was my project for the year. And I remember trying to trace Dom Mecillo who had been head of housing at the University and he was in Tennessee at the big government, secret government operation. And I don't know. They weren't supposed to give out his address or anything. But I remember writing to him trying to find out more about housing and what plans there were. And of course the University did do a big program. I didn't have anything to do with it I am sure but it was something that had to happen after World War II.

**CD: Sure. So when each of you had a project for the year, was that a combination then of editorials and stories?**

JM: Yes.

**CD: And would assign some of the stories to others?**

JM: Oh, yes. We'd have... You had a conference with a junior editor and the junior editors were some of them seniors. That's right because the editor was picked from one of the junior editors.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: And I remember I met about once a month with the chairman of the supervisory committee which was students and faculty.

**CD: And was that different than the board of directors?**

JM: No, that was the board.

**CD: Ok. So it was a daily publication.**

JM: Well, before the war it had been six days a week. During the war it was cut back to five days a week.

**CD: To five.**

JM: We did not work Sunday night and we did not work Monday night.

**CD: Did you have editorial meetings after the paper came out the next day in review?**

JM: Not regularly.

**CD: Not regularly.**

JM: I think we met once a week.

**CD: Ok. Well, it sounds absolutely fascinating in that the paper played such a big part in your life here. It is interesting.**

JM: The sororities, you see would subscribe to, oh, fifteen-twenty copies. The fraternities had been closed. There were no fraternities on campus. And there was quite, you know, everybody wanted to see the paper. Mostly they wanted to see Shalit's column.

**CD: Where did you run Shalit's column? What page?**

JM: I think the editorial page. Second page.

**CD: So they could get to it quickly.**

JM: That's right. And, you know, in addition to the *Daily Illini*, I had been on Illini Union committees and I was in the homecoming queen contest and a lot of things like that. Vice president of the junior class. In one play put on by the University drama department. You know a lot of other things, but by my junior year I really was spending all my time at the *Daily Illini*.

**CD: What was the Illinois Union committee you were on? What was the responsibility?**

JM: Oh, I think in connection with homecoming.

**CD: Homecoming, ok. And what was the Union like during the war? Was it a place where people gathered and was there a cafeteria?**

JM: Yes. Also there was a faculty dining room.

**CD: A faculty dining room.**

JM: And then a cafeteria in the basement. So we would go over there for snacks.

**CD: Were the servicemen allowed to go into the cafeteria?**

JM: You know I don't remember any servicemen there. I would say no.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: They were loaded with classes.

**CD: Yes. On the fast track so to speak.**

JM: But we had the dances in the ballroom in the Daily Illini. In the Illini Union.

**CD: The Union. How often would there be dances.**

JM: Oh, there was junior prom and a senior prom. And I remember there used to be B-M-O-C ball. That was Big Men On Campus.

**CD: Yes.**

JM: And they never did acknowledge any big women on campus. [laughter] Somebody, he maybe did a little reporting. I remember seeing him around the *Daily Illini* but he decided we ought to have BMOC, ball except...anyway I got in big trouble for being one of the cosponsors for that and I really wasn't involved in it beside from saying, "Well, that sounds like a good idea." We had it in a local bar.

**CD: What was wrong with...?**

JM: You can't call it a BMOC ball in the local bar.

**CD: But why would you get in trouble for that? I don't understand.**

JM: Well, it didn't have permit. You couldn't have something with out a permit.

**CD: Oh, it was the location. Right.**

JM: And the sorority scolded me and they sent a letter to my parents.

**CD: Oh my goodness.**

JM: That's right. That is what my Mother and Father said.

**CD: "This is what we sent..."**

JM: So there were social...

**CD: "This is what we sent you to college for."**

JM: Yeah and what kind of trouble did you get into. And I had gone to the party that night and it was just like going to Bidwell's on a Saturday night. You could drink beer. Had a date.

**CD: Was music, live music, a big part of life?**

JM: No.

**CD: No.**

JM: But they did have bands.

**CD: On campus?**

JM: For the big dances. And no I don't think, I think they were not campus people.

**CD: They brought them in.**

JM: They brought in bands. That was the era of big bands.

**CD: Right.**

JM: But I don't remember having any big bands on the campus.

**CD: Interesting. So do you feel that your time here was really instrumental in sort of your developmental both professionally and personally?**

JM: Oh, very much. Very much, in that growing up in a small town, I had a very limited view. Educated by the Chicago *Tribune* which was a great force in the middle of Illinois and the Midwest in general. Colonel McCormick.

