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Oral History Number: 046-011
Interviewee: Lucile Speer
Interviewer: Diann E. Wiesner
Date of Interview: March 31, 1981
Project: Lucile Speer Interviews Oral History Project

Lucile Speer: —that was a place where we made great strides.

Diann Wiesner: Yeah, it really is. We talked about the local government changes and the environmental issues—

LS: Yeah, in local government, I think I did say that it came after there had been very hot debate—I think it was on the Public Service Commission of what that should be and some of that. I think people were worn out and a lot had gone home on that Friday afternoon. We started at Friday afternoon on the local government, and we didn't have a large crowd. Nobody was very much interested. We did, then, continue the next Monday, but until we got to that last section of the local government review—that was section 9, I think—that brought a lot of debate. It passed. It was partly the fact that it was something very unique and new, and so it took time for the delegates to absorb the significance of it before they were willing to vote on it. There wasn't such strong feeling, but that was the only part that was really debated very strongly. It didn't come down to a tug of war over giving of home-rule power, but you might say that the reason it didn't was that we had already written into the constitution—the new one—an alternative so they couldn't...It was an alternative, and they didn't have to take it—the alternative was there.

DW: I appreciate that review.

LS: Did you want to...just a word on the ballot?

DW: Oh, yes. I hadn't thought of that, but—

LS: I had thought about it, but I didn't know whether...Oh, here it is. [papers rustling] The ballot form, which was sent out for the voters, was copied from the one devised by the state of Illinois at their convention, when...I think, '68 and '69 they had met. They met much longer than we did. In fact, we looked to the Illinois Constitution on a number of things. They were very good on environment. They were a bomb, though, on local government. But they had been unable to resolve the question of unicameral versus bicameral. I'm not sure whether they had any others, but we had three that we had wanted, had not come to a decision on. There was a large, a very large, proportion of the delegates who were interested in the unicameral legislature. That, by the way, was a very hotly debated subject. I didn't mention it because it is in our constitution. I think there would have been a lot more of us voted for it when we voted, as we took a vote—just a preference vote. I think it was almost unanimous for the unicameral. But I did not go out in the talks I gave recommending it. I was supporting it afterwards because I thought it would

divide the vote. I didn't think we'd get it through. I thought it was going to drag down the whole constitution if that was the only choice they had and that was true of many.

The same thing was true of two other—gambling. Should it be prohibited in the constitution or left to the legislature to settle? And capital punishment. So those three were put as alternative issues. The alternative was put...here's the explanation of the ballot. Yeah. Here is the [unintelligible] I can give it to you so you can see. Now, at the top of that, here is a copy of the ballot that went out to...well, no, they got it at the polling booth. It says up there at the top that you must vote on the first one of whether you approve of the constitution or not before you vote on the others. Then if you want to vote on these other issues, you vote in addition to that. In other words, the vote on whether to adopt a new constitution—

DW: That was one issue,

LS: —is one issue. And then you have unicameral—

DW: Gambling.

LS: Gambling was one, and capital punishment. But if you vote on those last two or three without voting on the one up there the, then it doesn't count. Well, it says that plain as can be, but that's what this group [anti-constitution group] that then sued, took it to court that they wanted to count those ballots—all of the ballots, regardless—even though they had not voted for the constitution or against the constitution. First, it was taken to the state Supreme Court. A good share of the delegates were over for that in Helena. It came out, I think, a 3-to-2 vote for the constitution. They didn't give up. The next move they made was to the circuit court, I think it is, San Francisco, and they lost it there completely. They just didn't have the vote, because it was perfectly plain what the intent there. Then they submitted it to the Supreme Court, U.S. Supreme Court, but they refused to review it. Said it was [unintelligible].

DW: This is the group that did not want the constitution to be adopted?

LS: Yeah, that was the Farm Bureau. It was a very strong group of people like Archie, Archie Wilson. Ralph Studer had lots of money. People who had voted for the constitution were against that and—

DW: Were against what?

