

**University of Illinois Student Life, 1928 – 38:
Oral History Project
Kathryn G. Hansen '34
Urbana, IL
December 5th, 2000**

Start of Tape 1, Side A

Ellen Swain: This is an oral history interview for the University of Illinois Archives. The interviewer is Ellen Swain. The narrator is Kathryn Hansen, a U of I alumna from the Class of 1934. We're at Ms. Hansen's home in Urbana, Illinois and the date is December 5th, 2000.

Kathryn Hansen: My name is Kathryn Gertrude Hansen. I was born May 24, 1912, Gardner, Grundy County Illinois. I was an only child and an only grandchild until I was about 10 or 11 years old, so I was very spoiled. I grew up with both sets of grandparents, aunts and uncles, and so when I graduated from high school in 1930, my principal was a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan. I was valedictorian of my class and he wanted me to go to Illinois Wesleyan. This was very agreeable to my parents because I could go from Gardner to Bloomington on the railroad, the Alton railroad, and that meant I could come home on weekends very easily. So all this set, I had my room, one of the women at Gardner was a member of one of the sororities at Illinois Wesleyan and I was going to become a member overnight, everything was ready, I was going to Illinois Wesleyan, to which I had a scholarship because it was very necessary at the time.

But one day my father went to Morris, our county seat, and there he met this () who was our county superintendent of schools and who had seen my mother and father go through school and who had seen me go through school. And he told my father about this wonderful scholarship to the University of Illinois for four years, but I would have to take five examinations. Now, to my father that posed no problem, but he came home all excited about this. I didn't want to do it and I didn't want to come down to here. Where was Champaign, Illinois? And all of that. But, nevertheless, I went to the county seat in Morris and sat up in the top of old Grundy County Courthouse on a very hot summer day with no air conditioning, and five of us took this examination: three in the morning and two in the afternoon. And my father waited all day, and when I came out I said, "forget it." But one day he came home waving the envelope and I had the scholarship. I still didn't want to come. But my father had a meeting in Springfield and he and mother went and they did not take me along. Things were very simple at that time. I already had been admitted to the University of Illinois on the basis of my scholarship. So they stopped on their way home and they saw Dean Trenchet, she was Assistant Dean under Maria Leonard. And they came home with a room for me in West Residence Hall. West Residence Hall had just been built, it was brand new. So I came to the University of Illinois. Scared out of my wits.

[Interruption]

Well I had a roommate in West Hall and she was a sophomore and she did not want me because I was a freshman. So here I was and I didn't know a single solitary soul very frightened.

And the University had around, I think, 4,000 students then. It was big to me, it was enormous. I was certain that I was going to fail and that I was going to disgrace my parents, things were pretty bad. So my letters home were pretty sad. A teacher in Gardner High School was from Champaign. She had a car, and she came home on weekends sometimes and so she brought my mother down. My mother took me out of West Hall one weekend and took me down to the Urbana Lincoln Hotel, at that time, sat me down in a chair and gave me a little...talk I guess. Which went something like this: I was an only child and I had never had to share with a brother or sister, and so was probably having trouble with my roommate. I might have to make my own way in the world and my parents were very anxious that I go to college.

ES: Did your parents have a college background?

KH: My mother had had one year at Illinois Normal and my father had gone to a business college in Chicago and they thought I should go. They really didn't want to hear these sad stories. I've often thought about this since because she could have come and said, "Honey, come on home. You can go to Illinois Wesleyan, you know, we're not going to have you down here crying your eyes out." But she didn't. Well, it's the best thing that ever happened to me, I thought, well, I better straighten up here. Well one of the early things...Do you want to hear all this stuff?

ES: Sure, sure.

KH: One of the early things that had happened was that I was in Garreta Busey's English 10A, early in the semester. And she said, "How many of you have studied Chaucer?" Only one. "Miss. Hansen, have you studied Chaucer?" "Yes." "Did you study the Canterbury Tales?" "Yes." "Did you study the Prologue?" "Yes." "Did you memorize the Prologue?" "Yes." "Could you say it for us?" "I think I could: *Whan that Aprille, with hise shoures soote, The droghte of March hath perced to the roote, And bathed every veyne in swich licour, Of which vertu engendred is the flour:* goes on, goes on." Well it got very quiet, and I thought oh no, I am not in Gardner High School, and I've done something wrong. I don't know what it is, but. And she said, "Ms. Hansen, could you stay after class?" Then I was sure. Well, I stayed after class and she said, "Ms. Hansen, where did you go to High School?" I said, "Gardner South Wilmington High School." "Who was your teacher?" "Ms. Oneda Vought." "Would you do something for me? Would you write her a letter and tell her what a wonderful teacher she was." Well, we thought Ms. Vought was a little flaky, we thought she didn't have all her buttons in. Anyway, I wrote her a letter and she was very pleased and she called my parents and told them she had gotten this letter. From that little incident and others that had occurred then, I began to think, I think I can like this. I don't think I can fail. Pretty soon I got involved in the Wesley Foundation, which was a Methodist Foundation, and began to date and things became far more interesting and I didn't want to go home. And so, that was the beginning, then in the spring of '31, I pledged the sorority (Alpha Delta Theta). This is a picture from a 1928 *Illio*, I think, of the House on Illinois Street. We had been a very close group, we have stayed together all these years. I think because we went to the University through the Depression and we didn't know if we had enough money for even the next semester. We were all in the same boat you know, and so we became a very close group.

ES: Tell me, how did you get involved in that sorority? Why did you want to be in a sorority?

KH: I wanted, well, I do not know how I got invited. I think lists were given out from the Dean of Women's office, I think that is where they got their lists. Anyway, they invited me to dinner. I just liked them the minute I got there. See there were 150 girls in West Hall, here was a much smaller group, that just appealed to me. I liked them just like that, I thought that this was just great. So I pledged.

ES: What was rush like? What did you have to do?

KH: Well, I didn't go through rush, you see.

ES: Because you were invited?

