

University of Illinois Student Life 1928-1938
Oral History Project
Pauline Linebarger McClain – Class of '29
Paris, Illinois
May 16, 2001

START OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

Ellen Swain: This is an oral history interview for the University of Illinois Archives. The interviewer is Ellen Swain, the narrator is Pauline Linebarger McClain an alumna from the class of 1929. We are at Mrs. McClain's home in Paris, Illinois and the date is May 16, 2001.

Could I ask you your full name and birth date?

PM: Pauline Linebarger McClain, Mrs. Riley McClain. Born July the 12th, 1907.

ES: Tell me where you grew up.

PM: Okay. I grew up south of Metcalf, little village of Metcalf. (Metcalf would be about 50, 75 miles southeast of Champaign), on a farm, three and half miles southwest of Metcalf, on the farm. I was born there, lived there until I was married, and I still live in Edgar county, but I've been in and out a lot, in the last, 30, 40 years [*laughter*]. When I started in to school, at that time, now we've got to go back, you've got to put a lot of thought into this to think that it could really be possible, because I lived a half a mile from a grade school, a little country school, where I went to school, and that was all dirt, it was mud road. I mean, you didn't have no gravel roads at all at that time. So, getting up and down that half a mile, I walked as long I was able to in the winter months, summer months, well spring and fall, winter months it got bad. Naturally the folks and neighbors would pick us up and take us. I remember one particular time, my dad didn't like to ride a horse. I've always liked to ride a horse, and I'll show you some pictures on how I won my first pony, when I was about five years old. From then on I've always had a horse. I've always had a pony or a horse, but this particular time, my dad never did like much like to ride, so he got this mule out of the barn, and I had to get on the mule and he took me up to school and back through the mud so I wouldn't have to walk. I always remember that ride because I thought that was fun to ride on the mule. Dad didn't, he just pulled, walked along the side. He didn't ride at all, but I thought that was fun. I thought it was fun, he didn't think it was fun at all.

But, grade school there were, oh, I expect 20, 25 kids in that school, and there are lot of pleasant memories going to a little country school. Graduated, I don't know much you want to know. There's much to tell. I can't think of anything that would be of special interest about going to school. I do remember one time, my first year, going to school. Of course I was not too happy to start out to the school, like all kids you kind of think, you want to be home. But, I was sitting there the first year and the school had just started, and at that time, most all the kids rode in on horses. We had a big barn. Those who had to come a distance, I mean four or five miles, they'd ride up. There was a family by the name of Turner who had fine horses. They rode beautiful horses and they both came, Sara, Sara and Rebecca. I was looking out the window, of

course, which I shouldn't have been doing at all, and Sara rode in on this beautiful horse, so I raised my hand. The teacher said, "Pauline what's the trouble?" And I said, "Teacher I have a stomach ache, and I want to go home." And she said, "Well, Pauline, you just lay your head down a little bit on the desk, and you'll be all right, I think." Well, Sara came in, took off her hat and coat, up went my hand again. Teacher says, "Pauline what is the trouble?" I said, "I still got the stomach ache and I want Sara to take me home on her horse!" *[laughter]* So she said all right, I guess she gave in, "If you've got the stomach ache we'll let Sara take you home." So Sara, "Oh yes, yes, I'll take Pauline home." Because I again, I supposed everybody says, "Pauline's spoiled," maybe I am, started in right then. She took home and oh I can just almost feel the horse right now galloping, because she galloped a little bit you know, that's what I wanted to do. Got out the back door and, oh, Mother came and my she was surprised, "What's wrong Pauline and Sara, why did you bring her home?" "Well she has a stomach ache Mrs. Linebarger," well Mother said, "I can take care of that without a bit a trouble." Mother took me in the house. Went for the bottle of Casteroil, and boy she soaked me with Casteroil. I can almost taste it. Now I still taste Casteroil. And, I didn't have anymore stomach ache. That ended the stomach ache!

ES: Well, tell me where did you go to high school.