**CD: Right.**

JM: And my parents were Republicans and very conservative. And I became a Democrat.

**CD: How did they respond?**

JM: Oh, by that time I was sort of on my own. Politics weren't that important to them.

**CD: And how long did they...did your parents grow up in Fairbury as well?**

JM: No.

**CD: No.**

JM: Well, my Mother did. My mother did. My Dad...and Dad had been living in the area. They came from... I was first in the family to even think about attending college.

**CD: You were.**

JM: And my parents were very proud of me and I was spoiled. [laughter] They neither of them had finished high school.

**CD: And were they both Midwesterners? You say your Mother grew up in Fairbury.**

JM: Yes.

**CD: And your Dad?**

JM: My Dad was born in Kentucky but came to Fairbury. Worked as a hired man. Came from Kentucky to work as a hired man. My Mother originally worked as a hired girl.

**CD: Really? Do you know when you Dad immigrated up to Illinois?**

JM: Well, I would say in 1912... he was in the war and it was after the war.

**CD: After World War I?**

JM: No. He was drafted. He was working as a hired man but he was drafted into the Prairie Division in World War I.

JM: Now I am in the process of trying to write and collect the information and pictures of Dad during World War I because he was overseas in both the battles that we fought in. And then he served in the army of occupation for a year.

**CD: Did he really?**

JM: When we lived in Brussels for four years, Mom and Dad came over to visit us. We took dad to Luxembourg which was where he was as part of the army of occupation. Nothing was familiar to him except the bridge in Luxembourg City.

**CD: How interesting.**

JM: If you have ever been there, it splits the town. Big bridge.

**CD: Fascinating. So he came back from the war and wound up in Fairbury. How interesting. You know the first thing I am going to do is look for Fairbury on a map. [laughter] Do you still have family there?**

JM: I am sorry to say, no longer. I have a brother in Champaign Urbana.

**CD: Oh, really?**

JM: In Urbana. After my brother retired from a job. Do you know about the Art Mart?

**CD: Sure.**

JM: My sister-in-law and her sister ran the Art Mart.

**CD: Really?**

JM: And after my brother retired from his regular job he helped them a lot at the Art Mart. So I have been back to visit them and Mother and Dad moved to Clark-Lindsey. It's a retirement home.

**CD: Oh, yes.**

JM: And so I was there visiting Mom and Dad.



**CD: So it sounds like you came back with some regularity.**

JM: Yes. Certainly, well Mom and Dad were living. And I came back for the Illini ground breaking.

**CD: For the new building on Green Street?**

JM: For the new building. And they asked me to say a few words about being editor during World War II, the last year of World War II.

**CD: Because when was that? Probably just two years ago?**

JM: Two years ago.

**CD: So 2003? Wait, no this is 2008 we are in. So 2006ish.**

JM: Yeah. I am trying to think were I might have that. It was in the fall.

**CD: I am sure we have the information here too. How interesting.**

JM: Yes. And the only one I am in close contact with is Glenn Roberts who had been sports editor and Glenn was head of the Iowa poll, which was quite well known for many years. Remember we moved to her from Wilmington, Delaware. My husband was vice president of a chemical company and it was in connection with the company that we were sent overseas for four years.

**CD: To Brussels.**

JM: He was president of the company's operations in Europe.

**CD: And Glenn Roberts...**

JM: Glenn Roberts is now retired although he has been very active in the association of pollsters and knows all of them in the country.

**CD: And he was someone that worked on the *Illini* with you?**

JM: He was sports editor.

**CD: He was the sports editor. Well, I may ask you for contact information for him.**

JM: Oh, yes. He is in Des Moines.

**CD: He's in Des Moines. Oh, that is easy.**

JM: I can give you his...I am not sure I have his telephone easily accessible but I can give you his address.

**CD: Ok.**

JM: Just one moment please. Glenn Roberts: sixty five nineteen Washington Avenue, Des Moines Iowa, 50322.

**CD: Great and it's G-L-E-N.**

JM: Two n's. And middle initial H.

**CD: H. And Roberts.**

JM: I also have the address of June Rogers who was an assistant editor.

**CD: I have her. She is in Hawaii right?**

JM: She is in Hawaii.

