# *Emma Glenz*

Interviewed by Marie McCabe on July 27, 1982 at an unknown location.

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*Emma, can you tell me where you were born and raised?*

I was born in Madison and raised here.

*In what part of the city?*

What was called Canal Street years ago. It's still there. It extends from Main Street down to King, a very old part of town.

*How large was Madison at that time?*

Probably about 10,000.

*And so you were pretty near the center of town at that time.*

When it was about 17,000 I was in high school. Seventeen to twenty thousand.

*Were you able to know the whole city then?*

We all knew the Square and some of the outlying parks. The Germans had a park called Schuetzen Park. They had picnics there. My father belonged to the Turnverein and Männerchor so we used to go to picnics there.

*Was that near the Square?*

That was out in the neighborhood of Olbrich Park.

*Oh, yes, around the lake then, around Monona. What did your father do?*

My father [William H. Glenz] was in the insurance department as a mailing clerk – I think that was his work – for forty years. When he died, he was the oldest employee in the state: forty years.

*And your mother stayed at home and took care of the children?*

Yes, she was a homemaker, a wonderful cook. She learned German cooking from my grandmother, who lived with us twice at different times. They had owned a hotel in Germany – really two hotels, the Adler and the Schuetzen, which are still there.

*What was your family like? You had brothers and sisters?*

My parents had five children. My brother was ten, then my sister was two years younger. Then a baby was almost still-born, just lived a day. Then a little sister two years older than I. She died of diphtheria about 1890, when she was nine. We all had it but she died of it.

*That was so common in those days.*

Yes. When the blue sign was on the doors we children would go across the street. We were scared of it. And the scarlet fever sign, too: all children were scared of it.

*I remember having scarlet fever signs on doors, but in my day we didn't have diphtheria. What year were you born then?*

I was born in 1883, September 6. This fall, in September, I'll be ninety-nine.

*Are you the oldest citizen in Madison now, do you think?*

I hear of older people, over a hundred. I don't know who they are.

*I'll bet they're not getting around and giving interviews anyway. What was your home like?*

*What kind of house did you have and in what neighborhood?*

We didn't own a home until later years. We always rented. My father was quite artistic and even though it was humble, he always made it very attractive. When we moved from Canal Street we lived on West Wilson, but that house has been torn down. Then we moved to North Hamilton and lived there many years, all through my high school years. Then Mother was so anxious to have a home of her own. My brother and father bought a house across from the Lincoln Center and we lived there eight years, until my brother was married. Then my father and mother bought a house on Livingston and I lived with them eighteen years, until they died.

*You were always very close to the lakes, then, weren't you?*

Yes.

*Did you use the lakes?*

My sister and her husband built a house on East Gorham, right on the lake, and my brother and Dr. Gilbert owned a launch, so we were on the lake quite a lot.

*Did you swim, too?*

My brother used to dunk me, so I never learned to swim.

*But in the hot weather I presume people did go to the beaches?*

Oh, yes. The Gilbert children and the Kubly children and Deans in that block all had an instructor from the Turnverein. They all learned to be fine swimmers.

*You were friends of the Kublys and the Deans?*

Yes. On that block where Dr. Gilbert and my sister lived there were the Kessenichs, Collins, Kublys, Wiedenbecks, and Deans. I knew all of them. The houses are nearly all there. The beautiful Dean house was torn down in one day.

*Oh, yes. They really go, don't they? Are any of those people still living that you knew then? Aren't there some Kublys, some rather elderly Kublys, now?*

Professor Harold Kubly is, of course, much younger than I. He's living. He married a Herfurth girl. And Stan Kubly is living. He ran the business until he retired. The Kessenichs, it's just the younger generation.

*Someone mentioned that there was a Kubly, I think probably Stan, who might also have early recollections.*

And of the Wiedenbecks, Mrs. Moore and Emilie and Margaret are all living. Margaret is in the high eighties.

*Is she in good health?*

They are living on the Midtown Road, a beautiful valley between Madison and Verona. The three sisters live in three houses about a block apart.

*We're very interested in hearing from people we talk to about others we might talk to, so those are really good references.*

Mrs. Moore and I were talking about our youth one day last year. We always talked German at home, all of us talked German, and they always talked German – I didn't know that – until

World War I. Then the father came home one day and he said we may no longer talk German, during the war.

*Did you have relatives nearby?*

Yes. My mother was Julia Kayser. [Adolph] Kayser was a former mayor of Madison, her youngest brother.

*So you had some cousins and uncles and things around?*

Yes. Stella, Helen, Paul, Mrs. Emma King, Mrs. Vera Blatz. And did I mention Esther Kessenich?

*She was a relative?*

Yes. I think I mentioned all the children.

*So it was quite a large German community?*

Helen. Did I mention Helen? She was the assistant dean of women. Helen Kayser. And Stella was very active in music. She, at one time, was president of the Madison Music Association. Very well known piano teacher.

*Was this sort of a German community?*

Yes. There was the Madison Turnverein. The Turner Hall is still on North Butler. We went to turnerisch school. They still have the turnerisch school.

*What is that turnerisch school?*

It was gymnastics. The German community had a theater group and the Männerchor also met there. My father was stage manager and they put on very good things, like Schiller's *Maria Stewart*.

*In German?*

In German. When the theater on the Square burned the fine companies, road companies, came to the Turner Hall. Julia Marlow was there. My father helped lace up her bodice. They stood at the curtain together and looked through the peek hole. Julia Marlow said "What a poor house." My father said "Well, you'll be known better after tonight. Then it will be more profitable for you."

*That's good. There was also an Italian community, wasn't there? Over near Vilas Park?*

I never got acquainted with them. That was a different part of town. I think the Germans were in the main city quite a bit, but scattered. There was a German congregation formed. In 1863 the church was built, the second oldest, Holy Redeemer. My brother and sister and most Catholic children attended there. My little sister that died and I attended it until after her death. We walked from Wilson Street way across the city, two little girls. One day the old priest who married my parents – my father was Lutheran, mother was Catholic – stopped us one day and talked to us. I remember that so well. He was a white-haired, old gentleman. Augusta was always so quiet; I did all the talking.