PM: I went to high school at Metcalf, which was then, as I said, was just about three and half miles from my house. At that time, they were building a gravel road, so we had just a half a mile. My dad at that particular time was a grain dealer in Metcalf. And so we had a little model-T Ford, drove up, half a mile, and get on that gravel road and go right into Metcalf, and I stayed in there for during the daytime, of course, to go to the school. I was fortunate, our Metcalf at that time was a fairly good little town. Small population, but we had a small hotel, and had two banks, and grocery, two grocery stores, post office, pretty thriving. Metcalf is just barely existing at all, now, like most all small villages. So—

ES: How many students did you have in your class?

PM: In high school, that's a good question because in my class I believe there were 12 or 13 that graduated, in the entire school there was 60 in the entire high school. So, when it came time for graduation, why naturally there were not too many going to the University of Illinois. In fact, I think at that time, there had been two others who had gone to the University of Illinois, because that was a long ways to go to school. And you've got to keep in mind Ellen, this is a farming community and you know families that had more money. Some had more money then others. Mine was an average family I would say, up until the Depression came along. We had bad luck during the Depression and at the time that I went to the University of Illinois, we had just about lost everything we had, but that's all another story too. But the point I think Illinois was the decision.

First of all, I didn't decide I was going to the University of Illinois. That's when your parents told you what you were going to do. Dad and Mother, I never had heard of anything else but the University of Illinois, that's all I ever heard. Because, Dad always said, "Well, we're close to Champaign, what better place can you find than Champaign?" But now, there were schools, girls schools out East but to get to New York, was unknown to me and my family, it was even hard, Chicago was long ways then. My father went to Chicago, to take cattle, because we

raised cattle, and he would go in there to the stockyards and that kind of thing, but it's just hard to visualize how much difference. It's like you're coming down here this afternoon, that would have been unknown back then.

ES: Sure.

PM: Back in 1929, yes. Starting to school, I thought and my dad thought, and mother of course too, that I needed a trunk. Well, at that time you could get trunks. They were called steamer trunks.

ES: Sure.

PM: You open the trunk up and you'd have drawers on one side, one side was drawers, and the other was where you'd hang your clothing. If I remember correctly, the folks had already made arrangements for me to stay at private home, when I first went up there to school, and had that all arranged for. But naturally they said, when I went, that closet space would be scarce, if you had any other way of handling it, do so. So Dad bought one of these trunks for me, right here in Paris. Well, I thought that was pretty special—getting that all filled and ready to go, which we did on this particular day. I remember when I got ready to go. We had a Model-T Ford to drive up to Champaign. Again, I'm repeating here that that was a long ways to go. But, we started out and when we got the trunk loaded, we could not get it inside the Model-T Ford. It had two doors. So, we had to put it on the outside, fasten it on the side where Dad was driving. There wasn't even room for Mother to go. She had to stay home [*laughter*]. I suppose there's boxes and everything else, I don't remember about that. But anyway, I do remember, we got up around Homer, and it started to rain and rain, and it poured, it rained so hard we had to pull out the side and stop. When we got up to Champaign, we started to unfasten, get the trunk into where I was going to stay, opened up the trunk, here some of the paint, you know on the trunk, had come zip, zip, or leaked down through into my clothing into the side of it. Oh, was I ever sick. I wanted to cry right then, of course and go back home, that's what I really wanted to do. But no chance of going back home. I can't repeat how lonely I was and how much I wanted to go back. The school was so big, just to get out and walk across that campus, down that main walk, what's it called?

ES: The Broadwalk?

PM: Broadwalk, you know. And then to get into one of the classes where you would have, oh I wish I could remember that professor, his name, it begins with a "Z," Dr. Zacher, was there anything like that? Zacher, I would have to look it up, I never thought about looking that up, he was a good professor. I thought it was big then, I don't think it's big now. But there were hundreds of students, and that's the way you took it. I majored in history, and that's why I remember so much history, European history. And he'd talk about England. Well of course, England then I couldn't even imagine. He'd talk about Italy. He'd talk about Russia. I've been to all those places now. I've done an awful lot of travelling. Oh, it just all came so fast. I thought, how can I ever get it all sorted out. Then you go from that then into your, you know how it works, did you go to the University of Illinois?

ES: I have a Masters there.