KH: Because I was invited. But I can remember rushing, you know. We had parties, you generally had a tea, you had a dinner, it went through stages you know. You got, maybe you got invited to the tea and you were looked over, and if you passed that, maybe you were invited to a luncheon or something. Then as you passed that you got invited to the dinner and when you got passed the dinner you were probably talked to about joining. In the meantime, they would vote, you see, and decide. Of course, lots of people didn't make it, maybe didn't want to make it, didn't like the group for one thing or another. Then you were pledged. And you went through a period of being a pledge. I had to go through a period of being a pledge for a semester or so.

ES: Did you have special responsibilities?

KH: Oh yes, you had certain duties you had to do. Like what no one else wanted to do. They weren't hard and I can remember the fraternities coming and serenading us, and how excited we were. We had cap burning at that time. Have you run into that?

ES: Yeah, talk about that a little.

KH: Alright. Well the fraternity boys, freshmen, all had to wear caps. And depending on what fraternity you belonged to determined the color of your cap: red, green, blue, or whatever. And they had to wear them to classes when they were a freshmen. So all during the year they hauled branches of trees out to around the Stadium. That lot across from the Stadium used to be a big field. They would haul all this stuff and they got a huge pile of stuff by the end of spring. So by May, early in May, they all went out, all the fraternity boys with their caps. They threw their caps onto this pile of stuff and burned them. As time went on it got wild, they'd take their clothes off and run through the streets and I can remember them getting all around our house one night and I can remember the house mother got us all down into the living room and we pulled the draperies and hovered. They were dancing around the house, you know. They finally, in the later years, began to do damage to property and then it was put a stop to. But that was cap burning.

But then it was very thrilling when they came to sing, you know, and we'd all hang out the windows. Miss Carter would be our house mother and be up there seeing that nothing went astray, you know. They would want you to through your panties out or something like that, you know. She was up there to see that we didn't do anything horrible like that. It was just a different time. I went back to the house not long ago for dinner, and this little girl was sitting at the table and she had a problem. She needed to get keys for her boyfriend to come into the house at night. I made a mistake, I said, "Well, when I was in school no one had a key but the housemother and the door was locked at 10:30. No one went out after that or they were kicked out of school. On Saturday nights we could be out until 12 o'clock and on prom nights until 1 o'clock. But you were inside." She looked at me and she said, "Well, that's archaic." But it was a different time.

We were taught table manners, how to be a hostess, how to be a gracious lady, that was all part of the sorority life at that time, it's highly different of course now. Miss Carter was it...she could discipline you, she had disciplinary authority, and I remember my mother saying, "Ms. Carter, anytime Kathryn needs correcting, you just correct her." A number of years ago, 24 years ago, a student interviewed me, she was taking a course in how American History affected your life. She was a final semester senior, straight A student. But she lived in an apartment. She read my book *Grundy Corners*. She said, "How did that Susan Jane run all around that town going to anybody's house and anybody's store and she wasn't afraid?" I said, "are you afraid?" "Oh, yes she said. I'm never at the library late, I'm always home before dark. I'm living in an apartment and I'm home before dark. Yes I am afraid." I said, "you know, now you are...we were disciplined, we had to live within rules. Now you're free and with that freedom comes these problems." We didn't have them, we didn't know what they were. It was just a different time. It was very wonderful. I wouldn't take anything at all for my years in the sorority. Wonderful, just wonderful.

ES: You're talking about rules and restrictions. Could you say a little more about that and the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women and what their role was?

KH: Oh they were very important. Dean Maria Leonard was the Dean of Women. She had two assistants, I believe, and I remember Miss Trenchard was one of them. Of course Dean Thomas Arkle Clark was God.

ES: How did the students view him?

KH: He had a spy system. Now, I'll have to go a little bit beyond my college years. Red Grange was the Chairman of the Board for my office for a number of years and I got very well aquatinted with him. I'm back in my career now. But, we used to have to go up to the old State of Illinois Building in Chicago, right across from the Sherman Hotel, to present our budget. This would be a hearing board and there would be an equal number of Republican and Democrat Senators, and they sat around this great big table and you got this time that you had to appear. Red Grange was my Chairman and he'd have to go in with me. We had to sit in this long dark hallway and wait until we were called. The reporters were always there, from the *Tribune* and

the Chicago newspapers and the radio stations at that time. They soon discovered that Red Grange was there, they loved to come and sit at his feet and they'd say, "Tell the story, tell the story." I wish I had a recording of them, but a couple of them I'll never forget. One of them involved Dean Thomas Arkle Clark.

There was another football player named Sweed, and Sweed was a great friend of Red Grange, and he had a car. Forbidden, but he had a car. And so this particular night they had gone down to the Orphium Theater that had Vaudeville shows and they had a gallon of Prohibition whiskey in the car. When they went into the performance the manager saw him and said, "Oh say, we sure got a good troupe here this time and they're staying over at the hotel." There was a hotel right across the street at the time, from the Orphium. "They're staying over there after the performance, we're going to have a little party." So, they did and they went out to the car and they got this whiskey out of the car and they went over to the party. Now, this was on a Saturday night. Dean Clark had a spy system, he had a kid in every fraternity and in every rooming house who reported to him any unusual things. So Monday morning Mr. Grange was called into Dean Clark's office. He said, "Mr. Grange, I understand that on Friday night you and Sweed went down to the Orphium Theater and attended a performance there and afterwards you went out to the car and got this gallon of whiskey and you took it over to the hotel across the street and you participated in this party. Is that correct Mr. Grange?" He said, "No, Friday night I was in Danville, I can prove it." Dean Clark said, "Mr. Grange, if you say so, that's fine." He said, "it took me a good many years to realize that he had changed the night." He knew. The reporters said, "Can we print that story?" And he said, "no."