*Were there sidewalks then?*

Wooden sidewalks. Then my father thought it was too difficult for me to go as a little girl of seven alone, so I went in to the Doty School. That's just going to be changed into condominiums. I think it's the same building.

*I think they probably will tear a lot of it down to make the condominiums.*

The La Follettes lived across the street. I knew Fola when she was a little girl.

*What age were you when you started to school?*

I must have been six.

*And was there a kindergarten then?*

No. I think that we met in the basement of the church. After a number of years the school, which is still there but is not used as a school, was built. Then after my First Communion... I went to public school at Doty until through... I skipped the second grade into the third grade. Blanche Harper, Dr. Cornelius Harper's sister, was my third-grade teacher.

*Oh. But you started as a first grader at Holy Redeemer Church?*

Yes.

*You said that was taught in German?*

Yes, most of it. Of course, the catechism and Bible stories, and so forth.

*But you were speaking English at that time as well as German?*

Yes. But always until quite late I had quite a German accent.

*Well, I think you've lost it now. How large a class did you have?*

In the grade at Doty, in Miss Burns's class, it was a full room. I would say about maybe thirty or thirty-five children. One day she said "Just look at Emma, how quietly she sits there with her hands folded, while you children are noisy." When I left Miss Blanche's school, third grade, she let me draw all over the board. I must have had talent as a child to draw.

*Yes. And you must have been very smart to skip a grade, too.*

Then we moved to this neighborhood and I went to Lincoln, old Lincoln, I think it was, and I had Miss [Elizabeth] Herfurth for my teacher. Then I went back to Holy Redeemer for three years to make my First Holy Communion and was confirmed.

*You mean you had to go to classes there?*

I went permanently. And then the Notre Dame sisters taught. Then I went back to public school, seventh and eighth grade.

*At Lincoln again?*

No. I graduated from Brayton School. I had a teacher, I always remember her name, [unclear] Clark. She was so lovely. I can just see her.

*Let me get this straight. Where did you go to seventh and eighth grade? That was still grade school then?*

Yes. I went to public school, seventh and eighth.

*And that was at Lincoln School?*

At Brayton.

*That school is no longer there, is it?*

I can't exactly remember, but I think it was near East Washington Avenue.

*I see. Now Doty must have been a fairly new school when you went there, wasn't it?*

Yes.

*And Lincoln?*

They looked rather old, some of those schools. They were torn down.

*Do you remember whether there were just six grades or did they go up to eight grades, through eighth grade?*

Yes. I can't get used to the way grades are now and with high school. We went through eighth grade into high school, at Central.

*So you had a really fairly modern school: it was a city school and you didn't have the kind of problems that the people out in the country had.*

No discipline now. [Richard Ball] Dudgeon was superintendent of schools.

*Oh, was he? And you had a principal, too?*

I think Miss Clark was the principal, the eighth grade teacher.

*That sounds reasonable. And you had sort of an equal mix of boys and girls?*

Yes.

*There was no separation?*

Oscar Jensen, who ran the college book store, was in my eighth grade. He always remembers me. He died a couple years ago. I used to see him at his home.

*You had the regular course of reading, writing, and arithmetic, plus apparently you had some art work and, I presume, some music. Did you have the spelling bees?*

I never was too good in math. In high school I got good grades in chemistry and algebra, but it was difficult for me.

*Do you remember the spelling bees?*

No, I don't.

*Or Christmas programs?*

I remember getting a badge in multiplication and subtraction in third grade, and we wore little ribbons. This was Miss Herfurth's class.

*What was the common dress for going to school in those days?*

I can't remember, dear. Not many clothes. At least I didn't have many changes.

*Yes, yes. My mother told of having a basic, long sleeved, sort of woolen dress and then fresh pinafores she would wear.*

I remember one dress I had with a deep lace collar.

*But that was probably a dressy one, wasn't it? You probably didn't wear that to school.*

Plaid.

*I suppose you had high-button shoes?*

Yes. It would be very difficult when they snapped off. You'd have to take them to the shoe store to have them put back. When you were late, to get those all buttoned, you know, that was difficult. We had button hooks. I still have one.

*I have one, too. And you wore long hair, I presume, with a ribbon?*

Yes. I wore long hair through my first year at the university. I tied it back. I never had luxuriant hair, like my mother. She had a big braid when she died, about eighteen inches long. And when she was married it was like a crown around her head.

*Yes, that was a very common style, wasn't it? Especially for Germans.*

Yes. Elizabeth of Austria.

*But it was hard work to wash hair in those days.*

Yes. We didn't have shampoos like now. We would beat eggs and use eggs, an egg shampoo.

*And I suppose you brushed your hair every night?*

Yes. I always brushed my mother's hair for her.

*Oh, how nice. Well, you walked to school then, obviously, because you lived close by. And you went for the usual term, end of summer to June?*

I walked to and from the university one whole year, through rain and shine, from the 700 block on East Gorham.

*Now, there were streetcars then, weren't there?*

Yes.

*But you walked anyway?*

Well, a friend of mine lived near and we decided to do that.

*That's the secret of your long life, I imagine, all that walking you did then. Let's take you into high school now. You were living on East Gorham.*

No, I was living on North Hamilton. We moved to East Gorham during my university, the last year, I think, about 1907 or along there. I got my master's in 1908, in German.

*You said you went to Central High when you lived on North Hamilton, so that isn't a terribly long walk.*

That was a lovely time of my life, Central. I was going to write an essay "We weren't angels either." I sent in to this Professor Gard's project but they didn't accept it. Maybe the kids acted too badly. We used to act very badly in study periods. We had a large auditorium. Everybody met there, all the four years, and then we'd go to classes from there. There was an aisle through it and big, open registers. In winter the girls would stand there to get warmed and our skirts would flare.

*You were supposed to study in there but you did a lot of other things.*

We passed notes, the girls. And the boys were very bad some of them. People would go through to the library, which was in the front part of it, and they'd keep touching the chairs, so it sounded

just like piano playing from the seats falling. It was terrible for the teachers that were in charge. One teacher wept one time. We used to say "Will you be in her room during the study period?" We just loved to be in there, to see what would happen. Then they'd roll marbles to the front and they'd come back. It was really bad. But nothing mean. No meanness like now.

*Was the teacher able to send the bad boys to the principal's office if they got too out of hand?*

Yes.

