

University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives

The Great Depression Oral History Project

Louise Proctor Allen

Greenwood, Indiana

January 20, 2001

Ellen Swain: This is an oral history interview for the University of Illinois Archives. The interviewer is Ellen Swain. The narrator is Louise Proctor Allen, an alumna from the class of 1936. We are at Mrs. Allen's home in Greenwood, Indiana and the date is January 20, 2001. Could you state your name?

Louise Allen: My name is Louise Proctor Allen, Mrs. Theodore W. Allen. And I live at 113 Fairview South Drive, in Greenwood, Indiana. I grew up in Chicago. I was born in Bloomington, Illinois, but at the age of three, my parents moved to Chicago, where I grew up. During the Depression, the city of Chicago was in financial straits, and they were paying all of their employees in paper script, which was a legally binding amount of money, you had to accept it. My parents at this time had a two-story apartment building. We lived in one story, and we rented out the other. During this time, we rented to a teacher and his family. When the time came to be paid for the services and the rent, he was paid in paper script, so that was no income. But my father was considered at one time to be the Dean of the can foods () in Chicago. It wasn't that we were that tight with money, but it was just another thing that meant that you didn't have a lot of money to spread around.

When I was in college, my dad thought it would be a very good idea if I learned how to manage money. So I had a little piece of paper or a notebook that I was supposed to enter all of the expenditures. I received \$5 a month, that was my allowance. It wasn't much, but it was enough that I didn't get too rambunctious. So I had this little notebook that I wrote down in every time I went to get a coke at Prehn's or at Kamerer's, if I bought a little pair of hose, that went in. If we had a party or anything that was over or above anything what we were paying to the sorority

house, then it came out of my money too. It was a good idea I suppose, but it seemed like a pain in the neck when I was doing it.

ES: Why did you choose the University of Illinois?

LA: I had been accepted to Northwestern. But living on the north side of Chicago, I thought that was just a little too close to home. I had a cousin that had graduated from the University of Illinois and has her husband. My mother figured that if my cousin had come through unscathed, then it was alright for her little daughter to go. So that's how I ended up there. I was interested in art, and I knew that University of Illinois had an excellent art school. So that is how I happened to end up there. I hadn't made up my mind to go until actually the summer before I entered school because I had already been accepted at Northwestern.

ES: This was 1932?

LA: Uh-huh, it was 1932. So it was really a big change for me because I had really never gone away from home for any length of time except to visit relatives you know. I thought this was a great time to get away and see what I could do on my own.

ES: Did you have brothers and sisters?

LA: I have a brother, and he was just four years behind me which was a big pressure. When I was in my last semester in college I developed strep throat with a quinsy, and in those days, there was no penicillin or streptomycin or any of those nice antibiotics that we have now so I ended up in the hospital on the campus there and spent almost four weeks in the hospital. I had no visitors because at that time it was considered extremely contagious. So when I got out of the college, or rather the hospital, I had almost four weeks of work to make up. Some of my professors said that it wasn't possible so I might as well drop out and come back later. Well, I couldn't do that. My brother was coming up after me. And as I said, we weren't particularly pressed for money, but I couldn't not foresee that the family could keep me in for another year and send my brother in after me. I was supposed to be in bed at 10 o'clock at night you know, but I never got to get to bed before two and three making up for all those hours that I was away, it was something. But I finally made it, my grades my last semester were not so hot, but at least I didn't flunk [*laughter*].

ES: You talked about this a little, but how did the Depression affect your family? 1932 was right in the middle of it. Did your parents have to sacrifice to send you to college?

LA: Well, I didn't know until long after it that my dad had one pair of shoes and one good suit. My mother was a very excellent seamstress; she loved to sew. In fact, she sewed for some charitable organization that her club was interested in. She just did that as a charitable donation. So I learned how to sew, and my mother helped me and I sewed a lot of my own sewing of the clothes that I took to college with me. I don't think that I looked different than anybody else. We tried to be style conscience even though it was on a limited budget. So I imagine that there were a lot of other people in the same basket as we were, you know. I never really felt that we were deprived, but I knew that when it came to getting my brother to school after me, we better get on the ball and get cutting so that's how it went.