Anyway, they were very important to the students. I remember we had a Pan-Hellenic Council and you sent your sorority representatives to this and of course Dean Leonard had much to say about that. And also, when these houses were all closing, our sororities houses during the Depression, she had much to do with that. I don't remember that we did anything but respect her. I don't remember that we resented her in anyway. We just knew that she was the word and when she said the word that's what we were supposed to do. It was just an entirely different time. You didn't question authority. You accepted authority. We accepted Miss Carter, we know she was going to be our house mother away from home, we knew this. I don't remember anyone ever saying anything rude or cross to Miss Carter. We might go back in our room, talk about it little bit, but it was just a different time. Everybody knew that Dean Clark had a spy system, this is how he got his information.

ES: Were they very visible on campus? Did students have contact with them or were they kind of figures?

KH: They were figures. In fact, you didn't want to be particularly be called into their office. I can remember Dean Leonard coming to the Pan-Hellenic Council and talking to us. We knew who she was, we knew she was there in the Women's Building. Of course, she had the two assistants, I just can't remember the name of the other woman. Very often, you went to the assistants, you didn't see Dean Leonard if you had something to talk about. She'd get a complaint about the sororities in some way and she'd call the officers in or our advisors, you

know we all had advisors, and we'd have to go in and talk to her about it for whatever it was. I don't remember any fear of her or resentment, that was just it.

ES: Do you remember when Thomas Arkle Clark died? What reaction was on campus to that? That was in 1932.

KH: I think that, isn't there something in here about him? May I look? I think there may be something in here about him. [Long pause as Ms. Hansen checks her book, Whispers of Yesterday.] So, Mr. Hoffman let you take this out...well, you're privileged. This is the story about the, that I just told you, about Red Grange. But there is a little thing in here somewhere, a little poem that the students said about Thomas Arkle Clark, and I don't know just where I had it.

ES: How did his rules differ than her rules? How did rules for men differ from rules for women?

KH: Oh, I don't recall that we ever talked about that or that it was a problem. We just knew that we had to keep hours.

ES: Did boys have hours?

KH: No. I can remember Miss Carter standing up at the top of the stairs, it was date night. It got to be 10:30, close to 10:30, 10:15, she would come down the stairs jingling her keys, you'd hear the keys coming and all. She'd say, "now boys, five minutes, five minutes." And they were gone.

ES: They could visit downstairs?

KH: Yeah, in the house. Not on second floor, no way. If you had to have a workman to do something to the plumbing, they'd say, "Men on second." And we'd all run and shut our doors. No, they were not allowed up beyond the second floor. You couldn't have dark draperies. I remember one time it was a big discussion, they wanted to put dark draperies over some of the windows. You couldn't have that, the Dean said you couldn't have that. But I don't remember we ever questioned about the boys, I just remember we had to keep ours.

ES: Was smoking allowed?

KH: Oh my no. Nobody, no. I can remember, well, it was a no-no, you weren't supposed to. When I was at the residence hall yet, there was a girl who was caught smoking, she was sent home. Now I can remember President Chase, he was our president, he lived in the first house there, or the second house, it would be west of the resident hall on Nevada Street. He had a daughter and she just upset everyone in Champaign-Urbana because she'd walk out to the end of the walk in front and smoke. Just threw the place in chaos. No, I don't remember the girls smoking at all, I don't remember it was a problem.

ES: Was drinking a problem?

KH: No, no. It might have been in some groups, it wasn't in our group – there was no problem. I remember in later years and I was an alum by that time and they reported that one of the girls came in one night and she was drunk. And the president of the chapter went right to the phone and called the national president and she came, and that girl was sent home. But, it just wasn't a problem.

[Beginning of Tape 1 Side B.]

ES: We've been talking about rules. Did you have impressions about the presidents of the University? You talked about President Chase.

KH: Oh yeah. President McKinley was very wonderful. He would come and walk along the Broadwalk as the classes were changing. He would stop and talk to us. We all know who he was, he wasn't somebody that you never saw or you know. He'd ask you how you were getting along and anything that was troubling you. He was wonderful. President Case was an easterner. He was very cold, he seemed to be very cold. Then, or course, later on, not while I was in school, when President Stoddard was here, that was a big deal and he got fired, a lot of it is in here. That's why the University likes this (Whispers of Yesterday), I was very close to the Stoddard problem. But when I was in school, as I say, for the most part of my time at school it was President McKinley. As I say he was a wonderful man. I don't remember any particular contacts with him, but I can remember his walking along the Broadwalks. I was looking here to see who signed my diplomas. Willard. Oh, I could tell you a lot about him. This was Daniel. He came, he was Dean of the Graduate School and he was acting President after McKinley left. He just happened to be there to sign my diploma. But President Willard came and, of course, he was from our College of Engineering. This was when the Illini Union was built, Willard Airport was built, and Betsy Ross came to be the hostess of the President's house, I knew Betsy very well. She became the hostess and wrote the book *I Fly the Flag* and so on and so on.

ES: How did students view him?

KH: Oh, they loved him.

ES: He was another person who was visible?

KH: Oh, yes. And see the President's House, when it was built, really started under Chase, when Chase was here. It came under a lot of criticism about the money, the amount of money that was being spent on it. A lot of stories that there were gold umbrella stands and I don't know what all. So when Willard became President one of the things he did, every Sunday he had an open house. Practically everybody in Champaign-Urbana go to walk through that house, from the first floor through every bedroom upstairs. One of the stories Betsy loves to tell is that

one Sunday the President was so tired and he thought everybody had gone and he went and sat down and took his shoes off. He said, "Thank God they're all gone." Just then the last contingent came down the stairs! He had to get his shoes back on and tell them goodbye. He opened up the University and it was a progressive time.

ES: Talking about the fraternities and sororities. Talk about how the Greek students and the Independent students got along.

KH: Well I don't remember, of course, I was in a sorority. We were a very close group, I don't remember particularly associating outside the house. I don't know if we were resented, we might have been resented, I don't know. I don't remember having any feeling one way or another. I just remember liking where I was and I liked the group I was with.

ES: Did being in a sororities elevate your standing on campus?