*That is a problem with a large study hall with many children. Was Central a fairly new school when you started going, or had it been built quite a while before?*

I think that I went to the old school for a year or two, which faced Dayton. It faced the Presbyterian church. We used to study on the Presbyterian church steps. I had a friend, Mabel Davidson – Governor [James O.] Davidson's girl – who was in my German class. German was very easy for me. I always got A's. I used to help her and work with her. I remember sitting there with her.

*That was a wooden school and then that was torn down.*

I think it was sandstone. There's so much sandstone found around Madison, and I think it was. And then we went to the Carnegie Library on Carroll Street for some of our work.

*Was that already there at that time?*

That was torn down and it is now a parking lot.

*Yes, I remember it. I used to go there. I had no idea when it was built. Carnegie gave his money for those libraries in about 1900.*

I think it was built at the turn of the century, because I graduated from high school in 1902.

*And it was already there at that time?*

Yes.

*With the little Peter Pan statue.*

Yes. That was outdoors.

*Then they built the new Central High. Was it the high school for all of Madison, or were there others?*

Yes.

*So you knew everyone in town at that time. And what course did you take?*

My eighth grade teacher told me to take the Latin course. I asked her. One day Professor Fuss of the German department, who was a friend of our family, met my father and he said "How is Emma? What is she going to do?" My dad said "She wants to be a German teacher." "Is she studying Latin?" He said, no, because he didn't think I should take Latin. He interfered. He said "She'd better get busy." So I took it extra for two years, which was difficult. Because of his interfering I went into the science course. It made it difficult for me. He meant well, but some people just don't understand some of these requirements.

*This was college preparatory then?*

Yes.

*You were expected to go on to school?*

I especially loved history. I took English history from Miss Murphy. She was the aunt of Robert Murphy, an attorney here, and medieval history. [Recently] I happened to open a diary I had kept through all those years. One day we had company. Miss Murphy, of course, wanted to show us off a little, you know. She said "Can anyone tell the migration of the nations?" I held up my hand. She said "Emma, you may tell it." So I went all through it, from Asia through England. As I passed her table she said "Good girl, Emma." I have that in my diary. That pleased me so. I was very fond of her. She was a wonderful teacher.

Our English teacher was considered the finest Shakespeare teacher in the state, Miss McGovern, Mary McGovern. I took physics from a Mr. Stengl. And elocution, from... she married a Mr. Steensland. I can't think of her name. She was so pretty and she had gorgeous golden hair. They lived across from us on Webster Street when we lived on Hamilton. When she'd come home she'd take down her hair. It was way below her waist, a big braid. I suppose she got headaches, you know. We were very cruel to her in her class, the children. They didn't mean to be cruel, just mischievous, you know. Made life hard for her.

*Did you learn all those gestures, like despair and all that?*

We used to have calisthenics, rising on our toes and breathing. And then she coached me for the auditorium. I read a poem by heart, *Grandma's Minuet*, and then another one about Madame Recombiere.

*You had a speech contest sort of thing?*

During the morning, the twenty-minute period, they always had exercise. And Marian Jones, Judge [Burr W.] Jones's daughter, could whistle so beautifully. You don't hear much of that. She was on the program once. And then – this will interest you – every morning when we were all seated we had exercises. We all sang and we sang religious songs and no one thought a thing about it. "Lead, kindly light."

*Was this to develop your singing voices? Or just something to do together?*

To open the day. Most of the time our Latin teacher would play the piano. Their home is still on Hamilton Street, next to the garage in the second block.

*But, of course, she is not there.*

No. But I always think of her when I pass.

*How many were in your graduating class?*

I have the clipping. If I had known you were going to ask me that I could tell you.

*Another time I might find that out from you.*

Frank Kessenich, Christian Kayser. Clarence King was salutatorian. I got second vote for valedictorian, so I must have been on the honor roll.

*I'm surprised you weren't salutatorian then.*

This will interest you. There were sort of groups classed. The girl that won it was in this university group, children from Langdon and professors' daughters. All lovely girls, you know.

*So it wasn't based entirely on your grades, then?*

Helen Whitney, Professor Whitney's daughter, became the valedictorian. Clarence King was Professor King's son. I think he was in the department of agriculture. And we had commencement in the second state Capitol, 1906.

*What kind of exercises were they?*

I graduated in 1902. I made a mistake. That was the Capitol that burned in 1905, I think.

*Did you see it burn?*

Yes.

*You lived fairly close by.*

We lived on Hamilton Street. My father ran up and helped carry out the books. But the north wing wasn't destroyed so badly.

*Oh. Well, that was big excitement in town, wasn't it? Were the streets paved by then?*

It started to burn from a gas shed, which is interesting. Not wiring, you see. The streets were in terrible condition as I remember. We lived in the second block, the third block, on Hamilton, and the road after rains was just mud, just heavy mud.

*There were some cars then, weren't there?*

The first cars came during that period. It was a red car. I can still remember, not the name of the family, but I can still see the young man that ran it. The sidewalks were wooden, with cracks in between that you could look through.

*What stores were there on the Square that you remember?*

There was a Jewish store right in the same location as the YW now. They used to have fire sales from other cities. You could get wonderful material for doll's clothing, I remember that. And there was a men's haberdashery on Main Street, Klauber. There were a number of Jewish families in Madison and they mingled with the German families.

*Yes. They may have come from Germany, some of them.*

They were very close.

*And there were hotels. The Belmont Hotel was there at that time.*

The Park Hotel was there.

*The legislators had to stay somewhere. Did you ever get up to what I've heard was called Big Bug Hill, where the big mansions are that they've designated as landmarks now?*

Yes. It was very much like it is now.

*Did you know anyone who lived there?*

A friend of mine, Helen Pierce, lived in what they call the Pierce house. And a dear friend in high school, Lillian Fox, lived on the corner of Carroll and Langdon. That beautiful house was torn down. I remember it so well. It had a front stairway going to right and left.

*Well, those were considered the rich people's homes, I presume?*

Mabel Davidson, when her father became governor, they lived in the mansion. Later the Davidsons lived next to the Lincoln School here. That house has been torn down.