ES: What do you remember about your first days at school? What were your impressions of U of I or Champaign-Urbana? Did your parents bring you to school?

LA: No, I think I came down on the train. There were quite a number of people from my high school that I knew were going and I knew that a lot of them had to be down at the same time. A gal friend of mine, Sally Marshal Kern, went down with me. I had registered to live in the resident hall because I knew nothing about the social life of the campus at that time. I learned fast. I enjoyed the campus, I thought it was beautiful. That was when they still had all those beautiful elm trees before the Dutch Elm disease hit. It was a spectacular campus, of course a lot of the buildings have been replaced. It is still an elegant place and I enjoyed it thoroughly. I don't know if it was just the feeling of freedom. I always enjoyed meeting new people, and this was certainly an opportunity. I don't know if I was any different from anyone else, but I also enjoyed schooling.

ES: You said you were an art major?

LA: Uh-huh.

ES: How did you get into that field?

LA: Well, when I went to the University at first, I really didn't really understand that much about it. So I thought I better take it easy for the first year until I got my feet wet. So I went into the

Living Art school, and I thought I'd just do my best here and see how it would work out. So then I decided I really wanted to be in Fine Arts, so I transferred to Fine Arts. So then I was in there for a year or two and then I decided that I better get into education because at this period of time it looked like there weren't too many jobs floating around so at least I knew that with my background I could probably get a teaching job. So when I got out of school I went to the superintendent of schools of Chicago because I had gone to junior high with his daughter. I wanted to get a job in the Chicago schools because that is where my folks lived at the time. He thought that I should go to Dekalb for another two years. Well, here we are in the middle of the Depression, I said, "I'm sorry, I just can't do that because I don't have the money to take another two years of school because my brother's in college now for four years and I'm not going to take anything away from him." Instead of continuing teaching, I went to work, this is ridiculous, I went to work for an insurance company on Michigan Boulevard. I was a receptionist and a cashier and whatever else they asked me to do for

\$13.50 a week. And then some of the girls I had graduated with and some of the girls that had graduated the year before, had gotten jobs as a service representative in Chicago and they suggested I go there because they were paying \$35 a week. Which would have been a man's salary really, so that's what I did. I worked for them as a service representative and then I became a teacher in the school that trained service representatives. I was with them for eight years I think, and then I was the Assistant Business Office Supervisor in the Edward Rodgers Park office up on the north side of Chicago.

ES: What were your classes like? What were the class sized then? Where were they held?

LA: Well, I was in the Art Building. The one that's in back of the library. We had our art classes up there. I think they were on the top floor because artists like to have a constant light and I think it was northern light that they wanted because then you don't get any shadows. So that's what I did, I went there and I studied there.

[Interruption.]

I had classes in Lincoln Hall, and I had some classes in the old Union Building. One class that I had, I went from the top floor of the Art building, all along the Broadwalk, up to the top floor of the Union building. In those days, the wooden steps had been tread on so long that they were

wore out in the center. Here I was huffing and puffing to get up to the top floor, I'll never forget that, I think it was a Psych class. I went in and I sat down, I'm sure I didn't hear a word that day. I just sat there huffing and puffing, trying to get my breath. But you know everything was a new experience. I never regretted it. The only thing I regretted was getting the strep infection my senior year. I always knew that if I hadn't spent three weeks or so in the hospital, I would have made much better grades that last semester. But that's life. I was in activities. I was house President at that time.

I guess I just gave up because I didn't have enough push to pass around.

ES: Did you have a favorite faculty member?

LA: I always liked my art classes. I took a sculpting class with Professor Lake, and I always thought that he was a real nice person. Who else? There was somebody else. If you wanted to know somebody that was a character, my French teacher was a character. He used to bring candy in and when we were having a final or some kind of a test, he would pass candy out. Then there was another Professor, Laric [sic], he was an English teacher. I think he taught a lot of engineers and people who were taking it as a side subject. They used the line the girls up in the front row and then all the boys would sit all the way around us and make these snide remarks, every once and a while that would make the fellows all start to titter. After a while you didn't pay attention to it anymore because you knew it was coming. He was a good teacher, I enjoyed it. I liked my French teacher too. I always felt that I was not as competent as I should have been, even though I had had six years of French, I guess I didn't have quite the ego that I needed to have at that point. It was all very thoroughly enjoyable. The people that I met and became friends with, they're people that you keep in your mind forever.