LS: Were against the...Even though they had voted and signed the constitution that day in Helena, before we closed, they worked to...June 6 was the vote, the date. They worked, then, to get a negative vote on it. We didn't get a tremendous plurality. When we took the first vote to get the referendum to call one, we had an overwhelming vote, and we worked just as hard or harder for this. As I say, it wasn't...and there was a lot of money went into it. We did raise money and supported it. It was, well, it was the same group that was against the change.

DW: Why do you feel there was less support for the new constitution than for the movement to create a new constitution?

LS: They thought they'd keep what they wanted and maybe get something better too. Maybe they wanted to put something in that would protect them against environmental restrictions and that sort of thing. Taxation preferences. I know that that was true of the environmental. They were there to prevent those things. They didn't want...labor had had no voice at all in the 1889 [Constitution]. They didn't want things creeping in that might be damaging to their financial interests. Cost protection, was that completely.

DW: Where were you, Lucile, when you heard that the constitution had been approved?

LS: I remember it was June 6, and I'm not sure whether Daphne was the one who...Daphne Bugbee was one of our delegates, and I was called, whether it was Daphne or who called...champagne party up there at their place. Did you know that they did that?

DW: No. But I'm not surprised that there was a party. [laughs]

LS: We all got up there in a hurry. [laughs] There were some of the interns, or research workers there, and other [unintelligible]. Various ones I know were bringing the champagne. We had a big crowd. I don't remember food, whether we did have or not, I can't remember. But we had a gay time. Their place was right down by the Rattlesnake—quite a big place and big patio. It was a great gala occasion. [laughs] I can't remember whether we gave any toasts or not. We didn't meet in Helena after that because we had no reunion that first...

Oh! We had had a meeting in May of the delegates. But that was a sort of a summing up of the accomplishments of the...but that was before the elections. The other thing that was done was to provide for a Constitution Society to carry on the records and to keep the group together supposedly. We had just a one-day meeting. I remember Marge Brown gave a very impressive, very moving talk. She had been so involved in it all. She was doing work on...for a doctoral thesis on the territorial period. That was in the '60s [1860s], but she, along about that time or a little bit later, she got interested in turning to law and started law school training. She kept up her work on her thesis for two, three years, but eventually she just had to give it up and she took these positions in the law school, so I guess it'll never be finished. It's too bad.

DW: I suppose someone will be probably interest in picking that up.

Well, Lucile, let me ask you a question about the University if we can change the subject now. The convention has sure been exciting to talk about. It's like talking about Washington and Franklin and all those guys back there in Philadelphia, only it only happened ten years ago here. [laughs]

LS: And we were all able to get up, none of us had to be carried in the chair. [laughs]

DW: Right! It's fun to talk about.

LS: Did you ever hear that Catherine Drinker Bowen's...She wrote the story of the *Miracle in Philadelphia* [*Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, 1966*]. It's one of my favorite books. It really is great.

DW: It will be really significant now after your experience with the state constitution, too, I would imagine.

LS: Yes, I guess I already said to you, I feel—and I've said it more than once—that it's one of the memorable experiences of my whole career or life than anything that happened in the library field. I suppose that my life in the library and familiarity with state government, and local government too, had probably stimulated my interest in, and I was quite aware of the need for, constitutional reform. This is also repetitious that I had worked with the League of Women Voters, which was an organization which did not initiate the study of the constitution, but I do recall that I had worked on two state projects and we would come, in our League studies, to a point where we would make recommendation. So often we observed, that you reached a point where the constitution blocked you, and there was nothing to do but a constitutional convention. We were aware of the need for it. The legislature itself was the one who made the move to present the referendum—made that move first—but the League of Women Voters was a major supporter of the campaign too. That was pretty general. I remember when I was back in Chicago about that time and I went to the League headquarters there in the state, and they were doing a big business on the League there working for the Illinois Constitution. So it's a natural product of the League.

DW: Of your work in the League.