*Those were considered the wealthy people's homes. And the governor's mansion was there then, too, wasn't it?*

At that time we called them "the 400" – very aloof, aristocratic. It's changed a great deal. I think that people are more outgoing and not so exclusive.

*I think that's true. It's a more democratic society now. There might have been a bigger division between incomes then.*

The Vilases lived up there. He [William Freeman Vilas] was a lumber baron. And the Fairchilds lived on Monona [Avenue], where the state office building is, in a red brick mansion. It was sort of on the slope and there was a fence in the front so that you could look down on it. Then where the City County Building is were three beautiful homes, stone or brick.

*When you went to Central you must have gone to school with all of the children from those families. Or did they send them away to school?*

Most of them went to the university.

*But didn't they go to Central High School, too?*

Oh, yes. It was sort of an exclusive group. As I said, Helen Whitney belonged to that group. One thing we had in high school was a girls' literary club called the Nautilus. Miss McGovern was our leader and advisor. I never thought that was exclusive, but two beautiful girls I had in high school told me they didn't get into it because their mother worked. I was very surprised that that group had any ideas like that.

*Of course, it might have been because they didn't write as well as they should, too.*

But, oh, they were beautiful and excellent students. I had them in my German class when I taught in high school.

*Well, I suppose there certainly was some of that sort of thing in those days, too. I was wondering about clubs. You mentioned the Nautilus literary club. Were there other dramatics clubs and glee clubs and language clubs?*

There was a sorority formed during my high school years. Nan Birge, [UW] President [Edward] Birge's daughter, belonged, I remember. The schools in the country were very against that. That was discontinued.

*But you undoubtedly had glee clubs, didn't you? Choruses and orchestra?*

No, I can't remember any glee club, nor orchestra work.

*Didn't have music, then?*

I can't remember it.

*Did you have art classes?*

Yes, we had an art teacher. Her studio was on the third floor.

*You must have been her prize pupil, weren't you?*

Well, I know I took art and enjoyed it. But I didn't make any posters or anything like that.

*Do you remember if there was manual training for the boys?*

No.

*No shop or anything like that? What proportion of the high school graduating class, would you say, went on to school?*

There was a commercial class. Wait. I'm going ahead. I taught in Central and it confuses me a little. I began to teach in 1914. Then there was a commercial class, a very big one.

*With typing.*

Now, these two lovely girls I told you, they were in circumstances that they couldn't go on to college. They had to go to work. They went into the commercial.

*I would assume that quite a few of the children did not go on to school.*

They rather looked down on the commercial students. There was a feeling. One day I was on the bus in late years. The girl I had had in the commercial department – I taught there later – said the girls that looked down on her going into commercial work now were glad for a clerkship in the stores. That's the way life had changed. They were lovely children that took commercial work.

*Well, in your family it was always assumed that you would go on to school? All the children?*

No. My brother went to high school and was a very good student, but my father thought he should learn a trade. My cousin was in the drug business. He was well known all over Madison, Adolph Menges. They called him "Ad." That group, his group, began to have the first chains here. Up to the Depression they had four stores.

*What were they called?*

Menges Pharmacies. So my father thought that my brother... unfortunately, my father thought that. My brother was very disappointed. He loved going to high school. One of his teachers even came and talked to my father about it. So he went into the drug business very young and he became vice president of the firm. At the time of his death he had been vice president for about thirty-five years.

*And the rest of your family?*

My sister married when she was about twenty-four. She married a doctor who was from Hartford, Wisconsin. He had gone to Heidelberg. Got all his medical training there, six years. And when he came to Madison she had a beautiful contralto voice and she was singing in a church choir, a quartet, and he fell in love with her.

*Had she gone on to school?*

No. And so she married quite young. But he died young, too. He was only fifty-two. He was the beloved doctor of the German community. He practiced here in Madison for thirty-five years. When he died he was a rentologist at St. Mary's. Also did some of the x-ray work in Madison.

*So who else in your family went to college besides you?*

Just I.

*You were the only one!*

Yes. A cousin interceded for me so I could go on. I was grateful to him.

*You always wanted to teach German?*

Yes. I got good marks all during high school. It was easy for me. I could read it and write it and spell it.

*So you always planned to go on. And you went right to the University of Wisconsin, then, because you could live at home. Did you have a summer job? How did you manage the tuition?*

My brother helped me a lot. But the tuition was very low and books weren't expensive.

*Yes. If you could live at home in those days, which I did when I went to college, it saves a lot. But nevertheless, if you're not bringing in income it's an expense to your family.*

Young people have to work during the summers now. I have a grand-grand-nephew. He said "Auntie, I'm going to paint houses this summer." For two years he worked in the chemistry plant.

*What did you do summers? Did you ever go to summer school?*

No. I just helped at home with the housework. One tragic thing in my life: my mother was a wonderful cook but she never taught me to cook.

*That was probably the best thing that ever happened to you.*

She helped me prepare things, vegetable and fowl and meat, but she never taught me to cook.

*Did you have a garden in those days? Did you put up food? Canning?*

We had so little space. But when we moved on Livingston he had a flower garden. He loved flowers!

*And I suppose that there were some farmers who came to town so you could buy things?*

Yes. They came by wagon.

*Did they have a farmers' market then like they do now? Or did they come every day?*

The farmers' market was started down here on Blount Street. They're trying to revive it right now.

*When was it started, do you know?*

It must have been maybe about 1902 or so. There was also a water tower opposite the First National [Bank], in the middle there, on East Washington. Farmers, now that I remember, came there from all over with produce. It was quite primitive, as I remember.

*Oh, I suppose. Did you do your grocery shopping at a neighborhood store?*

Yes. When we lived on Hamilton we went to a store which is still there now. I think lawyers are in it. It's the corner of Hamilton, Johnson, and Butler. It's white with blue awnings. The same building.

*Oh, isn't that nice.*

We used to see runaway horses in those days. I think that's interesting to remember. Terrifying to see it, you know.

*Normally people traveled in buggies with the horses?*

One day a woman came in with produce and her little girl in a buggy with a straw seat, a light buggy but four-wheeled. Runaway horses came down Gorham Street and went on either side of

her cart and turned it over. Of course, her horse was terrified. Children, you know, are so curious. I went into the grocery store to see her and after that I couldn't sleep for days. She had a big cut from a hoof on her forehead and was bleeding. The little girl was hurt, too.