ES: Did faculty and students have a close relationship? Did students go to faculty homes?

LA: The only time that I was ever in a faculty home was when one of my art teachers was a friend with a guy I dated for a while in the school of architecture. He had an open house one time and he had a loft apartment above one of the little theaters downtown. I can see him in my mind, but I can't remember his name from the Deans.

ES: What did you think were the main strengths or the main weaknesses of your education at the University of Illinois?

LA: Well, if I had only had a better idea of what I wanted to do, I might not have changed schools three times you know. In those days, a gal was a little different from the gals today. You didn't always have the feeling that you knew what you were going to do right off, there may have been some of them. I was really just trying to feel my way around to find out what I really wanted to do in the end. I had always had a trend of being interested in art but I felt that in those days, in the middle of the Depression, art wasn't going to get you any place, that's why I went on into education because I thought at least that would be one place that a young women could at least make a living.

ES: Another area I wanted to ask you about was the rules that were in existence for students during the time you were in school. Do you remember the Dean of Woman and her role on campus, Maria Leonard?

LA: Oh yes. Well, I had some contact with her and the assistant in women because I was in quite a number of the activities on the Y and in the Woman's League. But unfortunately, I think a lot of people sort of laughed at Miss Leonard because they were always tossing around the idea that she was not happy when girls wore satin and they should never wear red. But you know, that's just kind of scuttlebutt [*laughter*].

ES: So the impressions of her from the students' point of view were...

LA: She did her job, I'm sure of that. But I mean, a lot of kids liked to be in college were just getting their feet wet and liked living on their own. I guess they thought that any restriction like that was just absolutely ridiculous. You can see that in high school and college today. I don't think that we were that much different from those people except in some instances, our background.

ES: Were the rules for women different then for men?

LA: Oh yeah, 10:30 at night and 1 o'clock on weekends, period.

ES: Or what happened?

LA: I never tried to find out, really [*laughter*]. I know that there were lots of girls who thought that the rules and regulations were made for someone else. But if you were found out after hours it wasn't long until you before began to find out that you had a little tag at the end of your name.

People began to think that, “Oh, maybe she’s not that nice.” So it may have been more psychological than an actual having some real trouble made by your actions. I guess a lot of that is a lot like today, you have certain limitations and if you don’t live up to them then you suffer the consequences.

ES: You’ve mentioned smoking, was that prevalent?

LA: So listen, I got started smoking because you went into Prehn’s or Kameron’s and you went in and the air was blue and if you didn’t smoke you couldn’t breathe. I got started smoking and I’m on a soapbox now because everybody that I see I say, “Don’t start because you can’t stop.” I smoked for over 40 years, and I ended up with emphysema. I tell you that with all the medicines and breathers and stuff that I take, I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy. I shouldn’t interfere with people, but sometimes I just think if you knew what the results would be then you wouldn’t be doing that. I guess I’m just a grandma at heart.

ES: Did a lot of students do that? You said that at Prehn’s a lot of students smoked in there. Did they smoke around at other places?

LA: Oh, yeah.

ES: Did you smoke in the sorority house?

LA: Yeah, uh-huh. Most everybody that I knew of did smoke. Of course there were a few that never started, of course that was the best thing in the world for them. But you know, at that time, people were not too concerned about it. It was the tail end of the 20s, so to speak, when there was a lot of freedom that was around and that was considered a part of the freedom. It was dumb, but that’s the way it worked.

ES: Sure, sure, what about drinking?

LA: Yeah, they did that too. Yep, absolutely.

ES: Was it a problem do you think?

LA: No, not really, I don’t think so. There were a few that were buying more than they should have imbibed. An occasional beer, that seemed to be the dominate drink.

ES: Where did that take place?