KH: I'm sure it did. I'm sure it did. Although, there were many independents who got jobs on the *Daily Illini* or other things. There were a number of honorary groups, gee, I've even forgotten which ones I belonged to. And there was, of course, houses that were wealthier, Kappa Alpha Theta and Pi Phi and Chi Omega, were the wealthy girls, they came from wealthy families. Then there were houses that were poor like us.

ES: And this was known throughout campus?

KH: Oh yes, oh yes. There was feeling there, for instance I remember the expensive fraternities dating the girls in Kappa Alpha Theta, Pi Phi, and Chi Omega. Poor houses came to us. There was a very definite line there. When I went through this old *Illio*, the only big house, all the sororities lived in places like this, except Kappa Alpha Theta, Pi Phi and Chi Omega. Their houses had been built and they were there on Wright Street. They were the houses to see. They were the wealthy girls and they came out of the Chicago suburbs and they wanted nothing to do with us. We were peons.

ES: So you didn't participate in the dances with them?

KH: Oh no, just with the fraternities that we dated.

ES: That was informal? You knew that there was nothing written down?

KH: That was nothing written down, but it might as well have been written in stone. You know what I mean. At home, and our house dances were right here that the house, and the fraternity were in their houses. You didn't go out some place, you know. The proms were, somewhere, in some University building. Very simple.

ES: How did the Depression affect sorority and student activities?

KH: Of course, there again as I say, in groups like ours, and there were many of us, we didn't know from one day to another if we were going to be in school because we didn't know if our parents were going to be able to keep us there or not. So, things were very simple, you know, you could have...I don't remember...Oh I'll tell you this. One of our big deals was to buy some hamburgers and have some coke and get on the Interurban and ride to Monticello and get off at that park right at the edge of Monticello. The one right the at the edge of town, and we'd get off the Interurban there and we'd have a picnic and we'd come home. The Interurban would be stopped for us and we could get on and get off. But we had to be home in the hours. That was a big deal. Then, fellows didn't have any money, so a date, you went down to the corner, well Prehn's on Oregon, and you'd get on the bus and you would ride clear out to, well, it is where Market Place is now. That was the end of Champaign, that was the end of the Interurban. You were out in the country and it would stop there. Then the motorman would say, you've got to step up now and pay for the return trip. Well, some of them had the money and some of them didn't. Anyway, we'd all come back and we'd ride clear to the Court House in Urbana and then we'd get off and we'd walk from the Court House back to campus. And if we were real lucky, really lucky, we were taken to Prehn's on Oregon for a hot fudge sundae. Nobody had any money. You made your own entertainment. I don't remember, nobody felt deprived because nobody had it. Except for these few, but they were not in our realm, anyway. So, I remember that I had a, I thought I was quite a coed, I had a raccoon coat and I thought that was very special. But, I just, we didn't feel deprived at all, but those were the things we did.

ES: You mentioned that sororities had a hard time staying together because of the costs.

KH: The costs, people couldn't afford it you see. They had to drop out of school, many had to drop out of school. Then the tuition was practically nothing, \$100 a year or something like that, it was nothing.

ES: How much did it cost to belong to your sorority?

KH: I don't remember, it was a little (). I'm writing now the history of the Altrusa Club right here in Champaign. They started in 1915, which of course was a little early, their first dues were \$2. Even then, you know, so we probably, I don't know, probably paid, I don't know, \$25 a month maybe for our board and room. Something like that. But that was just as hard to come by then as it is three times or four times that amount now. It was very difficult. People just did not have any money.

ES: Did it cause many fraternities to close?

KH: We closed, Phi Omega Pi closed, Alpha Lambda Delta, which was in this book. I bet there were, Beta Phi Alpha closed, in fact most of them closed except those Wright Street ones. What they did, they had us move in to these other houses, because they were half empty, and they gave us housing in these other houses. That's what Dean Maria Leonard did, I remember

when we were going to close and we went through like a rushing party, and we went around to these other houses to see which ones we wanted to live in. That's when we chose Phi Mu.

ES: So as a group you moved into the Phi Mu house.

KH: Uh-huh. We had four rooms on the first floor and Mrs. Hale was our house mother and her room was right across from us and she really got closer to us, I think, than she did her own girls. And she loved us and we loved her. And we stayed there.

ES: Then you were part of Phi Mu? Or did you retain your identity?

KH: No. We traded our identity, we even rushed. We had our own area in the dining room and we ate together and we stayed together.

ES: Did you get along?

KH: Oh yes, that's how I knew all these people. Yes, we got along fine. We were helping keep them open and then it just happened that later on we merged nationally, it was nothing to do with us here locally, it was just a happenstance. That's what we did, Miss Leonard arranged all of that. Try and keep us solvent.

ES: What other activities were you in? I know you were in a journalism honorary.

KH: Kappa Tau Alpha was like a Phi Beta Kappa, for journalism. Alpha Lamda Delta was a freshmen honorary that you made according to your grades. Then there were different societies. I've forgotten the names of some of them

ES: What was the Jamesonian Literary Society?

KH: That was just what it was [*laughter*] Jamesonian Literary Society. We studied literature and talked about it, it was an honor to belong.

ES: You were asked?

KH: You were invited.

ES: Was it connected to the English department?

KH: No, it was just one of the many societies on campus. Is that my old literary society, isn't that. Jamesonian, I had forgotten about that, but yes.

ES: Also in your *Illio* (1934) it mentions that you were in the Woman's League? Do you remember that?

KH: Woman's League. Heavenly days, I have no idea what that was.

ES: What was the Pan-Hellenic Council?

KH: The Pan-Hellenic Council was made up of a representative from each of the sororities. They met with the Dean of Women and that was another, that would be considered a very exclusive group. You elected your, I think that two went from every house. The house representatives elected the two that were going to go to the pan-Hellenic council. And they had various things from time to time. Little activities that you participated in.

ES: And you were a member of that?

KH: I was a member of the Pan-Hellenic Council, yes, somewhere along the line.

ES: How important were athletics?