*Yes. The train was, I suppose, what people used to go from city to city, and the legislators came from Milwaukee and around on train.*

That was the St. Paul, and the Milwaukee Road.

*Yes. Otherwise they'd have to drive into town with their carriages or wagons.*

There was good train service, especially between here and Milwaukee.

*Now, will you tell me some of those interesting stories about how your family happened to come to Madison?*

My Grandmother Glenz – her name was Augusta Heil – married my grandfather, who was not trained in the hotel work. She inhabited a hotel called Der Adler, which means Eagle. He mismanaged it; he didn't know how to run it, and they lost it. That's why they came to America, for a new start. They came over in 1859. The Kayser family came from Erbach im Odemwalb, "Erbach in the olden forest." It's near Heidelberg. My mother's family came from Frechen, near Cologne, to get a new start, too. In Germany, you know, they had an insurrection in 1848; my grandfather belonged to that, too.

Of course, the families went to different places. Quite a few Germans had settled near Sauk City so the Kaysers settled there. My grandfather came ahead with the two older boys, Anton and Karl, and built a log cabin. My grandmother came the next year with four or five children alone on a sailing boat that took six weeks. And with these little children! The baby was nine months old. She was a city woman. It must have been terrific for her to settle in a log cabin.

*Was he farming there?*

Yes, they had a farm there. My grandfather didn't know anything about farming. She wept so much they thought they'd have to send her back. They thought she would die of homesickness. They took the boat at Rotterdam. I think it was an English boat, English sailing vessel. They told her that there was a cow on board for the babies. There was a Dutch couple with twins. I wish I remembered it better. My mother's little brother died on the boat and the sailors wouldn't bury it unless she'd give them whiskey. She had no whiskey. She offered them a jug of wine but they didn't want that. So the Negro cook came up and offered to bury her baby. Think how sad. Put it on a board, you know, and over. The sailors stole her wine, shook the jug at her as she left the boat. She had a rather sad sailing.

*She probably was seasick the whole way, too.*

They settled above Sauk City, ten miles. I went back with my mother after forty years and there was just a hole there left where the log cabin had been. But she loved it there. My mother loved it there. She was a young girl then and she said it was one of the happiest time in her life, living in Wisconsin there in that log cabin.

*It's a beautiful area.*

Then the war came, the Civil War, and the two older boys ran away. My grandfather got them back because Anton was so young and then they ran away again. Anton became a drummer boy and later he was in the cavalry. Charles [said his name was Karl a few paragraphs earlier], the

older one, was an orderly for some officer. They met at Vicksburg. They both got to be head of the GAR in Milwaukee, got to be very old gentlemen.

My father's side, my grandfather came ahead and met them in Cincinnati, which is quite a German city, you know. Then they went to Chicago and opened a boarding house because my grandmother was such a wonderful cook. They had those hotels, you know. Then, I don't know why they left, but they went to Watertown, which of course was a German place.

The Schurzes were there at the time, Carl Schurz, and they got to know the Schurzes. Later Carl Schurz was here at the university as a speaker during one of the commencements. My father went up and talked to him and he remembered the family. Carl Schurz helped elect [Abraham] Lincoln and he also became senator from Missouri and ambassador, I think, to Spain. He is an outstanding German-American in Wisconsin. Before World War I they were going to erect a statue towards the King Street side opposite where the Heg statue is. Then the war came and it fell through, of course.

*So this was your grandmother who ran the boarding house in Chicago?*

Yes, the Glenz family. They came to Watertown, and then they moved about the time of the Civil War to Madison and we've lived here ever since.

*Where did your mother meet your father?*

That I don't know. Maybe at the Turner Hall. I don't know.

*Oh. Both families lived in Madison then?*

Yes.

*Your mother's family was?*

Kayser. It means "emperor." See, when people called the Kaysers names during World War I they really were saying "emperor." He was emperor of Germany.

*And do you know how old your mother was when they were married? You probably know what year it was.*

I have a picture of my mother when she was nineteen, but she wasn't married then yet. They were young. I would say their early twenties, maybe twenty-four or twenty-five.

*That would have been in about?*

1873. They were married in St. Raphael, which is the oldest church in Madison. They were married New Year's Eve. In German they call it "Sylvester Abend." They were married in the parsonage because my father was Lutheran. It was a mixed marriage, and my mother was Catholic. We always celebrated, all through the years, New Year's Eve. My father would make a hot wine with burgundy and water and oranges, sliced oranges, and cloves. It's something like a Norwegian hot wine, but the Germans called it Gloeh Wein.

*And how long did your parents live?*

My father was seventy-nine, my mother seventy-six.

*Oh, they were long-lived.*

They weren't ill too long. Mother was ill eight months or six months and my father ill really from old age. He grieved about my mother's death.

*But he retired then from his job?*

No, in those days you could work and work. He was in the insurance department and they had no pensions at that time. They paid him until his death, which was lovely. He died at home. My mother had sarcoma in the glands in her neck. They couldn't discover what it was in those days, but she had severe pains.

*Now what year was it that your father died? You were a young woman by then.*

I was teaching in high school then. My mother, I know when she died. She died in 1926 and he died the year after.

*Oh. Did any of your family go to the World War I? Your brothers?*

They were too old. My brother-in-law was too old.

*Did they have children who went?*

My brother and his wife had no children. My sister who married Dr. Gilbert had two, Gretchen and Ralph. Gretchen died about seven years ago. Ralph became an ophthalmologist and retired last year and is living in Hanover, Canada, near a daughter. He lives with his wife in a retirement home.

*You started at the university in 1902, did you say?*

Yes. And I got my BA in 1906. Then I taught a year and went back for German and English and got my master's in 1908. Then I taught three years in Youngstown, Ohio. I went around like a music teacher, teaching German in three schools – sixth, seventh and eighth grades. It was very unusual in that era to teach German in the grades. But there was a high school teacher from Germany who was considered so excellent. The boys in Youngstown all went east to school, to Harvard, Dartmouth, and one of them once said that they could tell Miss Kerrer had coached them in German because they were so good.