Lucile, how did you get into documents? I believe you touched on this before, but—

LS: I think I probably mentioned that documents as a special area—at least in this institution, and I think it was true...Oh, there might be documents libraries some places—a few—with complete collections, but we had no documents department here for a long time. Although this library had been a [federal] depository since the 1890s, at the very beginning. It had received large quantities of documents from...well, the library of, W.A. Clark, see, he was in Congress. Also the School of Mines didn't want a lot of theirs. They were a depository.

DW: This was federal documents, wasn't it?

LS: Yes. When we talked about documents at that time, we were talking of federal ones only. They were not classified like the books. The Superintendent of Documents had devised a system of classification—superintendent of documents [SuDoc] classification—and this is

terrible and embarrasses me. I think it was '99 [1899] that is published that, but we hadn't used it. We just arranged them alphabetically by the issuing agents. They were usually in numbered series and then alphabetically by series number and put them in boxes. Maybe some of the greatly used ones, you would bind. At the time I came, some of the things of particular interest for reference were classified with the book collection—a few—but very, very little.

DW: Were you ever responsible for state documents?

LS: Yes. I was going to say the big problem at that time, I came into documents—took over—just the time of the Roosevelt administration New Deal, and the number of state agencies and the number of documents—the quantity of documents distributed—began to multiply. There was just a flood of them, and it wasn't very long before I had to do something with them. I had been in charge of the federal documents and the Montana state [documents] from the time I came there. It was just a matter that I seemed to kind of like it, and nobody else did. [laughs] I took documents, of course, from Miss Buckhous [Gertrude Buckhous]. She apparently had her eye on another young woman whom she knew, but she was a hopeless misfit for the documents department [laughs]. Had no interest in it whatsoever. So Miss Buckhous immediately saw that I got into it. That didn't mean that I spent all my time. I wasn't call Documents Librarian then. I was still just—I was assistant cataloger, but I took care of the documents. None of them were cataloged, except for those occasional references, and people shunned them because they didn't know that they existed. The Superintendent of Documents publishes excellent indexes, but you need qualified people to see that they are arranged properly and then assist the public in the use of them. Always for the history or government classes, or econ and business—they were bringing their students over to learn how to use the documents and how to use the indexes and so forth. Excellent indexes. But every time you had a booklet—Farmer's Bulletin—you didn't put another card in the catalog and that sort of thing. That's the date from which the real development of the documents—

DW: Did they start a documents department in the '40s and put you in charge of it?

LS: Well, it came this way. I was just going to say that—this was after Miss Buckhous died. Let's see, who was...Oh, this was after Keeney left, I think. This was an interim before they were getting settled, and they created a serials department. That was also another expanding area of printed materials. We had a serials librarian, who got the serials arranged in order and some record of them. Then she left after two years, and they couldn't get anybody—couldn't find anybody. I boldly said that I could handle both if they'd give me a trained assistant in one of them, and so I became documents and serials librarian. It was very different work. I didn't have to do the reference work on the serials, but the difference between documents and serials, I was responsible for the ordering and handling. And in the case of the documents, I did the classification and the reference work on them because it was special classification system. The serials weren't.

DW: How long did that setup go then? Did that go for ten years?

LS: That continued. As long as...until they remodeled the library with that Ryman Annex...I guess it was Ryman Annex. The serials were checked at the other end, and so they had to change the serials, separate it. Well, anyway, it was a complete—

[Break in audio]

LS: —and there were many fields and subject fields, where we were acquiring foreign documents and documents of states.

DW: So that was a time of large expansion for documents?

LS: Yes, and it was very interesting. I really enjoyed that. We had a system there for a time when salaries were so low, instead of getting promotions, we got a quarter off every two years. I spent six weeks in the East visiting libraries and different documents departments. I had to work out my own system. I went to other libraries and got my ideas on how to set up the classification at UM.

DW: You got a quarter off instead of a promotion? You mean an increase in salary?

LS: Yeah. Well, you got a little bit, but you got promotion, from say, instructor to assistant professor and so on. This was in lieu of, yes, that's what we had to take there for a while

DW: Is that right? When was this?