KH: Oh, the teams were very important. We couldn't afford to, I remember, I couldn't afford to go to the games, you know I couldn't afford to buy a ticket to go to them games. We didn't have all the facilities that we have now. And of course some people were very involved, especially people who were in physical education were active in a lot of sports things, you know. I wasn't a sports person so I never, it was never an important part, but I knew we had a football team. My folks came down and we went to the games and we went to the Stadium. They came for basketball game, we went to the gym.

ES: Did you have big Homecomings?

KH: Oh my, Homecoming was very important and all the alumni came back and we had to give up our beds to the alumni.

ES: They stayed in your house?

KH: Oh yes, but they always brought us money. They came with gifts and we were told how we had to treat the alumnae and there was to be no grumbling and so on and so forth, and we had to sleep on the floor and they came for the whole weekend. They came on Friday and they left on Sunday. We were very close to our alumni, in this picture here of our house, there are at least four or five of the alumni that I recognize that came back after I was in the house. These people graduate, you see, there are four or five of them in here that I can recognize that came back for Homecoming.

ES: But they were mainly the people who had just graduated?

KH: Oh no, they were very loyal, they came for years. We had a big Chicago Alumni group, they always came and they brought us money, bought the grand piano and a lot of the nice things that we had – very important to us. But I can remember these people fondly. We always had a Mother's Day, our mother's all came for Mother's day. And the mother's got all aquatinted and they looked forward to seeing each other. They all became very good friends, my mother became very good friends with a number of the mothers. They also bought us nice things, there again we had to give up our beds because they stayed at the house. They would come, well, there was always a dinner on Saturday night and then on Sunday we all went to church, then there would be various things on the Pan-Hellenic, a lot of things would go on for the mothers. It was very nice weekend.

ES: You mentioned that you were involved in the Wesley Foundation. How much did religion play in the lives of the students?

KH: Of course, it was very important to me, that became the source of my social life. That is how I met the fellows I dated.

ES: Rather than through the sororities.

KH: Yes, some, of course we met some of the fraternities boys, but of course a lot of the fraternities boys went to the Wesley Foundation. I was there. It became very important, that's where we went for our recreation. They would have things on the weekends for us, parties, picnics, so that's where you went because as I said, you had no money. They were very important. There was Wesley and there was McKinley, and there was the Lutheran and the Catholic, oh, you know...

ES: Newman?

KH: Newman! So they were the big foundations.

ES: Did they get along? The different foundations acting? How was the Catholic and Protestant?

KH: I don't remember any difficulty at all. No. Years later there was a Father Duncan who was a Catholic at Newman Hall. He was a very wonderful, wonderful man. I was in Rome and we had arranged to go to a public audience with the Pope where his summer palace was. There was a courtyard, and they told us on the bus that just remember the number of the bus because you'll never see the number of the person you came with after you get off the bus because they'll be such a crowd. So we got jammed into this courtyard and we were jammed and the Swiss Guards came along and they had spears that came down like this and you moved your feet back and there were cobblestones. All at once I looked up and I was standing with two Father's and they looked down at me and they said, "you're from the states aren't you?" I said "yes." "Do

you know Father Duncan.” I don’t remember any conflict, any fussing or any competition or anything. I don’t remember anything about that.

ES: Do you remember what the ethnic and religious makeup of the student body was? Were there African-Americans at school, were there Jewish people?

KH: Nah, there was Jewish people. One of my very dear friends who I made friends with at the West Residence Hall was a Jewish girl. There were Jews, quite a few Jews. The Jewish sorority was strong, Sigma Delta Tau, it was on Nevada Street and it was a very strong house. And there were strong fraternities houses, Jewish fraternities houses.

ES: Did they socialize with the rest of the system?

KH: No. They were, they took care of themselves. And of course there was the Hillel Foundation back then. Dr. Saccur, who as a leader in the Jewish communities who was a wonderful man, he gave historical seminars, anyone in Champaign-Urbana could go. I don’t recall any problems. I just knew you stayed where you were. I don’t remember wanting to go to any others, even though I was a Presbyterian I started going to the Wesleyan and I just stayed there.

ES: Did you know of or where you aware of discrimination with the African-American students at all? Or did they interact?

KH: I don’t even remember that they were there. I don’t even remember that there was even a group of... I’ll tell you one little incident on this. In my little high school in Gardner, there was one Black girl in the class, she was the only one in the high school. Her name was Kathryn Meed. So when I came down to school as a freshman, she wrote to me. One of the teachers in the high school found out about this and she wrote me a letter and she said, “Don’t answer her. She might take a notion to come and see you and that would ruin everything for you.” 1930, don’t answer her, she might come and see you.

ES: Your teacher thought that would be a problem?

KH: Oh yes, I would be an outcast, immediately.

ES: So there was feeling on campus?

KH: There was feelings among people, I don’t remember them on campus at all. I don’t remember them ever thinking about them. We had Orientals, a lot of Orientals. We had Jewish people. We had foreign students even then. The Black problem was not with us at that point.

ES: Did the other students have problems? The Chinese students and the...

KH: I don't remember. I remember there was a house over on, well, Illinois Street or something in there, that was for the Oriental students, like our foundations. There again. There weren't that many. As I say, I think there were 4,000 students, there just wasn't that many. I don't remember any problems.

ES: What was the political tone during this time? Were students actively involved in politics or protests?

KH: No, not at that time. There again, you see, you just have to remember, we were so poor. We didn't have time to, we were so, we wanted to get our education and go out in get a job, did we ever want to get a job. Students had to think about getting married, what were we going to do? You couldn't support anybody, you know. The important thing was to get through as best you could and get a job.

ES: Is that why you got through faster?

KH: No, I just, I don't know, I just discovered that I could take more work and I could pass it. And I wanted to get a job, sure, so then I got through in three and a half years.

[Beginning of Tape 2, Side A.]

KH: I was in Journalism school, of course that was my major, and I also had a teaching major in English and in History.

ES: How did you chose those subjects? Why were you attracted to Journalism?