*When you started the university were there quite a few girls there? It was completely co-educational, wasn't it?*

I remember when I was a little girl, a girl in the neighborhood went to school. The neighbors all said "She's going to the university!?" It was very unusual. But by the time I went there were many girls.

*And it wasn't a separate female academy at that time, was it?*

No, it was coeducational.

*It seems to me I read that about 1890 they merged the two. So you had classes right with the young men?*

And we dressed as well as we could. There were rich girls came from Milwaukee and at that time they even had fur coats. It was very unusual, you know. But we dressed as neatly and nicely as we could.

*My mother was in school about that same time. The pictures of her showed her with the tucked waists and dark skirts down to the ground.*

We wore very long skirts. And I had a skirt that even had brush braids around it. They were very, very hard on us, on our weight, and tired us so. And then picking up all that dirt!

*Did your mother make your clothes? Or did you? Or were they bought?*

My sister learned to sew before she was married and she sewed some for me. But we had a dressmaker at different times. A dressmaker made my commencement dress. Mrs. Evjue, Stella Bagley, was in my high school graduating class and she made her own dress. It was so beautiful. We were all admiring it.

*What classes did you take when you were at the university? A basic course?*

I took English, history, history of the South. And because I was in the science department I had to take advanced algebra and trigonometry, which was not my choice at all. I was in a class with engineers, just another girl and I, and I got two conditions. I would have to have taken a very difficult exam to write them off, so I took them over my sophomore year and had a very heavy program. I took quite a lot of German and always got good marks there.

*Yes. You didn't really need that science at all.*

This might interest you. Because Professor Fuss was a friend of the family, instead of taking literature, which might have been more interesting, I took philology and graduated in philology. I had to take Anglo-Saxon, which is like a foreign language, Old German, Middle-High German, and I read the literature of that period.

*Do you recall that you had a good time in university? Did you have a nice social life?*

I didn't belong to a sorority, but I had a very happy freshman year. I met a girl in Milwaukee whose father was state senator and knew my father as a student. She was a beautiful pianist. She even came over and played concerts, two or three, in the Capitol, as a young girl, a freshman. We were almost the same age. Every summer we would exchange: she would come over two weeks and I would go over two weeks. Through her I met other people, her high school group. Two of the boys came to the university and they took my chum and me around all my freshman year, to concerts and dances. Oh, we had just a wonderful time. I said I wouldn't have taken a Phi Beta Kappa for that. I had such a good time. That was almost the happiest year: high school and the first year of university. Then, of course, I had that heavy program and had to get down to real hard work.

*I forgot to ask you when you were talking about high school if a lot of your social life was in the church. Did you have church parties?*

No, there was no social life at that time.

*Some places I've heard, maybe in the country, that they used to have their gatherings in churches.*

In my grade years the Turners and Männerchor always had marvelous masked balls. There was nothing going on, you know, like movies or TV. People came from Yankee Hill to see it. There was a balcony, you know. My father was very artistic and used to get first prizes. He would dress in historic costumes, like Charles the Great, with a beautiful crown that he would make and everything. He often won the first prize. Once they dressed me, when I was about twelve, in a brocade dress with these big... I forgot what they called them, over the hips, from the time of the pompadour in France. Mother and my sister put my hair up and powdered it, and I had a fan and a mask, you know. Walked in and I got the eleventh prize. I got an umbrella that was bigger than I was. But they had beautiful prizes: furniture, dishes, glassware.

*So what did your father win as first prize?*

Willa Cather wrote about that in *My Antonia*. I think she wrote about a ball like that.

*Well, do you remember games that you played and what sort of fun you had when you were a child?*

When I went to Milwaukee we played tennis, but we didn't play very well.

*I was thinking of earlier. Did you have sleigh rides?*

Yes. I remember a winter sleigh ride to Middleton when I was in high school. But, oh, dances, we danced two-step and waltz at the university, and I went to a party with these boys and my chum to Esther Beach. We took the steamer at Angleworm Station. At that time, during my high school years, the Chautauqua was running and they used to have wonderful artists come, and famous bands and speakers.

*And everyone in town went, I suppose.*

They took the boats over, unless you had a buggy to go.

*One friend of mine, Harlin Mosman, told me that he met his wife by taking the steamer over. Their church group took the steamer over to Esther Beach and he liked her. He had seen her, but he got acquainted with her and then he asked her out. That's where I had heard of Esther Beach. Well, were there lots of sororities and fraternities then?*

Yes, they were very strong and, I always thought, quite undemocratic. I used to wonder, you know, where everybody paid taxes towards the university, why these groups could be so strong and powerful and aloof. It was so undemocratic.

*You lived in town so you were part of a different group and had friends.*

The Kayser girls all became Pi Phis. The oldest sister didn't continue school, Miss Emma King. She went into different work. But the other girls, Stella, Helen, Esther, and Vera, were Pi Phis. It's kind of closed. The house isn't there any more.

*No, they sold that when everyone started moving off campus. You probably don't know, since you had such good grades, but I wondered if it was hard to get into the university, if girls had any more trouble than boys? Or was it just a matter of if you could afford to go and your family wanted you to go?*

I never had any trouble at all. I remember when we registered we went into the old law building. I still had my hair caught and some fellow said "Look at the kindergartner." Mabel Davidson told me "Pin your hair up, Emma."

*You were pretty young to be going.*

I was nineteen, though. Pretty old to have my hair down. But now even men wear it down. I saw one yesterday with a braid.

*I wondered if you noticed any attitudes on the part of the professors. Did they think you were a serious student?*

Well, yes, in German they thought I was serious.

*Many of the girls who were going to school, I assume were going to become teachers.*

Yes. I had Professor Hohlfeldt. Faust is so difficult. He didn't even give us an exam in it. Then I had all those philology classes. Of course, I loved the German part of it. The history I enjoyed so much, too. I had another course in English history. And I got through the math, you know. When I was studying for the exam again my high school math teacher passed me and he said "Emma, you'd be a good student if you would study."

*Oh. I suppose the city was expanding at that time, that it had been growing out toward the university and getting bigger.*

It was much smaller. All the German was in North Hall. I remembered something the other day that a friend thought was so interesting. On the grass in back of Main Hall, Bascom Hall, a company came from England every year called the Ben Gree Players. We just loved that. They performed Shakespeare out of doors. We'd sit on the grass. I asked someone and yes, they still remembered the name. She was a girl younger than I.