LA: There was a place down near the creek, I can't even remember the name. I know you could go and get beer there. Was it Kamerer's downtown? You could go down there to eat, and you could get about any kind of beer that you wanted. It's another one of those things that when you're on a limited budget you didn't do much.

ES: Could you drink in the house?

LA: No, never.

ES: That wasn't part of the social life?

LA: No, no. You know what they say about Greeks, but maybe the fellows did, but not in the sororities.

ES: I want to talk about economics, did you have a job at school while you were a student?

LA: No, no I didn't.

ES: Do you remember friends having to work?

LA: I know some of the fellows did. I think just like they do today, they needed money so they could date.

ES: For their social life. What kinds of jobs did they do?

LA: Well, a lot of them were waiters in the fraternity and sororities. And I remember that there were some in the resident hall when I lived there because I lived there for almost a year.

ES: Which resident hall?

LA: It was the Woman's Residents Hall, what is it on Oregon?

ES: How did you get involved with the sorority life?

LA: Well, I guess in my first year I became aware of the sororities and I met a lot of nice people so I imagine that is how I probably became involved with them. My folks thought it was a good idea too. They figured that with a house mother I'd probably get a little more supervision and in an organized group we sort of watched out for each other too so we never strayed off too far.

ES: So you went through the Rush process? What was that like?

LA: Yes. It was a lot of parties. A lot of people, some that you knew, a lot that you didn't. But it was an interesting experience. I enjoyed it, of course I'm pretty much a people person anyway. There wasn't too much that I didn't enjoy about school except when I got snowed under with class work. The only D I ever got was when I didn't finish a project on time—I wasn't too proud of that because I wasn't used to getting D's.

ES: Pretty traumatic.

LA: It was, and they put it up on the bulletin board in the sorority. See, you had to maintain a high scholastic average in the sorority, so at least that was one of their prime motives and if you goofed, everyone knew about it.

ES: So they posted everyone's grades on a wall downstairs?

LA: Uh-huh, yeah. So if you got too out of line, you were told about it.

ES: What was your sororities name? LA: I was a Tri-Delt, Delta Delta Delta. **ES: Where was that?**

LA: 508 E. Chalmers.

ES: And you moved in you sophomore year?

LA: Uh-huh.

ES: And did you live there all three years?

LA: Yes, I lived there. I finished school living in there.

ES: And you had a house mother?

LA: Mrs. Adams. She was a very nice woman. She was elderly, she had white hair. She painted and I guess she was very accomplished. She was very social too, she had a lot of friends among the house mothers and I guess I would say among the people who were in the University themselves. She was pretty well aware. She knew kids pretty well too. I figured that out later [laughter].

ES: What were her responsibilities? Why was she there?

LA: What she did was, she maintained the house. We had a couple of helpers, we had a cook, we had a couple of housekeepers. We were supposed to keep our own rooms clean, we didn't have anybody waiting on us hand and foot. She just kept the public rooms clean. I remember the cook and I got along really well. At that time, I just really loved chicken livers, fried chicken livers you know. You think I would have been () but I wasn't. This one girl that I was going with, we would come and sit in the living room of the Tri-Delt house, on Saturday afternoon, and listen to the broadcast of the opera. She would give me a little () with the chicken livers in and we would sit there and munch chicken livers and listen to the opera. Everybody thought we were crazy but that's all right, we were having fun [*laughter*].

ES: What were some of the rules? You talked about curfew, were there other rules in the house? You couldn't smoke in the house?

LA: No, we could smoke in the house.

ES: That's right, you couldn't drink.

LA: We didn't drink and on Friday nights we dressed for dinner just to make sure we were still ladies. And we didn't wear slacks. Cold weather or not, we wore skirts. And it's just because everybody else did. I don't think a lot of people went to wearing slacks until it started the World War. Because I remember, I know my mother would never had worn slacks. The only time she did was when we had a little Victory Garden.