LS: After the first term of Roosevelt.

DW: Okay, it was still the tail end of the Depression?

LS: I'll say that the field of documents continued to increase—multiply—and the interest of the field, the subjects they covered and the expanding curriculum in political science, say, was one and the role of the government documents in the development of the sciences. You see, geology, the National Bureau of Standards and—

DW: Well, there were more and more government departments being developed all along, weren't there?

LS: Yes, that just began in the first administration and continued.

DW: By the time you retired in 1965, was it, or '67?

LS: No, '68.

DW: Okay. By the time you retired, how many people were working in documents under you?

LS: Well, I had two assistants.

DW: Is that all?

LS: Yeah, and a lot of student assistants. I worked, I spent an awful lot of time.

DW: What were your hours? What was your day like over there, I guess I should say? Did the library open at 8:00?

LS: Yeah, I didn't go in at 8:00. [laughs] I was always there at 8:30, I think. Some of the girls told me, the student assistants—some of them weren't student assistants either—they liked the perfume I used. When I pulled out a handkerchief, they would smell it—violet, I guess it was—and they knew it was time to get to business. I gradually too...I began to get into foreign documents like the Hansard Papers, the British Parliament parliamentary papers. We were getting the German and the French too, but we weren't trying to fill that in. Then along in the midst of this great expansion came the explosion of the microprint microfilm.

DW: I wanted to ask you where that came in.

LS: That had tremendous, what shall we say, value and possibilities. It made great changes in the documents field because documents, well, you can imagine what your congressional record and your...if you kept the slip laws, for instance.

DW: What's that?

LS: That's when they're published first, why, they're slip law. We got the documents from the various organs of the U.N.

DW: Did the University library start converting some of their documents onto microfilm?

LS: We did it this way. I never made much headway with science people in filling in or acquiring material. Of course, they want...what they do now, like ordering newspapers from all over the world. Well, they have the order for the printed one, and the same time they have it for the microfilm. They don't keep that printed one for more than a month afterwards. The same thing I did with some of the documents you take—well, hearings before appropriations committee—those just swelled out of the place, bulging out of the windows and so forth. You couldn't keep all those. The trouble is you were a depository library—you had to house them and you couldn't throw them away without permission, but if you kept them on microfilm then it's all right. We had tried at library associations to get the Superintendent of Documents to distribute to us a microfilm edition so it would take care of our need. But you have to have, for the current use, the printed material on it.

DW: How were those materials ordered?

LS: A standing order.

DW: Did the faculty request them or did—

LS: Well, not in the case of documents. They just assumed that they were there, and I pretty much did that. I did consult with the faculty, but I think that was one of the interesting parts that I learned to...I studied bibliographies—the bibliographical information that came out on the documents—and not only of this, international organizations and so on, and checked all such catalogs. I considered myself responsible, and the faculty expected them to be there. You got so you knew in a department what the interest of various faculty members were, and so you were looking for that. I always remember that—it was after I left that, I think, Bob Peterson (?)...I don't know whether he's still over. He was a few years ago, History Department. Dale has talked about him since I left. Well, he was writing a history of the Northern Pacific, and he had done all of the newspaper work at Akron and Minneapolis, I guess it was, and he wanted to do, he thought he could while he was here, the U.S. document work. There were the Northern Pacific surveys for a route—better route—to the Pacific Coast, and it was somewhere in the 1870s. He said he went to the library, and there they were! Well, of course, back 1870, that was long ago, and he said, "How do you happen to have those?" The thing is that those had been put on microfilm or microprint that was—I'm not sure now which it was—and I go through the list and I find those things. I knew he was interested in that. I didn't talk with him. I just ordered those, and there they were then. Well, that's what you do.

DW: That made you pretty popular at times I'm sure. [laughs]

LS: Well, yes, that's what a librarian's supposed to do. I think in documents...Faculty and students, they don't like to use those indexes very much, [laughs] and they do think the librarian should. Well, I don't think I babied them either. But the fact that they were there, that was it. He had the reference. It was just, would they be there? It might have been something that would have taken—he would have had to write Washington, D.C. for, borrow interlibrary loan. He was very pleased to be able to get it

DW: Were the assistants working under you trained librarians, Lucile?