KH: Because I always enjoyed writing and I found it fascinating. But I also thought I was going to be a teacher, I thought I was going to be a high school teacher and I was going to teach history and English and I would have the school newspaper and the yearbook and all of that kind of thing, that's not what I wanted to do. What I wanted to do was enter the College of Law, but at that time women were not admitted to the College of Law. I could go and take a listeners course, but I couldn't take a course for credit, so that was always one of the...that was really what wanted was law. So it so happened that when I got into the merit system with the University Civil Service system, so much of that was law and I got to work with the lawyers, so I kind of got my....And then after I retired I worked for two years in the Weber Law Office in Urbana. So I got to get it in in the end.

ES: Did you want to be a lawyer?

KH: I wanted to be a lawyer. That's what I wanted to do, but I couldn't do it.

ES: Women weren't accepted?

KH: No, you could not enter the College of Law.

ES: Where were women? What majors did they chose?

KH: They're going to be teachers. They're going to be school teachers or librarians. Safe, nice, safe occupations, you know. You're going to be a teacher, a librarian or a nurse. If you couldn't go to college you became a nurse. That was really what was open to you.

ES: Those were the expectations of going to school? In going to school, you'd become one of those?

KH: One of those, uh-huh.

ES: Or to get married.

KH: Or to get married. And then it was nice to have that college background, you might get a wealthy husband.

ES: Did you have favorite professors?

KH: Oh, indeed I did. Why yes. I had a Professor Hansen in history, American History. He had a lecture section, you went to the lecture section, you know, and then you had your class discussion and I could sit in his lectures and never take a note, he was, oh, he was marvelous, just marvelous. Oh I had many that, many professors that were wonderful. By the end, by that time, like your freshman graduate course you got a graduate student, but even so, for your lecture sections you got the full professors. And it would be in your discussion section that you might have a graduate student – you know. But we got the top people in our lecture sections. But, oh my yes, we got some wonderful professors.

ES: What was the relationship between student and faculty? Was there a lot of social intermingling?

KH: Well now in the a sorority, yes. Every month, I think, every month we had a faculty tea on a Sunday afternoon. And we got to invite our favorite professors and their wives. And they came to tea. You sat with them and you visited with them. I remember so well that this professor and his wife came and they were my guests and so I sat with them and they were going to Europe, oh, they were going to go to Europe, I just sat there oh my eyes were bigger than I was. I remember what she said to me, "My dear," she said, "the best part of going to Europe is coming home." And she said, "It isn't all glamour and everything, the best part is coming home." I just thought, oh, if I could ever go there.

ES: Faculty surely were affected by the Depression as well?

KH: Oh yes, their salaries were nothing. I remember Mrs. Neuber who ran the information office on the campus for years was the highest paid faculty member on the campus and she got \$6,000 a year. And I thought that was phenomenal and she died in poverty because her pension was so little she had nothing to live on. One of the old students had bought an old house over in Champaign and he let her come there to live and she had a room there. That was just a different time.

ES: Did you go over to faculty member's home? Did they open their homes to you?

KH: Oh yes, especially when you got to be a graduate student. They would open their homes on Sunday and we would go and have tea. Oh yes, a lot of that, especially when you got to be in graduate school.

ES: What types of classes did you take? Do you remember any specifically?

KH: Oh well, of course I had to take my science, you had to take so much science. I remember I took geology, which I loved, and I took botany and I took...I stayed away from chemistry, and then we had to have language and I took Spanish and I liked American history especially, but I took world history and ancient history, all the history courses. I had some marvelous professors in history. Then I had to have my English, so I had rhetoric courses. I took short story writing. I took editorial writing. I took a lot of literature, renaissance and modern literature courses. Then of course I had my journalism courses, advertising, reporting. I was telling someone the other day that it was election time and our reporting class was assigned to cover the precincts in Champaign county of the Associated Press. And the women got to stay in Champaign but the fellows had to go out to all the towns around. And so I got into this place in Champaign and they were wonderful to me and they had all this food and they counted ballots until 4 in the morning and they brought me home, you know, and it was great. But this one kid got out into one of these communities, I don't know which one it was but it was on the Interurban. And the old judges of the election wouldn't let him in the room and he had to sit outside and it was cold. Finally he managed to sneak in he sat in the back of the room. Well they had this big dishpan full of sandwiches and coffee and they passed it around the table and never offered him one, he was just dying. Well they put a break and went to the bathroom or something. When they finished, there was one sandwich left in the bottom of the pan. Well they took this break and the kid sneaked the sandwich and he went outside and ate it. When they were done counting, the sandwiches...the judge says, "Now for my () sandwich." And he flew out the door and he had to get on the Interurban and we got no report from that precinct.

ES: What was the class size?

KH: It was small. Except in the lecture sections it was small, I don't think over 15 or maybe that many lectures? Discussion sections were small.

ES: Something else I didn't ask you that I just remembered. Where did the student hand out? Did you go to University Hall? Or where did students congregate to meet each other?

KH: Oh, in the restaurants. Prehn's on Oregon, Prehn's on Green, Prehn's on Daniel. Vackey's, Vackey's was down on Wright Street. And the dance halls, I should tell you about the dance halls. There was Robeson's Roof Garden, Papa Robeson's store, now that was the apex. If you were invited, the fellows wore white coats, we wore formal dresses to go to a dance at Robeson's Roof Garden, that was the top. Then there was a dance hall in Bradley Hall, that was on Wright Street, up over some of the store buildings there. That was not quite as choice but it would do in a pinch.

ES: How did you afford the gowns?

KH: You had one [Laughter]. You had one, you made it, maybe you made it. I remember mine was eggshell satin. Oh my, yes. I remember my roommate. In a sorority we were supposed to change roommates every semester, so you didn't get clicky, you know. But my roommate and I would not change, we said we would leave if they made us change, so we stayed together for three years. And she lives in Monticello now, and her husband is gone and she's had a stroke and she's paralyzed on one side now. But anyway, we stuck together, we were not going to do that silliness. We used to sit at night, and we'd say, if we could ever have one pair of hose we hadn't worn, or we wanted a pair of black shoes and brown shoes. And I thought if I could ever, ever, ever make \$200 a month, that was going to be my goal. We had a Sunday outfit, we had an outfit we wore to class.