So they tried to teach us table manners and how to handle the tea. We planned things for the groups themselves you know, so that we weren't isolated by any means. We had exchange dinners with some of the fraternities. You made friends with all different fraternities and sororities. In fact, two of my very best friends were in other sororities. It wasn't as isolated as some people think today, you know. The Greeks have gotten sort of a bad name and I wish these people who start being such stupid fools, because they're not just hurting themselves, they're hurting the Greek name. The Greeks did a really good job, they trained a lot of people in a lot of different ways because they liked to have the members of the fraternities and the sororities enter into the campus activities. I think that was good training for when you got out into the real world. Some people just didn't think that way so it's another case of "to each his own."

ES: How did the Greek students and the independents get along?

LA: As far as I know, of course, a lot of the kids that I knew were independents and one of the fellows that I dated was an independent. Of course I dated a lot of the fellows in fraternities too. It never crossed my mind that there was a don't do or a do. So I think that some people, in fact I know of one fellow that I was dating when I was an independent, his fraternity frowned on his dating me because I was an independent. I thought, oh well, so what? Well, anyway.

ES: Among the fraternities and sororities on campus, was there a hierarchy? Were some viewed as better than other?

LA: I think it was based primarily on scholastics and the number of people that were involved in campus activities. I think that was really more of a criteria than anything else. Of course, there's always a few that figured that they're going to be a little bit better than somebody else. I always sort of poo-pooed that. I always tried to judge people for what they were doing or what they were worth, but some people were brought up that way. It was just like out in the world, you're going to find all kinds of people no matter where you go.

ES: What kind of things did you do for fun?

LA: You'll never know. I loved the theater and I loved music. I had kept playbills from way back then. Here's the *Lad Imaginero* by Moulaire and that was put on by the Cirque Frances, and here is the *Lower Depths*, these were put on by the theater. *Hit the Deck*, Woman's League [referring to programs in her scrapbook on the table.] Oh, there's all sorts of things.

ES: Were you involved in theater too?

LA: No, I just loved to attend. I became more involved as I grew older when I was out of school. In college I just had too much else to do. When you're in Fine Arts, you have three hour classes and so you get two classes a day and that just zeros out everything else. When you're in the Art School, you just sort of do what you can, and some days there's just not enough hours. Oh, during the Depression Chicago did have the World's Fair.

Living there we heard a lot about it, but it was so expensive that we went twice: once each year. I have all the paper clippings and the post cards. I knew people collected stuff like this, but as my husband said, I just collect everything [*laughter*]. He thinks I'm a pack-rat. I keep pictures of these, you never can tell.

ES: Were most of the theater events you went to on campus?

LA: Yep, uh-huh.

ES: Student group productions?

LA: Oh, all sorts of things here.

ES: What were the dances like here?

LA: We had all the big bands. One time I was going with a fellow, in fact I was going with him for almost two years. But he loved to dance, so we hit every dance on campus. I loved that because I loved to dance. We heard all the big bands. I especially like Hal Kemp, of course he was not as well known as some of the others, but I enjoyed that band a lot. I keep all these silly play bills and senior recitals from the University School of Music. But I don't know, that's all part of your life. If you don't enjoy a variety of things, you might as well give up.

ES: Sure. What was Terrapin?

LA: It's a water carnival and it was the honorary swimming club. I only saw a couple of those things.

ES: That's a women's event?

LA: Uh-huh. Yeah.

ES: What student activities were you involved in? What organized groups?

LA: Well, I worked in Woman's League and I worked in the Y.

ES: What was the Y's role on campus? What did you do?

LA: Well, they had a lot of different activities. I remember there was one special one that I had charge of selling chrysanthemums for one of the big games. I was more or less in the business part of it. I just got into that. I liked to do things as I said, I like to be with people, so I just look for things to do. Sometimes I spread myself a little too thin, but I really enjoyed it.

ES: Did you go to athletic events?

LA: Oh sure. In those days when you paid your tuition, part of it was for tickets to all the games, basketball games, football. Then you also got your health insurance. I don't know whether they do that now or not, but that was just a part of signing up at the University every semester. I think it's a marvelous idea because that way you get your money paid out and you don't have to worry about paying anything later on. I don't know what my folks would have done if they would have had to pay for three or four weeks in the hospital for me, even back then. I think that that insurance was an excellent idea.

ES: Did you notice that the Depression affected student activities to a great degree?