PM: Yeah well, I suppose it works the same way now. Then you have your separate classrooms for discussion you know. Oh I was so scared in one of those discussion rooms. The teacher would ask me a question, and I couldn't answer it, I was so scared, can't imagine now the way I can talk to you [*laughter*]. Girl was I then. I got over it, I got over it, but I was no scholar ever, and I think part of it was because I was scared. I will have to say that during all this time, one of the fellows who went from Metcalf and was in the Law School, that was Riley McClain, whom I married, was a senior in Law School at that time, and he also was a very, good friend, of my father and my family, the whole McClain family, they lived in Metcalf. So he sort of took me over in a lot of ways, saying, "Pauline," in that I had to stay. Came by frequently.

In fact, he got where he came by frequently and after that we fell in love, that was another long story, but we did a lot, he did a lot to get me to stay. After I got through the first year, and then I got into the sorority, the Theta U sorority. You asked me other things, oh mercy, Junior Proms, Senior Proms, Riley was in to. . . .the Scabbard and Blade, fraternities . . . can't think. . . Riley was an honor student, number one thing. A Field Artillery officer. You asked me about social life, that took us into an awful lot of things. So I went, every Friday night, Saturday night, I was always out to dances [*laughter*].

ES: So the first year it was your hardest year and then you got out of it?

PM: That was a rough, then I got adjusted, yes I did. I got adjusted. And—

ES: Did you have brothers and sisters?

PM: No ma'am I didn't. That's a good question. I'll tell you, I lost a little brother when I was five years old. He just lived a few hours. So after that I never had any more brothers or sisters.

ES: I see.

PM: And, I didn't have children. Pauline is the last leaf on the tree [*laughter*].

ES: Why did your parents want you to go to college?

PM: Oh mercy yes. They were as I said, probably in that period of time, above average. My father had gone to high school at Hume and then he went over to Decatur to a business college, when he was still young and unmarried. Now my Mother was not, that far along at all in Education schools. I would say mother was self-educated person.

INTERRUPTION [*phone ringing*]

ES: Can I ask you a few more questions?

PM: Yes, oh yes sure. I thought maybe you were through.

ES: You were talking about that education was important to your parents.

PM: Yes, oh yes, that's right we were talking about. Oh, I just can't think of any other, other reason other than thinking. . .I expect, they had no other thought except for sending me to college. I just can't think of any other reason.

ES: Did you want to go?

PM: Well, I guess, oh yes, I wanted to go. I knew I wanted to go to school. But I didn't have a feeling that I wasn't going to want to go to school. It was just going up there and being so far, so big, so different, and so big, it was hard on me. But, oh I knew that I probably would have stayed. Now in between that I could say, my father was strong on education naturally. He said he knew it was going to be difficult for me, having a big change there. I was not a very forward child at that time. Say forward, but there's a lot of difference in kids. So I went to Charleston College, the teacher's college, that summer before I went up to Champaign in the fall, went down there for I think it was three weeks or something. Just to get used to a different way of going to school you see. It's hard for you to realize. It's hard for anybody to realize that being in such a small high school and then the big jump to the University of Illinois. It doesn't look big to me now at all, no, no. Time changes things, doesn't it. What else do you want to know?

ES: I wondered, did you have any career goal in mind, when you went off to school, did you want to be—?

PM: I wanted to be a school teacher. I knew I was going to be a school teacher, that was my aim from the very beginning. So I of course, went into education, and then majored in. . . history, social sciences, and English I believe was my major. Oh yes, I knew I was going to be a teacher. So then when I got out, do you want to hear the little story about that, when I got out of school?

ES: Sure.

PM: That was in such a Depression time and it was so hard to get jobs. Of course, my family was pretty well known around our community here, but absolutely no jobs at all. They weren't hiring, they were firing teachers. Now again—

ES: Now this is in 1929?

PM: I graduated in June, and this must be in the summer months before school started in the fall. What was I going to say there? Well, it just went on then. My father said, "Well Pauline, I think the best thing for you to do," and now he might have talked to—I imagine he had other people that he could talk to besides Mother and I. He and Mother and probably others you know, Riley McClain might have had some advice on this. "I think a business college would be a fine place for Pauline." "I had never had any business." "You can go through the University of Illinois." I don't know whether you can do it now or not, but you could when I was in education, I imagined your getting Spanish, I had two years of Spanish, and English, but you know you don't have any educated Business training, as far as bookkeeping and handling business. I didn't have it and now I'm sure I wasn't in that school. So I went over to the Business College at Indianapolis, fine

school, good school, spent nine months over there. I came back. I had no trouble at all getting a job, I did have three or four offers, but I went to Brocton, because that was not too far from home, you know, Brocton, Illinois?