ES: What did you wear to class? Dress?

KH: You wore, you could have a dress or a suit, a hat. You wore your hat and coat and gloves and nice shoes. But you had a Sunday outfit and for Saturday night dates, you might have an outfit if you were lucky.

ES: Was it important to attend church on Sundays?

KH: It was in our house. Mrs. Carter took us, she went with us a lot.

ES: Did you all go to the same church?

KH: No, but she would go with some of the girls and some of the girls another time.

ES: As a Presbyterian, how did you end up at Wesley (Foundation)?

KH: Oh, that's a story all in itself. My parentage, way back into my grandparents were Presbyterians, and we had a Presbyterian church in Gardner. Now Gardner was a community at

that time of about a thousand people. There was a family there by the name of Alison and they were bankers. They were in the Presbyterian church and they ran the Presbyterian church. Absolutely R-A-N it. So, about when I was in third grade, the Presbytery got suspicious that the money of the church was in the Alison bank and they were afraid something was going on. The Alison family had always chosen the minister so the Presbytery decided that they were going to send the minister, so they sent Rev. Morrison for the purpose of seeing what was going on. So he came, and on Sunday he got up and told the congregation that things were not as they should be. And so that was on Sunday, and on Monday Rev. and Mrs. Morrison left us. Well, the church divided, we were a rural church, so many of the farmers were indebted to the bank, they had borrowed money from the bank, so they didn't dare, you know, divide the Alisons, but the church divided. Out of this, some 20 families left the church and among them were my parents. They said that this is not a church, we have lost everything that a church is about.

So they withdrew and took their letters out and I was sent to the Methodist, and I was delighted because I had more friends in the Methodist Sunday school than I had in the Presbyterian so this was fine with me, I didn't know the difference. So I grew up in the Methodist church. And this minister came to the Methodist and this was the very beginning of the Depression and there were about 20 or 25 of us high school aged, and he was very concerned that we were going to go to the streets or something. So he hired a choir director and we had a junior choir, much to the horror of the senior choir. And so I was in the junior choir and we had a girl who played a wind instrument and one of them played the violin and we got fairly good and we got invited to go around and sing at the various churches, so when I came down here it was just normal for me to go to the Wesley foundation. So many years later, many many many years later, the Methodist and Presbyterian churches in Gardner merged. So it happened that it became, the Methodist gave their buildings, they had the better physical plan, but it became a Presbyterian church because they had a larger population. And then all those 22 families went back in, so we went back into the Presbyterian church, and that's why I went to Wesley.

ES: Getting back to education, I have a couple more questions. What were the main strengths and weaknesses of your University education, do you think?

KH: I don't think it had any weaknesses. I think, you know, when I had to be in charge of an office, and I saw many people come up that I could not promote because they had never gone to college, and they would say to me, "I could do it just as well." But there is something about having gone through college for four years, there is a discipline, I can't explain it to you. The only explanation I can say is, I don't know it would be to live like the Rockefellers, I have no concept of what that would be like, I cannot tell you what you have missed, it's not possible. I would not take anything in this world for my four years at the University of Illinois. And when I got out into the world it was amazing to me the reputation we had, "Oh, you were at the University of Illinois, oh."

ES: Do you think that is why your father encouraged you to go here rather than the smaller school?

KH: Yes, I'm sure. And I also think they needed, they were wise enough to know that I had been very protected and that I was going to have to learn or I was going to be a brat. And they enjoyed every bit of my college, every bit of it. They followed me all the way through and they were part of it, you know. And the girls in my sorority would go to see them, and they loved them all. It was, no no no, I don't think it had any weaknesses. It might be that, oh, once and a while you got a poor graduate student in one of your classes or something like that, but no.

ES: The disappointment you may have felt had more to do with the times more than the school? Like not being able to go into law?

KH: That was a disappointment, that was my first understanding that I was a woman and that I couldn't do what I wanted to do. But as it turned out in the end, it worked fine.

ES: I was wondering if you could talk about, after you had graduated. What you went through in trying to find a job and your experience with that.

KH: Ok. As I mentioned there was that one part of the time that I stayed home, that one year, and then I came back and got my masters. Then I told you how I got to work of Dr. Odum and he took me back to the University of North Carolina. I would not take anything in the world for my two years. This was the Old-South, I got introduced to a society that I had never known, never been a part of my life. These people became, many of them my friends, most of them are gone for the most part. Dr. Odum's daughter is still living in Chapel Hill, but for the most part the people I worked with are now gone.

Before I went to North Carolina I had taken an examination, a State of Illinois examination, for what they called, at that time, University Graduate Stenographer. While I was in Chapel Hill I got a telegram saying that there was a position open at the University of Illinois, and would I come. I wired back and said I would have to give them 30 days notice. They wired me back, this was my second year out there, and they said they could not wait, sorry. Well I was disappointed, I was getting ready to come back home. I was a damn Yankee, I could not get my family history back into Virginia, Georgia, or some place. While they were wonderfully kind to me and I was not one of them and I wanted really to come home, so I was very disappointed. Well, in a couple of weeks I got a telegram and said that the position was at University High School and Dr. Stanford was interested in me and he would wait. I had worked there as a student under NYA, that was the National Youth Administration, when I was at the University, so he knew me. So he said he would wait. I came back to Uni High in the fall of 1937 as a University Graduate Stenographer when I was really an assistant to the principle. And I took a big cut in pay, I had to come back, I think I was getting close to around \$150 and I had to come down to \$112, to come back to the University of Illinois when I came back in the fall of 1937.