LA: Well, when you sign up, you've got these tickets and this insurance, so you had an outlet in some of these activities. You had your monthly rental at the sorority house and that included just your board and your room and if they had any extra, special fancy things, then you would pay extra for that, like you saw the banquet program there, that you had to pay extra for. But there were not too many situations like that, that you had to be concerned about. So, I think if you used your head and didn't go running off at all angles, that there weren't too many problems that were insurmountable.

ES: You said you made your own clothes?

LA: Yeah, I did a lot of my own clothes and I enjoyed dressing well and there were some things that I felt that I couldn't do well enough that I'd buy. And there's no restrictions, as far as my folks were concerned, when I would buy things. If I felt that I needed them, then I got them. But I was never, we didn't take the attitude that you needed to have everything in the box. I think that's because when you grow up in the period of the Depression like that, your expectations are not as high as some kids are now. There wasn't the fad of having to wear everything by all the famous designers, you know? I would absolutely refuse to be a walking ad for some of the designers that the kids pay bocu bucks for now. I think that's absolutely ridiculous, maybe that's just my age showing.

ES: What was the student body make up like?

LA: I've always heard, and I'm not too sure about it, that overall there were only about 5% of the people who graduated from high school went on to college, and of that, only 5% were women.

So there was still that idea that if anyone was going to get an education, it was going to be the boys.

ES: But your parents didn't feel that way?

LA: Oh, no. My parents always felt that I could do anything I wanted to.

ES: Had they gone to college?

LA: No, they never had. They had graduated from high school. They were readers, they liked to read. We always had *The National Geographic* or *The Reader's Digest* around. When I was in high school I would go down to the library and cart home a bunch of books; that's what everybody did. We had a big radio and we listened to the radio, but we didn't hang on every word that came out of the radio, the way that some kids do about TV now. I think it's a placebo for some people. I feel pretty normal. We went to church, we went to the movies every once and a while.

ES: What church were you involved in?

LA: That time I went to a Baptist church. We had moved several times within the area and we really didn't have any, "it's got to be this or nothing."

ES: Were you involved in college in one of the foundations?

LA: Well, for a while I went to the Baptist church down there, but as I got involved further and further in activities, I just had to give it up. I was on one end of the campus and they were on the other. Very few people had cars then, so any place you went, most of the people walked. I can remember walking downtown to go to a movie, and it was raining. You didn't stay home, heck, you put on a raincoat and you went.

ES: Was religion important to students? Were they involved in the religious organizations?

LA: In some of them deeply, but other ones, as a matter of fact, they would go because that's what they had been taught to do. I don't know whether some of them relished the freedom and decided, heck, that was something that they didn't need. But I'm sure when they got older and got out again, that they resumed the usual attachments. It was one of those things, if you were brought up in a church you went, if you weren't, you probably didn't.

ES: Was there, that you knew of, any division between Catholics and Protestants?

LA: Oh, no, I dated a Catholic boy [*laughter*]. His mother didn't like the idea though.

ES: Were there black students on campus?

LA: Some, but not many though. This was the Depression so there weren't too many that had the money to go, even as expensive as it was, by today's standards.

ES: But you do remember some being on campus?

LA: Oh, uh-huh.

ES: Did they intermingle with the rest of the student body?

LA: Not too much as I remember. I remember them being here, but for one reason or another I didn't have much opportunity to be with them. I think there were a couple in the school of Art and Architecture, but I couldn't put my finger on it, that's a shame.

ES: You weren't aware of fraternities and sororities?

LA: No, they didn't have them then. They had some for the Jewish kids that I knew.

ES: How did they interact with other students?

LA: See, I grew up on the north side of Chicago and at that time there was a large group of Jewish people that lived in that area. So I grew up with a lot of them and it never made much difference to me one way or the other.

ES: Were you aware of discrimination on campus at all?

LA: I think there probably was although I wasn't terribly aware of it.

ES: I have a question about national events and how aware were students of national events and what was going on outside the University? Presidential elections and news about the Depression?