**CD: Yes, I have her address. She is on my list of people to contact because it is incredible that all of you folks who worked at the *DI* stayed in touch with each other. You created these networks. It's quite interesting.**

JM: And Jim Armsey of course was in India during the war but Jim been named to the Illini Media Hall of Fame and is over at Clark-Lindsey.

**CD: Well, this is great. I don't want to keep you but there is one more little piece of business and that we would like to include in the archives, this information eventually will be made available via the internet the web, and we'd like to include photographs of each of the people we speak with.**

JM: Oh, I have one I that got taken for my obituary.

**CD: For your obituary!**

JM: Yes. Well, I am eighty-three.

**CD: You have a long way to go here.**

JM: Well...

**CD: But it is the one you want run when you die.**

JM: Yes.

**CD: That's so...I have never heard of this kind of thing before. It's a great idea.**

JM: Well, it annoys me when you see pictures and the woman's ninety and there is a picture of her when she was thirty three.

**CD: Yes!**

JM: So my husband and I decided we would take care of that.

**CD: How interesting! I love that. These are traditional photographs? Printed photographs?**

JM: Yes.

**CD: Would it be possible for you to send me a copy?**

JM: Yes I'll send you one.

**CD: That would be so nice of you.**

JM: Did you give me an address?

**CD: It's the address of the Archives, Archives Research Center.**

JM: Let me write that down.

**CD: Yeah let me pull it up here on the...hello.**

JM: Yes I am with you.

**CD: Let's see. The internet here I am trying to get this to work. Here we go. About. Yes. Our address is...my name is Chris, C-H-R-I-S.**

JM: Yes.

**CD: D'Arpa. D as in David.**

JM: Right.

**CD: Apostrophe.**

JM: Right.

**CD: Capital A-R, P as in Paul, A.**

JM: Right I have that written down some place in the office but now give me the address.

**CD: Sure. It's the Archives Research Center.**

JM: Right I've got that.

**CD: Room 105, 1707 South Orchard and we are in Urbana, Illinois 61801.**

JM: My brother and his wife were just here for the wedding of one of our grandsons.

**CD: One of your grandsons! How sweet. That's great. How long have you lived in Greensboro?**

JM: We moved here nine years ago. It is a retirement community. And thought it was high time to be relocated near some relatives and we have two daughters here.

**CD: Oh, that is great!**

JM: So it has been a very good move for us.

**CD: Well, it has been a pleasure talking to you. I really appreciate you taking time this morning to have this conversation.**

JM: Well, I know I have rambled on with a lot of things not of general interest.

**CD: No.**

JM: But it was a fascinating time for me and I, you know, it did lead to my working for the University at the Medical Center and then at Navy Pier. And did not work... I haven't worked since I have done a lot of free publicity work for organizations but I have not been paid for anything for a very long time. And I know you have...What is Millicent doing?

**CD: She's in Lansing, Michigan. And, you know, her husband died a couple of years ago and she seemed, she seems very active still reading newspapers and keeping up with what is going on in the world. And has very much a life there and several children so.**

JM: Good I am glad to hear. I am glad to hear that she is doing fine. If you have occasion to talk with her again tell her hi.

**CD: Ok and you know you all...what we'll do as I said I'll send you, once Dan finishes the transcript and we review it, we'll send you a copy and ask you to just...**

JM: Change any mistakes.

**CD: Change any mistakes.**

JM: Or make me look better than I really am if I can. [laughter]

**CD: We will do what we can. [laughter]**

JM: Well, I will put a photograph in the mail for you.

**CD: And let me ask you, it occurred to me while you were talking about this, did you finish the law school program here?**

JM: Oh no.

**CD: No.**

JM: Because at that point they asked me to come back and work at Medical School.

**CD: Right.**

JM: Until Jim Armsey could get on the spot.

**CD: Right.**

JM: And by that time they needed somebody at Navy Pier. And during that time I met the young man that became my husband.

**CD: Oh sweet! So in Chicago.**

JM: So I never did get to law school but one of our daughters did.

**CD: So it's been done.**

JM: It's been done.

**CD: Well, again Jean thank you so much and we will be in touch.**

JM: Ok. I expect to be around here.

**CD: Well, I look forward to...**

JM: Don't wait too many years!

**CD: I'll talk to you again.**

JM: Fine.

**CD: You take care.**

JM: Right.

**CD: Thanks. Bye bye.**

JM: Bye.