ES: Uh-huh.

PM: And got a job down there, and the first thing that they said as they again, you know how rules are now, “You will want to stay down here Pauline,” and I said, “Well, I’ll do what you want me to.” They said, “Oh yes,” they said, “We don’t want you staying at home and driving back and forth,” which is different than it is now. People drive all over the country, on a job. So I stayed in Brocton. The first year I stayed in home, those days as hardly, I think there was two houses in Brocton at that time, that would keep anybody that had a modern house, toilet and all those things. Well, they weren’t so that first year, there were three other teachers and myself, four of us, in a house. No modern conveniences at all. We had to wash, get up in the morning, wash our faces in the old bowl [*laughter*], and carry the chamber, and do all those things. But that didn’t hurt us any. It was different, it didn’t bother me too much. Those things didn’t bother me any at all. Because I was getting to do what I wanted to and I like my teaching. I was blended right into the school, or I would have been in trouble.

First thing, I took my first check I got was \$100, paid us \$100 a month then, and I bought a horse, that is the first thing I did, I bought my horse. Had to buy, went up to Chicago, I didn’t go to Chicago, but I had someone else who did do it for me. The stockyards up there, bought me a horse, and brought horse down to Brocton. Well I was sailing from then, the kids thought Pauline was—most all of them were country kids, you see, one of the little girls she’s still living, but I meet her, in fact I think meet her probably out here this alumni meeting for teachers, that had a pony, rode her pony in. She had me wait until after I had to stay—then teachers had to stay after school, about thirty minutes, at least 30 minutes, sometimes I stayed an hour because I was interested in my kids. Took an hour to get them started, that’s what I did. She staying and we ride after I got out of school in the evening.

One particular time, it’s kind of a funny little story, I don’t care if you write it down or not, or even hear it, but we had festival in the fall of the year at Brocton. This was my first year down there. They said, “Oh Pauline we want you to lead the festival, the band.” We had a high school band playing that said, “We’ll want you to leave the whole parade down through town on the horse, would you do it,” and oh yes I’d do it of course. I thought that was an honor too. Okay, I came up with my horse [*laughter*] and the band was also gathering at the same time, but they got themselves lined up. I got myself lined up and boy that band clacked up loud, drums and oh yeah, that horse just shot right down through town. I never will forget that. I thought to myself, I don’t know how I ever stayed on, because I couldn’t even begin to hold the horse to get him in. I was half way down through town before the parade had even got started. So I had to turn around and come back, finally got him calmed down enough, but of course, it scared the horse to death. I should have known that, by having sense about those things then, I wouldn’t try it now though. I know better, but we got through that parade, and my teaching. I taught three years. I’m sure you wouldn’t know any of those people at all. Hence was principal. I got to move then the 2nd year over to a very modern home. They were friends, who took me in, oh they thought that was great to have me. The name was Price. I don’t think that would register at all with anybody you know out there now, they’re all gone.

ES: What did you do after you stopped teaching?

PM: That's a good question. I taught one more year at Chrisman, Illinois [10 miles north of Paris], nice little town, and then, like everybody else, got foolish and got married you see. That was to Riley McClain. He was an attorney and practicing at that time. He'd been out of school about, about two, years I guess, by that time, he was, he went right up the ladder too fortunately. But then we lived here in Paris and bought a house the first year after we were married. It's right over here on Central Street, but it's down a little farther from here. Paid \$5,000 for that house. Think about that now.

ES: No.

PM: But you know \$5,000 would be pretty cheap wouldn't it? Yes, it would be, but that was the way we got started, and we thought we could never get that paid, but we did. Then the War came along. I'll just finish by saying the War came along, and then that changed everything. Riley volunteered. He had already had a commission from the University of Illinois. He was already Captain, so then he went into the service for World War II. And he was in 10, 12 years, and I didn't try to go over seas, but I was staying home, taking care of our farms and family, and did that thing. And, closed the Law office, I'll end this, kind of up like this. Then when he came back from the service we lived in his family house at Metcalf and lived there until Riley died, which was about 20 more years. Then when that happened, which was about '72, 1972, then I came here where I am right now. And this has been a McClain house as long as I can remember, has been in the McClain name, not Riley's name, but McClain, but it's old, the house is, same as I am.