LS: One had some training but not much.

DW: So generally, you just showed them their responsibilities?

LS: I divided their jobs so there wasn't any one of them that could carry on all types of work. I had one girl who'd been in the longest, and she had a little training in library work but she was not...I certainly wouldn't have chosen her if I'd any say in it.

DW: You usually didn't get to hire your assistants?

LS: I usually did, but I didn't her. I don't remember why. She took library training over a year, and I guess Miss Campbell thought she had to give her a job and that's where I got. She did like to work with people. She would have been good in a high school library. She was very good [laughs]...she had all the patience in the world when it came to working with those summer school students. [laughs] I would just get out in the summer because they drove me crazy, and Virginia enjoyed it.

DW: Why was this? Were they there trying to do studies in the summertime?

LS: In order to get promotions and increases, they have to get so many credits every two years.

DW: I see. So, they'd be there in force?

LS: Or some of them were working for another degree, you know, to get their master's. I don't remember any in particular. It used to be too that we had more students who stayed—regular students who stayed—in the summer to get on with their higher degree. I don't think that was true in the later years.

DW: Were these summer school students less familiar with the library, and therefore—

LS: Were they less?

DW: Were they less familiar with the library?

LS: Oh yes, they just were not very familiar with libraries, and [pauses] they were taking subjects that kind of over their heads. It was something rather very different from the kind of book material—the ordinary books—that they're accustomed to getting their knowledge out of. I visited libraries in a good many places. New York City, and I spent a day at the United Nations Center there at Flushing. Washington, D.C., two or three libraries. University of Minnesota library, Washington State, University of Washington, British Columbia. I gathered a lot of information. Our Pacific Northwest Library Association, I got acquainted with librarians at Oregon University and Washington, Seattle, and British Columbia. Those people were all a great help to me, because they were larger than we were, and they were dealing with...and they would be specialists, who maybe already faced some of the things that I was up against.

DW: Who took over finally Phil Keeney's place when he was dismissed?

LS: Well, Kathleen Campbell.

DW: Then she was there for quite a while, was she?

LS: Yes, she was. She had been in a public library in Denver. I don't know, she was not a scholarly person at all. I guess I would say, something like Reagan [Ronald Reagan], I guess she got along pretty well. [laughs] She communicated with people well, and she had a style. There were many who liked her a lot. I never thought that she did much for this library building. She knew a public library—the Denver Public Library. I don't know what she brought to the University library. She worked well with a library committee. She never got into any troubles. She had worked with a very good man at Denver, but to me a librarian—there've been some in the Pacific Northwest and California and those—should be scholarly people, and she had none of those qualities.

DW: What was her education background I wonder?

LS: It was library—

DW: Schooling?

LS: Oh, business.

DW: Was she here quite a while, Lucile?

LS: Yes, she was. [pauses] When did Thompson [Earle Thompson]...well, it would be about 1963 because he came, arrived at the library while I was back at Mayo's for hip surgery and that was '63. I know that year because it was the year that John Kennedy was assassinated.

DW: She must have been at the University then, oh, 20 years or—

LS: Oh, yes! I think there were various moves by faculty members to get her to move on—not renew her contract. But, you see, she had tenure, and they'd had this experience with firing and tenure and nobody wanted the problems. Kathleen was a kind of a person who would have fought. I guess, nobody was ready to carry through on it, and I don't know whether they would have. There was just as many misfits in the faculty, I expect. How many are there who really give something to the institution? I don't feel that her contribution was anything compared with Gertrude Buckhous—someone like that.

DW: Do you feel that's a talent that some have and some don't?

LS: No, no. No.