*Were there winter sports there on Muir Knoll? Did they ski and sled and have a good time? Did they have snowball fights and things? I'm trying to think what they did for fun.*

At the beginning of the year the men had a rush – not rushing for fraternities, but the sophomores against the freshmen. It got so rough they had to stop it. They were injured. I saw them dragging one fellow by the legs, dragging him over the curb and his head striking. It was very rough. They put an end to that. Then there was like the ROTC. Girls, even as seniors in high school, used to go out there and watch them drill in the Old Gym. Then they had military hops in the Old Gym and the boys wore uniforms. Those were lovely dances. The proms were always in the Red Gym.

*Were there athletics for girls at all? Were you required to take gym?*

Yes. In Lathrop Hall. What is the other one called, the other one near Park Street? Chadbourne. We went there for our gym.

*That was a dormitory, though, wasn't it?*

Part of it was gymnasium. And I remember there was still a wooden sidewalk leading to the door. I tripped on it and fell so terribly that I couldn't take part.

*What did you wear for gymnastics?*

We wore bloomers.

*Those big black, shiny, sort of satiny ones?*

No. Like knickers. I was going around a little with a freshman at that time, when I was a freshman, and here he comes and coaches our basketball team. I felt so embarrassed I didn't go back.

*Did you wear middy-blouses with them?*

Yes. We were all dressed, stockings and all.

*Were there football games?*

Oh, yes. That was the era of famous football teams with Cochems, Arnie Larum, and King was the coach. They went to Yale to play. There was a whistle on the waterworks here, which... you know, the waterworks is just going to be changed into condominiums. It was there for years and years. There was a big whistle. Whenever there was a fire in Madison that would blow. It was terrific. That blew for five minutes because Yale only beat us by five points. They thought that

was so wonderful!

*Did they play at Breese Terrace?*

The first games I went to there was a covered pavilion, a cover over it, a roof, but not elaborate, not too large a place. I think it was on University Avenue.

*Yes. There was a skating rink that I remember from the first time when I was a little girl and came to Madison. It was there down where the stadium is now. There was a big skating rink.*

Maybe it was in a different location.

*I'm not sure, of course, about that. The campus was expanding and they had the ag school at that time.*

Yes. Professor King was connected with that. I knew the King family quite well. Clarence was our salutatorian. They were a very nice family. I knew Anna and then I just knew the two boys.

*And do you remember the May Days?*

Yes. When I was a freshman they had dances on the upper campus. The girls were in white and we all wore big hats we made of tissue. It was not the real delicate tissue. We could buy it. It was creased and kind of wrinkled. We made these big hats with a black crown like sunflowers. And we had to learn the different rhythms, you know, I suppose in gym. I shouldn't perhaps tell this, but when I passed there were people standing along there near Music Hall and somebody said "Emma, you've put me in such a dilemma."

*They were just waiting to say that to you.*

Some fellow said it. I never knew who it was. That was too bad.

*While you were going around the May pole?*

No, no. It was just rhythms.

*What was commencement like?*

I remember my partner in high school commencement was Julia Tormey, the Tormey family that lived on West Washington Avenue. They had Dr. Tormey, her brother, and then later Weston. Quite a family of doctors. A lovely Irish family. She was my partner, and she also walked with me when I graduated from the university. She died quite... She taught English at Central when I taught German there.

*So you were a very good friend of hers?*

My history teacher was still there when I taught, and my English teacher, Miss Moseley.

*Well, was this ceremony outside at the university?*

It was in the Red Gym. But when I got my master's degree there were just two of us in German getting our master's. We wore white dresses. I always thought that was such a pity they didn't have the robes with the red trimming.

*Did you wear the robes?*

No. We wore just the white dresses.

*But when you graduated from the university first, when you got the bachelor's degree?*

Then we wore a robe and mortar board. This may interest you. There was a custom when you were a senior that you could wear your gown and cap the last semester. So, many people walked around with caps and gowns and that way you knew they were seniors.

*Yes. Sounds like Oxford in England or Cambridge. Well, that was a big achievement for you. Then you got the job right away when you were out of university? You said you taught a year somewhere.*

Yes, but I always thought the university could have done better by me instead of sending me to this little, unfriendly town.

*Where was that?*

I hate to tell you. It was called Plainfield, Wisconsin. Later, when I worked on the highway on the maps, the boys always teased me. I had come to Waushara and I would always groan then: "Oh, that's where I taught the first year." And one day one of the boys said "Now you will hear something." That's where that awful murderer lived.

*Oh, yes. I know somebody who lives right close by there.*

The people did nothing for us teachers. There were three high school teachers.

*And you taught just German?*

No. I had to teach English and history. It was an unhappy year. Nothing doing for us. We even gave a reception for the parents so we'd get acquainted. They did nothing for us. A couple families were nice to me, had me for Thanksgiving. And my father came up to see me while I was there.

*I suppose you couldn't get home too often when you were there.*

Some girls got into such lovely schools and had such good times. Oh, I wasn't supposed to go around with any of the high school boys or anything. I was young.

*The first year of teaching is very hard anyway.*

Yes. I was only 23, you know.

*Well, perhaps that was a good thing that you weren't too happy there, because then you did come back the next year to get your master's degree.*

I got my master's the next year. Then I went to a big city in Ohio.

*But if you had had a very advantageous place to teach you might not have wanted to leave it to come back.*

That's true, too.

*So then how did you get that job in Ohio?*

I had told you there was a German teacher there that was known even in the East. She was such an expert teacher. She was here getting a teacher. They sent me to her. She said "Sie kennen doch Deutsch sprechen? Do you want to speak German?" I could, you know, and not as fluently as I can now. So she chose me and I taught there three years.

*Then where did you go?*

Then I got into the high school here. I met a gentleman, an Englishman. My people thought that I

should try to get into state work, so I went to 4C College and took typing. Steno typing was just new then. I had an interview with this man. He knew I loved to teach and oh, he thought that was a pity that I wasn't teaching. So he said "I have a friend in the French department, a close friend. I'll see what he can do for you." He got in touch with Mr. Diehl of the German department and he chose me. There was an opening. That was 1914. I taught German four years. Then the war [World War I] came and overnight all of us lost our jobs.