ES: How did the Depression affect your family, did it affect you when you were in college?

PM: Oh yes. How it affected us, it took everything that we had. We had a farm, they all had to be. . .what's the word I want to use, when you've had them put in trusts, I guess that's the word. I don't think that's quite the word I want. A lot of people took, I haven't even thought of those words, where you give up everything, and you go into bankruptcy, lot of people went that direction. But we didn't, because we owed debts, we owed money, and they were good friends, and we didn't want to live like that because we were in the community. Where my family has always been Linebargers right there, and that made a difference. We were not going to be. We paid our debts, we said we would pay them, but it would take time. So, that was all arranged legally, and paid all we owed.

ES: When was that?

PM: The Depression started I would say, when I graduated. I expect that started '29, '30, '31, I would say. It started while I was still in school. But it got worse, as time went along '31, '32. '29 and '30 it was bad. I can't say much, be sure about that exact dates. But then World War II came along, that's what made farm prices go up. Grain prices went up and farmland, because we could sell grain and stalk and everything like that, we were soon out of debt.

START OF TAPE 1 SIDE B

ES: I wanted to ask you what the relationship between students and faculty members was. Did you know faculty?

PM: At the University of Illinois?

ES: At the University of Illinois.

PM: It was not at all what I wanted. I don't blame the faculty. I can only think of one instructor as I could think back I would never have thought hardly of going to see an instructor. I wanted to, but I was, I just thought it felt like it'd be comfortable talking to a instructor then. And I don't know. They weren't instructors like I would expect today, but maybe that is a way instructors go, I don't know. They were busy too. And, Spanish, I remember the Spanish teacher. She was, you know. They talked fast and you always had a few good people in there. It's hard for me to say now. I don't know. I felt different then. I feel sure about that. I'm going to have to say, I can't think that I was helped, but by only one professor. . .and that was a math professor. Oh it was so hard. I hadn't had math at all in high school, except algebra. And he was very kind and very nice, and I think he passed me just because of that. I don't think I could pass at all as qualified.

ES: Did you get help from your friends then, is that—?

PM: No, I didn't get help from friends. I didn't have any close friends at that time. You mean help me with my work? No—

ES: Yeah.

PM: No.

ES: Yeah, how did you—

PM: I just got home and studied it out the best I could. I can't remember anybody ever helping me with my schoolwork. Much of it was reading. I went to the library. I went to the library all the time. Even vacation time, I hardly would ever come home because I felt I needed to read. I need to study. No I didn't. I had to work very hard. And then it wasn't easy, that's another thing I think, number one, I didn't know how to study, to tell the truth about it. You know those days in high school nobody taught you how to study. Up here, at this, everybody knew Pauline it didn't make much difference I didn't have to say very much whether I said it right or wrong. I was going to pass anyway [*laughter*]. My Dad was on the school board.

ES: What do you think the main strengths and weaknesses of your education were?

PM: Oh mercy the main strength was mercy put me on a different degree entirely. Even the people that I associate with, and I am with. I mean women, 80, 85 we naturally you do all those parties. There's not too many that have degrees you know that, from the University of Illinois, and . . . well, my education, I was able to, I mean when I went out, Riley was in the service, and

he was out at Washington DC at the Pentagon, I went out there, and I was able to associate and mix with those people as just one of them I think, because I was educated, not all smart, educated, but I was intelligent enough to know how act, where to go, what to look like, lot of things that you get in schooling. You can't be bookish and be successful, real, real studious, student. It takes a lot more to get you through successfully in my way of thinking. I can't think, did that answer it?

ES: Yes. What do you remember about the rules on campus, for students?

PM: [*Laughter*]

ES: Do you remember the Dean of Men?