LA: Well, I got most of that when I went home. We got the *Daily Illini* and of course we kept on the affairs of the world through that, but it was mostly pointed towards the campus activities,

even though it wasn't entirely for that. I remember going home when some of it was, and the people next to us, a man and his wife, were of German decent.

One day he snagged me when I was out in the back yard, "What kind of rubbish are they teaching you down at the University?" And I thought, whoa, what is this all about? And I guess he was still a deep, diehard German and this was in the time that the Nazi's were building their power. I knew that they still had a huge wireless set and they kept contact with people over in Germany. I guess he was trying to find out from me if we were being made pro- or con- to the German people as a whole. At that point, all we knew was that we didn't like them for what they were doing. At that time it really hadn't gotten too bad. It was after that when things started to tighten down over there. It wasn't really a pleasant time to be alive to see what was going on all over the world. Finally, I guess, the inevitable had to happen. It's hard to think that one man can have that kind of power over a complete nation. Him and this loony, and the Emperor of Japan, people would do their bidding without any question. I think that when power gets that bad, they weren't even aware of it, but it didn't impress us as being as being imminent and affecting us. It wasn't long after us that we realized that everybody was wrong; you had to become involved. So I don't know, maybe it was just the times.

ES: But you as a University student, didn't really have that awareness? Didn't know what was going on nationally?

LA: Not to that extent. Internationally is what I was thinking about. Not this sense of the pressure that was building up. We listened to the radio, but even with that it still seemed far away, that it wasn't ever going to affect us. Just like everybody else, "it can't happen here," but it did.

ES: Were student involved in politics at all? National politics or local things going on?

LA: I really don't know about that, whether there was or not. I don't think there were any that were involved in local politics.

ES: There weren't protests or marches?

LA: No, I was around then and I didn't hear about any protests or marches. That all came later, I think. '36 was just at the beginning of when things started to pop.

ES: There weren't radical groups on campus?

LA: I'm sure there were, but they weren't flamboyant.

ES: They weren't as visible?

LA: They weren't as visible. I know that even when I was in high school there were things going about a group that had definite communist leanings, and there was a group in high school called the White Gloves, and this was in '32. There was a lot of talk about communism and some of the kids that were in the ROTC there, I went down to one of these communist meetings to see what it was all about. It was sort of scary. I guess I was just too sheltered to be exposed [*laughter*]. But I know that there were such things, and I know how violent and vial they can be because they were so adamant about their beliefs. There are no, if's and's or but's: either you were or you weren't. That's one thing that I learned about them when I was down there. I only went to one meeting because we went down with this White Gloves group, I think there were just three of us who went, but just three of us wouldn't make a difference, so you've got two guys and a girl, it was different. So I went along as the detraction. If my folks would have known I had done that they would have skinned me alive [*laughter*].

ES: After you graduated, you didn't find a job right away?

LA: No. I took this job at the insurance company just so I would have this money. I was sending my brother spending money out of what I was earning. Otherwise he wouldn't have had any money to go on a date or have any fun.

ES: A lot of your friends were in the same boat?

LA: Uh-huh.

ES: How did you meet your husband?

LA: That was after we graduated. He was at Northwestern and I was from Illinois, naturally, and there was a little theater group on the north side of Chicago and I met him there. You come out of the college environment where you're in activities and everything, you come and home and everything goes *pouth*, like a loaf of bread in the heat. I was looking for something to do to keep myself busy, eight hours a day was nothing after you've been to college and pulled all-nighters

you know. I went there and I met him. We didn't date for a while because I just was there to work in this little theater group. But that's how we met. You know they say, "Northwestern and Illinois, never the twain shall meet," well we always got rubbed about that years later because my Illinois friends and his Northwestern friends would all get together, and they would comment about the sophistication of Northwestern and the farm hillbillies from Illinois. Oh, that used to gripe me.

ES: How was Illinois viewed in Chicago?

LA: It was considered a good school, but the kids at Northwestern, you know. Some of them were super serious and they would just look down their nose at anyone who didn't go to Northwestern. It has always been a very good school, but I didn't want to go there.

ES: Well, I think you've answered all my questions, do you have anything else you'd like to add?

LA: I can't think of anything. We've reminisced a lot.

ES: Thank you.