DW: Is it attitude or—

LS: Well, I think by the time she came here, she had been in a job...Well, actually she was kind of a secretarial assistant to the head of the Denver Public. She was not in book selection or

working with the people. She could have gone and done a very good job, but she certainly had no background. She didn't know the great literature or the great books or anything like that and showed no interest. She never would have acquired that for the time she...she wasn't at the stage where she was going to. There wasn't any field in which she had read or was knowledgeable. But she was a wit and was great. People enjoyed her, and I suppose...Is this on the record?

DW: I've got another question for you here. Were you ladies ever accused of reverse discrimination, not that it would have been called that at that time, but there weren't very many men on the staff in those days, were there? Were there applicants? Applicants from time to time? Were there many applicants—male applicants—for jobs and things like that?

LS: No. There weren't many at that time. No, I think [pauses]...there were very few. The University of Washington had a few I recall, but I can't remember any men at the University of British Columbia, except the head. Kathleen was a little unusual. Of course, those institutions were all larger, but they'd have a man as head.

DW: It seems like the head of the library should have worked up through the ranks, but I suppose they looked at it differently.

LS: Well, I don't know. She came then at the time that Charles Dice (?) was chairman of the library committee. That was when they had a faculty committee, and he had surveyance over the library. He was over there checking up on us all time. This meant that Simmons [UM President George Simmons] was still there. Well, she fit right in with that. But I don't think you ever got any...I have said this before, not for any record, [laughs] but really I thought there should have been some correction of these charges that were always being made about Keeney doing nothing. He did more to departmentalize the library—open shelf—and create a real reference service than...There were more changes like that took place during his three or four years than Kathleen did in all her time. There were the inevitable small things, but—

DW: What was a person's background like Keeney's, that he would be the head of a library and, say, not an English professor or something? Had he gone through library—

LS: Yes! He was a graduate of the University of California Library School. He had good qualifications. When he was fired, he had suffered a bad attack, and more than one, I guess—[unintelligible] covered his health—ulcers of the stomach. The one who gave him the job was Archibald MacLeish in the Library of Congress. He and Mary Jane both had rather extreme leftist feelings, sympathies, and that was an excuse. They might have had more support had it not been for that. They really were victims of that. But they exposed themselves. I think about things like that, when some of the things that Reagan says, that it wouldn't take us very long to get to that kind of state now. And hey, where a person would be suspect for...

DW: There was quite a period of that at the University in the '30s here, wasn't there?

LS: Yes! When the Keeneys came back here after the trial in Helena, where he was awarded those two years' salary—damages—and he had had that attack...What did I say? Ulcers. They'd already given up their apartment to save money because he...so there was a YW [YWCA] there, and they got an apartment there and took that. I went to see them there. Mary Jane told me that I was the only one of the staff who came in to see them, and that one of the staff members, who lives here in Missoula now, crossed the street rather than meet her on the street and speak to her. That's the kind of thing that happens. You just can't believe it. I went my way, and there were ways in which I didn't admire the Keeneys completely. I thought he was kind of lazy [laughs] and so on, but there was no reason for the brutality of the treatment that he received here. And the reasons for it were so utterly abhorrent to me. Yes, I think that was—

DW: It wasn't really that they were pursuing his professional—

LS: When I was New York City—that quarter off that I had and I went East for six weeks—when I was in New York, I had their address. I called, and they invited me to come out one evening for dinner. Mary Jane was a very good cook, and Phil hadn't been well. Mary Jane, she worked out at the U.N. when it was out at Flushing. She said, "You talk to Phil while I get dinner."

So we had some drinks, and he [laughs]... "The old bastards," then something more, "The old bastards," he just railed about. But he was enjoying seeing somebody and getting it off his chest again, I guess. Well, it was three flights up, I guess, and it was a dark street. I'd never go down a street like that in a big city, or even in Missoula now. [laughs] I climbed the stairs and got there. It was all right. They took me back, up to the place I got the streetcar, or bus—I don't remember which one. It seems to me it was the street where the brokerage companies were. A week after that, he was picked up by the...it would have been F.B.I. or someone for trying to get out of the country without a passport.

[End of Interview]