PM: Yes, I sure do [*laughter*]. I didn't have a car of course, students weren't allowed to have cars, unless you had special permission from the Dean. Now Riley, my sweetheart, did have car because he was staying in a private home and through permission he was allowed to have a car to help with the family there, that's a little side story. But that car was not supposed to be used to take Pauline any place, but occasionally it did work out. But one time, I do remember, Riley and I had taken a little ride. We went out to the park, that's Urbana Park. And I expect we were sitting there on a Sunday evening when we shouldn't have been doing it. I'm not trying to get around, out of anything, but anyway, it got us into trouble. It got Riley into trouble. It didn't get me into trouble because I think the police got the number on the car and took it, turned it in to the college. And, of course Riley's father was called. "Why was Riley in the car on a Sunday evening?" I don't remember, he got out of it, without too much trouble. It wasn't real, real serious, but that was rules were rules then, but you did break them too. We were, we were human, let's say it that way [*laughter*].

ES: What was your impression of Dean Clark?

PM: I never knew Dean Clark. I never did know any of the deans. I didn't know them, just going through getting a degree and all that. I think he was pretty well liked. I think Kinley, was the President?

ES: Uh-huh.

PM: But they were strict, oh dear, to what they are now, I think. And they said a law, a rule, that was it. I don't know. It seems today there's a lot of confusion. The football. . .oh trying to think of. It means so much, the Chief. Trying to think of, what is it?

ES: Chief Illini Wek.

PM: Chief Illini, I know, yes. I think it's ridiculous they allow such a thing to on, but about Chief Illini as part of the University. I'm afraid if I was the head of the thing, I'd stop that bunch, whoever they are, I think we've got too much of that going on in our whole country. People trying to get *in* control. There's a right and a wrong to everything. But, when right is

right, it's right. If you don't think it's right, then there is a right way of trying to make a change, and I don't think their approach shows that at all, at all!

ES: Do you remember any other kinds of rules? Was smoking prevalent on campus?

PM: Not with women. I don't think any women were smoking at all at that time. I didn't know it if they were. I was in the sorority. I was in charge of the girls in our sorority, for that, a little bit later in another period in time. But, I went back to the University and lived one year, when my husband was over seas three years. So things had changed a lot then to what they are now.

ES: Tell me how you got into the sorority. Why did you choose to join a sorority?

PM: Well I had a good friend in Ridge Farm who invited me. She was a sorority sister, already in the sorority. And, she invited me, called it rushing, I guess at that time. Maybe they still do it that way. I was glad, it was a good place for me, because I was more with people who were more concerned about me then staying in a private home, where they were unknown to me, and not very interested anyway at any time, as I thought.

ES: Your first year, you lived in a private dorm?

PM: No, I went into the sorority I think about the first semester.

ES: Oh.

PM: Very early. Uh-huh, very early. [The] thing I didn't like about it, was there were rules again. I've never been told where I had to be. Well I didn't like that idea of having to be in at certain time, and they were pretty strict. If you get in at 10:30, I don't know, 11 o'clock or 11, I don't know what time it was, but I know a time or two I got in trouble. I got in trouble on that because I didn't get in on time. I hate sometime to tell stories. I don't want you to think I'm bragging, it wasn't that. But, most of these girls were out of Chicago and I'm going to have to say that most of them had never done these things. They didn't get to go to the Military Balls, they didn't get to go to the Proms, they didn't get to go to Scabbard and Blade. A lot of them never had had dates, and I was going to all those things. And I was only freshman or sophomore. They were not too happy about it. You know, really they weren't. They didn't know why Pauline, "How come you get to do all those things?" I said, "I don't know why I get to do them, but I do," and I think it was a little bit of jealousy worked in to it, but I don't know. But anyway that didn't stop me from doing it, but it all came out all right. I had some very good friends in the sorority, and they stayed friends. One of them was Dorothy Smith. She later became President of the YMCA. She was from Chicago. Her father was a minister. I went home with her several times. She was a good friend. And her husband, he was also in military activities with Riley. He was Scabbard and Blade, those things, you know, you tie up with a people who think and do a lot like you do. Do you find that true with your life?

ES: Uh-huh.

PM: Yes, that's the way things go.

ES: Why were the other people in the sorority not doing those things? Not going to the balls?