*German was not very popular all of a sudden.*

There were five full-time teachers. We had a beautiful department, about three hundred and fifty children. The young people, they wouldn't have quit, you know. It was the older people that were so fanatic and almost cruel. They painted houses yellow, they painted the American Exchange Bank, splashed it with yellow. They changed the name from German-American to the American Exchange Bank.

*Oh. It was called German-American until that time!*

Yes. People talked German on the street. "Wie geht es?" "Guten Tag." But during the war you couldn't open your mouth, you couldn't say "how do you do" in German. It was almost persecution of the German people

*Well, we did the same thing to the Japanese in World War II.*

Young generations didn't know that, but it was a very difficult time to live through.

*Yes. When you were in Ohio did you come back here for summers?*

Yes, I always was home, helping at home.

*It was nice to be at home, I presume.*

At that time my sister and brother-in-law bought the beautiful Allis place on Monona Drive. It's now DePere House of Studies. It has ten acres. They lived there eight years, until he died. He died of cancer. We always were welcome there. We always went there Sundays for picnics.

*Madison is a fairly pleasant place to be in the summertime. You would have been glad to come home. Do you remember what kind of salary you got when you were first teaching?*

When I taught up north I got, I guess, fifty dollars a month. I could hardly live on it. When I was in Ohio I got seventy dollars. Of course, that had the dollar value. But that was terrible. I paid over half for my room and board and eked out a little for clothes. When I left the superintendent said "You led a dog's life." Three schools, every day, at seventy dollars.

*And how did you get around from school to school?*

I had to take a streetcar, rain or shine, to get to the schools. They were miles apart. The last year they gave me eighty dollars and two schools. But then I thought I'd quit. My parents were getting old. I wanted to be with them.

*So it was ideal for you to be teaching at Central, and all in one school. Did you stay with your parents then?*

They were kind. We had a substitute principal. He was very kind, Mr. Robetts, and he kept us all. One was given a teaching job in history, two in French, and they asked me to work in the commercial department. I had to work up a course in two weeks. This was correspondence. I didn't know a thing about it. I had to work up a course in two weeks while I finished the

German. But I enjoyed it. I had lovely and serious students, big classes. But I had to mark maybe one hundred and twenty-five or one hundred and fifty letters a night. My father thought it was too nerve-wracking. I began to save up and he helped me some, and I went to the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and graduated in 1922. It was a very hard two years, a very difficult school.

*In drawing or painting, or what?*

I took so many courses. I had fourteen courses in the two years: life drawing, crafts, design, dress design, so many.

*You loved it, though, didn't you?*

Yes, but you see I was thirty then. I had to start all over. The young people... there were boys back from the war, a pretty serious group. They all wanted to get jobs and get ahead. I did have some pleasure. I loved music and I went to opera every Monday night for two years. Way up, you know, in the balcony. I heard Kreisler twice, I saw Pavlova twice, [unclear], a lovely soprano, Rosa Poncell. And I'd go alone, Mrs. McCabe. Just imagine, coming home nowadays in Chicago on the elevated.

*Did you live in a boarding house there?*

I lived in kind of like a YM. It was a club called the Eleanor Club. Very primitive, very poor meals.

*But you survived somehow.*

Yes, I was a poor art student.

*When you came back to teach in Madison did you live at home?*

It was difficult getting started. For a while I taught crafts in the Wisconsin School of Music that Miss [Elizabeth] Buehler had.

*No, no. I was thinking before, when you came to teach German at Central, from Ohio. Did you live then with your parents?*

Oh, yes. They were getting old.

*And do you remember what you were paid then here at Central?*

Much better. I did work in the Board of Commerce, when it was first started. I worked as secretarial work for a few months. The first month he paid me thirty dollars and I didn't go back. I told my brother and he got as white as a sheet. He thought it was terrible. What women used to be paid was just awful. And then I got into high school and I was paid a hundred and fifty dollars a month.

*That's how you were able to save money then, living at home, to go on to the Chicago school. When you graduated, then you came back to Madison again?*

Yes. And then I had to look for a job, you know. As I told you, I was with Miss Buehler, and my cousin Helen tried to help me. I taught crafts there for a few months. Then one day my father was on the streetcar with a man he knew in the state board of health. They were looking for an artist, so I had an interview and I got it for half days; I worked it into a full time job. I did the charts for conventions and covers for magazines and I worked quite a lot with the engineers in drafting. They had an engineering department there, so I did quite a lot of drafting. I worked

there thirteen years.

*And Madison had grown quite a bit by this time and the state government had grown. It was quite different than when you were a little girl.*

It probably had a population at that time, in the early 1920s, of about 150,000. And new stores opened. The old city hall was torn down.

*Wasn't it only about 50,000 then, as I recall? We came in 1940 and it was only about 80,000 then. But even 50,000 was big.*

Maybe I'm wrong. I'm not good about the population.

*Still all the shopping was around the Square.*

The beautiful old post office was torn down and Manchester's was built. The city hall also was a very interesting old building, but it looked a little dilapidated. It had these lovely round windows.

*That was still here in 1940, before Woolworth's. And did you go to the Opera House here?*

The Opera House was a park. My brother was in the Menges Pharmacy downtown, where 30 is now, and everybody said "Meet me at Menges." We'd meet friends there. It might be interesting to you: the Menges were a prescription pharmacy, but there was no store that had beautiful leather goods and scissors and things like that you could buy at a store, like Manchester's. Menges carried a line of that and a very fine line of candies, bon-bons. There was a firm here that made marvelous chocolates: Keeley's bittersweets.

*Isn't that still out on East Washington somewhere?*

I think they still do. I ought to buy some, just for old time's sake.

*I'm sure it's not as good these days. The streets were paved, of course, by this time and the new Capitol had been built. It was quite a different city then, I presume.*

I saw the statue before it was hoisted up. It had enormous feet, about a yard long, Miss Forward.

*So you've certainly enjoyed being in Madison.*

I think it could be the most beautiful city in the United States for its location. But the early settlers had no vision. They built on this narrow isthmus, and that's why the house are all so close. I also think they made a big mistake now to make a boulevard of State Street.