Then I was there for seven years and Dr. Stanford moved over to the college in the College of Education. Then Dr. Allen came, but he wasn't Dr. Stanford, so one day I thought, gee, I don't want to stay here for the rest of my life, this isn't what I want to do. And there was one man, one person over on the campus, he said "oh there's nothing now, but I'll keep you in

mind.” It was fall, it was war time, we were in the World War II, and so he called me one day and he said, “come on over and talk to me.” So I did. This Mrs. Neuber had this information office and they were moving that to the new Illini Union Building, but she ran a little stenographic bureau, and the professors went in there and got their exams and their study lists and that thing, and they paid a penny and the students came in a paid a penny a piece. And they conceived the idea that now that they couldn’t, it was war time and they couldn’t get anybody qualified to do anything and I could take these girls and train them and make the employable while they were doing the work at the bureau. So I did, I left and I went over to the stenographic bureau and I became a principle clerk and I called my folks up and I said that I now have a position and I was getting \$150 a month, and anyway it was one of those ideas you have that won’t work. These girls could not perform the work for the bureau, they couldn’t type. It was terrible, they’d be working on the same thing at 5 o’clock that they had started on at 8. Mr. Weber was the () and he was the one who had me come over and I said to him, “I’ve got to have help. I’ve got to have someone in here who can do the work while we’re trying to train these poor things.” And so the first person he said, “Well, I’ll loan you Mrs. Anderson.” So Virginia came, Virginia just died a few weeks ago, she had cancer. But she became like a daughter to me, we’ve been together all these years. And so she was the top girl and then we had these military installations on the campus and their wives came and I got the girl who had been secretary to the President of Millikin. She came, and then I hired a girl who had been a court reporter and we began to get some people who could do the work while we were trying to train these 60 I.Q. people. Well that was in September and the following January they brought the first Director of Personal, not Mr. Dickenson. They picked up my little training office and put it in the Personal Office, and that was the beginning. As you can see, once I got into that, I said, that is where I want to be. That is my field.

[Beginning of Tape 2, Side B.]

ES: You went to school on a scholarship but you also were...

KH: Well, you see the scholarship only took me through one semester of my masters. Then I had to get my other semester of my masters and that was when I worked at Uni High under NYA.

ES: How did you get that job?

KH: You went to this place where you signed up for government help under NYA and you were assigned to somewhere to go and I was assigned to Uni High.

ES: Now, you told me off tape, why you came back to get your masters, but I was wondering if you could go into that again? You graduated in 1934...

KH: I graduated in February of 1934, I still had a whole semester on my scholarship, I couldn’t get a job. I had a whole semester of my masters on my scholarship. Then I still couldn’t not

get a job. So I was home in Gardner that whole next year, then my father said, “maybe if went and finished and got your masters you’d have more chance of getting a job. We’ll manage someway or another.” So I came back and that was the year I worked on NYA.

ES: How did the Depression affect your family at home?

KH: Terribly. First of all, my Grandfather Hansen had come to America from Denmark. I have a plaque over there, he started his furniture store in 1882 and he was a cabinet maker. I have some pieces of his work here. He had two sons and a daughter. The furniture store prospered, it did very well, and then the Depression hit and our store burned. Then the banks closed and my parents lost a tremendous amount of money in stocks, that’s one reason I won’t buy stocks to this day. I remember how we lost it.

ES: Do you remember the Crash?

KH: Oh, do I remember the Crash! Yes! Oh my, let me tell you this. The banks closed and my father was, what do you call it, a booster in the bank, and we had to put in, they put in first the amount of their stocks, a stockholder, and he had to put in the amount of his stock and they had to double the amount trying to save the bank and the bank closed. So, I can remember the bank examiners walking through our house and saying, “that’s worth so much, and that’s worth so much.” But we never got to that point where they would take anything, but we were very poor. My mother’s people were on the farm and of course, farm prices were nothing, absolutely nothing, and we had the year of the great drought. Do you remember the movie, famous movie, the story of that time where they go west, *Grapes of Wrath*. That was a very great story, a very true story of the period, and we had dust storms here in Illinois. I remember driving through the country and barley being able to see with the dust blowing off the field. So the great drought, we had to crops and we got nothing for them. They were just, very very hard times. Our store was able to stay open, we did not go bankrupt. There were funeral directors and half of those funerals were never paid for because those people just didn’t have the money. I remember when my uncle died and he had all of the books of the store in his closet and my cousin and I went through and said, “What are we going to do with all of these?” They were all written in hand, you know, from the very beginning. And one said, “Oh look Louis, there was letter after letter after letter not paid. Could you possibly pay us a little bit on your bill, you see?” And I said, you know, a lot of these people have heirs who are still living, lets take them out and burn them. So we took them out and burned them. But, it was just an unbelievable time. As I said, you could never, unless you lived in it, you wouldn’t understand it. It was a bad time.

ES: Did many of the students in your class go to college?

KH: No, no. In fact, they had to drop out of high school because they had to go to work. I remember my very best girlfriend came from a big family and she was able to squirrel, and she had to drop out, I think her junior year. She became a personal maid to Mrs. Franklin Smith-White, he was a banker and he ran for Congress, and they were wealthy people. And she

worked for them, and they all had to go out and get to work, on the farm, anywhere they could get. My class when down when we actually graduated there were only 24 of us left. But when we had our class reunion we invited everybody back that had started out with us and a lot of them came.

ES: Was it typical to send the girl in the family rather than the boy, or do you have a sense for that?

KH: Well, of course, most boys were supposed to follow. My father and my uncle didn't have a choice, my grandfather said you're going to be in the business. He did let my father go to college for a year at Chicago Business College, but that was it. He had to be there to work. Agnes, the sister, got to go to a year at MacMurry, but he was going to make her a lady you see. My mother got to go to Normal for a year...was going to be a lady. Have you read my book, *Grundy Corners*?

ES: I haven't.

KH: In there is a story about a little Susan Jane goes with her mother to this society and the woman is speaking about women having the right to vote. The mother turns to Susan and says, "What do I care about voting? I have a good home and a good husband. What do I care about voting? It's silly with all these women all parading around about voting." Anyway. That was how it was.

ES: But your parents wanted to you to?

KH: Absolutely. That was the thing. I was to go and I was to make the best of it because I might need it and they were right.

ES: Well thank you for talking to me, it's been great.

KH: It was fun, fun to go over it.

[End of interview.]