PM: Because the boys didn't ask them, that's what I think. Now you ask why the men weren't asking them. There were men there then, just like there are now. I expect though there probably were more women, how is the ratio now, are there more women than men or—?

ES: I don't know, I would have to look that up [laughter].

PM: [Laughter] I don't know. I never went through that. I never went through that. I can't answer it either.

ES: Did you feel like women were treated differently than men students? Except, beside the curfew rules.

PM: Women treated differently, women. . . no, I can't think of anything that would make me feel that way at all. No, I don't think with student body. No, I can't think of anything that would make me feel that way at all. It's a change of life today, to what it was then. I think you would agree. A lot of women are working today and their husbands are staying home, that's even true. It's true, right here by my neighbor, right next door to me, mostly because he doesn't have a job, so he's staying home, but that's not true with all cases. I'm not to sure that's going to be a successful way of life. I wouldn't choose it, I thought, although I'm still old-fashioned enough to think a mother, if you're going to be a mother, that's a full time job, being a mother, nothing else. You can't be a mother, I think, and work a job. But again, circumstances might change it, and you can't make statements like that and have it fit every case.

ES: Right.

PM: That's right, that's right. It's much better if the mother can be home, let's say it that way.

ES: Tell me a little bit about sorority life, what kinds of things did you do? You lived in the house?

PM: [Laughter] Oh yes, oh yes. I think there were about, at least three of us in one room. At least three of us, living, can you imagine that? They were pretty strict on rules, if I remember correctly, as far as living. We had to have a seminar, is that what it was called, where we studied at night, where we went downstairs, and had a place to study. It was supposed to be quiet, from say seven to nine or something like that. That was very, again, helpful to me. I needed it, it was a great help to me. Nobody helped you with your studies, as I'd remembered it, but it was quiet and you could study there. You couldn't study in your room, because there was no place for that. The rules were pretty strict. We had a mother, sorority mother, what was she called, sorority mother wasn't it? She was from Paris, I remember. They kept pretty close, I think, with their girls at that time.

ES: Was it expensive to belong?

PM: Well, I thought it was then. I thought it was awfully expensive, wouldn't think of it now. I can't be sure, dear, about those figures, seems to me, would \$50 be a lot? \$50 a month, that doesn't sound very much, for your board and room. But I'm afraid it was about, around like that.

ES: Uh-huh.

PM: I hardly can't be real sure of those figures I haven't thought on them. I don't know, my father and mother probably thought it was a lot. But going to school, your tuition then, was very low.

ES: Very low.

PM: What was it then, I'm afraid to say? I'd have to look it up, but it was low then. What's tuition now, do you know?

ES: Oh, yeah.

PM: It's ridiculous to me.

ES: Thousands of dollars.

PM: Oh it's nothing like that, nothing like that.

ES: Did your parents want you to belong—

PM: To the sorority?

ES: To the sorority.

PM: Yes, they knew the family, in Ridge Farm who had asked me to come, and they came, my father and mother, as much as they were able to spend the money to come up there. They would come up on Sunday and we would just go out to eat. They kept very close contact with me, to knowing that. It was my first year, second year, I guess after that I was pretty well settled. But, we've always been a family that stayed close association, no problems there anytime.

ES: Did the sorority and fraternity socialize with the independent students?

PM: Not very much. We've never did go much to where the sorority would have, did they have fraternities come over I believe and dance. Or the sorority would go to the fraternities. I think some of that did go on. I didn't participate in that. I don't think Riley did. I went to dances with him, but he was a PAD, Phi Alpha Delta, wasn't it? Was that a Law fraternity? Phi Alpha Delta, I believe so, at that time. . . now for drinking. There was no drinking going on, out in the open. I can't say that on back doors, but it was not very much going on or you would have known about it, don't you think? Nothing I don't think, like you see it today. Nothing at all, not with my

friends. I'm speaking for people I was with. Never thought of taking a drink, never thought of taking a drink at any social affair on campus.

ES: Do you think being in a fraternity or sorority gave a student higher social status?

PM: Status, on the campus, on the campus. Dear, I think that would have to be answered by the student itself. There are some people that shouldn't have been in a sorority, shouldn't have been in a fraternity, in my way of thinking. For me, it was much better for me to be in a sorority because I was a person from a farm, and I didn't have brothers or sisters. It helped me get through the University, I think, and enjoy it as much as I did. My husband, he wouldn't live in the fraternity. He didn't even want to be in a fraternity, and never did live in one up here. I think that would almost have to be answered by the person themselves, don't you?

ES: Uh-huh. Well tell me what kinds of things you did for fun, you told you me about some of the dances, Military Balls.

PM: Dances, yes, and dancing. I can't think of things for fun. I never was a bridge player, never have been a bridge player. Tried to some, after I was married, but never was very successful with cards. For fun, what else did we do? Picnics. I kind of remember we came down to Homer Park. We could get in a car. We got in a car, we're allowed to do that then, maybe this was a little farther along in life, maybe, we were able to drive a car, I can't be sure, but there was at Homer, they had a park there. That was kind of nice place to come for little outings. You get your boat, and you could take a little boat rides there, that was nice. We had another couple who did that with us occasionally. We didn't mix an awful lot with a lot of other people, I mean, my life. I can't think of anything else as a sorority. Seems like we had things as a sorority, we entered in to, and there's just things, singing, we practiced a lot of things like that. They always had a concert, organ concerts. I remember that. They still have those up there, organ concerts, at 4:00 on Sunday afternoon, do they still have that? I attended regularly.

ES: I don't think so, I don't think.

PM: I thought that was a wonderful thing to go to. I never hardly ever missed a concert.

ES: Were those free?

PM: Oh yes, absolutely. I can't give you the name of the person who was the organist then, but I think that I did know the. . .Riley knew the family and, that doesn't come to my name at all. It was free. What I did for fun, that's what I'm trying to think of.

ES: Were there student hangouts in the 20s that you would go to?

PM: I don't know what a student hangout is, what is that?

ES: Well somewhere that the students congregate, a meeting place.

PM: I never entered into anything like that. There was a place there on Green Street, where most everybody went to eat; can't even remember the name of that place. We went to Urbana a lot to eat, I remember that. Well, maybe not a lot, but occasionally on Sunday evenings. I didn't do too much of that hanging with other students, that I can recall.

ES: Did you ever go to the sporting events?

PM: Oh yes, oh yes football, absolutely, everything in football. In fact, when was the stadium opened now, was that the?

ES: '24 I believe.

PM: '24, then I wasn't up there yet, no. Red Grange was the big fellow at that time. I went to that. I went to that opening of that, of the football grounds, if I remember right. I went to a game, a football game from Metcalf, I was still in high school, and the McClains took me to that football game. Riley met us up there. That was when they had, some place over in Urbana, where we met. Then they built that new stadium, then I went to the first game. Oh yes, I thought that was wonderful, wonderful. I got into all those. I still went to games up until probably three or four years ago. I had a cousin who lived in Homer. I always go up there and we'd always go to the games, but I haven't been to one in the last two or three years. I am now 93 years old.

ES: Were they pretty well attended?

PM: The football games?

ES: Football games.

PM: Oh yes. Mercy, you had to get your tickets, I think, in advance, it seems to me you did. There's always, had good bands, and you sat in the rain, the snow, didn't make any difference what weather was, you still thought it was fun. I wouldn't now.

ES: I noticed in the yearbook you were in some sports too?

PM: Yes, I think it was, hockey, but that was nothing, that was just playing games. Just part of, you had to be into a game. You had to take sports then, I can remember. I remember that teacher teaching it. I thought that was fun though, but I haven't played hockey since then, I don't think. What was the other thing. Swimming? Tennis? No, it wasn't tennis. I don't believe, when was that.

ES: Volleyball?

PM: Volleyball is what I did, volleyball. I haven't done much of that. Swimming, but now that's after, of course, that's colleges all over. I can go to Florida now, in the winter months, had been for the last three years. And, when I got down there, this was two years ago, well they found out that I could swim, see I had told you that I had been to four nationals, well they said,

“We’ve get to have that down in a paper!” So they came and had an interview, just like you are, and got my picture there swimming and all, uh-huh, that was fun. Why don’t we get and see some pictures now? [To the garage where all my pictures, medals, certificates hang—a life history of 94 years.]

END OF INTERVIEW.