

Maureen and Mike

# Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

## **Archives and Special Collections**

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: [library.archives@umontana.edu](mailto:library.archives@umontana.edu)

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

**Oral History Number: 408-022**  
**Interviewee: Christopher Mullin**  
**Interviewer: Jordan Goffin**  
**Date of Interview: November 15, 2006**  
**Project: University of Montana Oral History Project**

Jordan Goffin: It's November 15, 2006. I'm Jordan Goffin interviewing Chris Mullin.

Christopher Mullin: Chris Mullin, former Special Collections Librarian being interviewed by the current Special Collections Librarian, Jordan Goffin.

I arrived here in November of 1969, making, I believe, \$7,400 as a cataloger. In those days, we had a bunch of catalogers. I'm looking now at the 1970 phone book, which will make it convenient. At that point, which would have been in early 1970, about a year after I got here, Adelaine Midgett had taken over from Mary DeLand as the head of cataloging. I never even worked with Mrs. DeLand because they knew that she was retiring at the end of the year, and I got there in November.

Cataloging, in those days, was very different from the way it is today because most cataloging had to be done originally. The National Union Catalog existed, but of course it was way behind, since it was published in paper. A lot of materials never got into the National Union Catalog for years and years. Only the things cataloged by LC [Library of Congress] got in. There was no cataloging in publication either. Unless you wanted to wait around for a long time, maybe years, there was a tendency to catalog things now.

It was possible to order computer-produced cards, and we had just started doing that from a company in Oregon before I arrived. The backlog had gotten, really, pretty overwhelming when I arrived. It was 20- or 30,000 volumes, I think. Our code from the company that was selling the cards was DUMM...no, DUUM, so we referred to them as "dumb cards," naturally enough. At that point, there were complaints that they didn't do things like printing all subject headings in red, for example. In the card catalog, all subject headings were in red; authors and titles were typed at the top of the card in black. We solved that problem by ordering them without anything typed, and we just typed the tracings on ourselves. That wasn't as much extra work as you might think because we only had DUUM cards for about half the things we got.

At that point, basically, except for that, there was no copy cataloging. In those days, the attitude was that, even if you had copy, it really ought to be looked at by a professional librarian to see what it was like. I must say, after spending 18 years as a cataloger, I can see the advantages to that because LC does make mistakes, especially when cataloging is new. These days, it's not as big a problem because if there are any overwhelming, major mistakes, somebody will catch them and will fix them on the master record. Then, when the master record is downloaded again, it will be right for everybody in the country, but that wasn't the

case in the old days. Nobody was checking it again except for all the thousands of individual catalogers who were checking it. There were also the tens of thousands or more of other catalogers who weren't checking it at all. If you wanted your catalog to reflect the truth, it probably did make sense to have somebody with a master's degree in librarianship actually looking at everything.

For the things that we did ourselves, in those days, there were of course no self-correcting typewriters. Correction fluid and typing being what it is, and most of us being cruddy typists anyway, we normally handwrote our cataloging out. It was then turned over to the typists. We had several typists in the department to go along with several catalogers. The typists would put those red subject headings at the top of the DUUM cards, and they would also put the red subject headings at the top of the master cards that they got from the Xerox machine.

We did not type all of the cards by hand. There was one Xerox machine in the library. It was a Xerox 750, which is the same model that is in the Smithsonian Institution now: the original, commercial Xerox machine. We continued using that until—I believe we were still using our machine for the purpose of doing cards because we weren't using it for anything else by that time. When I arrived, I think it may have been the only copier in the library, although, if so, there were other coin-op copiers added fairly soon. We kept using that old machine for cards until after there was one just like it in the Smithsonian.

You would copy the cards onto a sheet. Sometimes, there'd be five cards in a set; sometimes, there'd be six cards in a set. The minimum would be three cards. A shelf card: the normal minimum would be an author card, a title card, and a shelf list card. If its nonfiction, there might conceivably be a title main entry, but, in that case, there would be at least one subject heading. There were a lot less subject headings in those days than there are today. There was a tendency on the part of all catalogers, because of the nature of the workflow, if nothing else, to try and keep cards down to where there weren't any card twos or card threes if you could get away from it. There's a lot more in an average catalog record today than there was in the year 1970.

This was not—it's not necessarily true to say that there's more in a new catalog record today than there always was. There was a time, back around a hundred years ago now, in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when there were many cards, many catalog records produced, that had extensive contents' notes and analytics. If you look in the old pre-1956 NUC [National Union Catalog], you can see some of them. They were as detailed as cards are today, as cataloging is today.

We would, once the cards were out of the machine, they'd get the headings typed on them. Then, we got to alphabetize them, using—do you think people know, Jordan, about what an alphabetizer is today? I'd probably better explain it to them.

JG: I kind of doubt it, yeah.

CM: An alphabetizer—we might even still have one or two around the library in the basement, I don't know—is a device with about 26 little slots that you slip cards into. The ones set up for libraries were labeled A-Z and then were also set up with 00 through 900 at the top of the alphabetizer because we, like many other libraries, were a Dewey decimal library. Unlike a lot of them, we still are. Alphabetizing or organizing the shelf cards was fairly simple. Then, everything else got organized into one alphabet. This would be some hundreds of cards in a week, obviously, because you're putting through a hundred or more books a week. I don't really remember what the catalog department was turning out. I think, probably, if anyone wants to research this, that there's some stuff back in archives that would allow you to do that. There were new book printed lists that, I believe, were still being made up in that time period.

The final step was the actual filing of the cards into the catalog. I was never very good at that, but I had to file anyway; as did the other catalogers. As a result of this, the catalogers in those days really did have a much better sense of what was in the card catalog, and of how to use the card catalog, than did any of the reference librarians. My impression is that reference librarians at that point, typically, knew about as much about actually using a card catalog as the people who had just had, in high school, a good course in it. We knew a lot more.

There were a lot of things you could do with a card catalog; some of them you can't do with an online catalog, at least not nearly as conveniently. One minor example: everybody knows that "McDonald" might be MacDonald or McDonald, but nobody really is sure in a particular case which it is. With cards, we just interfile them. We interfiled them all in this library as though it was "Mac." Then there would be a cross-reference card: "Mc" see "Mac." If anybody found the cross-reference card, they'd understand it. If they didn't find the cross-reference card, but looked at the drawers, there'd be drawers that began with "Mac" and they'd figure it out, probably. At least, we liked to think that they did.

That's just one example. There were a lot of things that we did that are not done today. We maintained contents books for series. There were some big series, really big series, with hundreds of volumes in them going on that did not seem worth listing a separate card for every volume in the catalog—maybe they figured that you would want to look at the list of the series because this was a major series. I'm not really sure how these came about because this is one of those things that had been in effect long before I arrived in this library. These series were listed in a book. We would just pull out the page from the three-hole punched notebook and type the next one in. We tended to do this quite a lot for series that were really big.

The other thing that we did with series, rather than list a separate card for each item in the series, if it was an analyzed series where everything is cataloged under a uniform call number, as we still have some of today, then you would just have cards in the catalog and one card would have five or six entries on it for the series' cards. Of course, in addition to that, there would be a full-sized set of entries for the individual item: an author card, a title card, subject cards, and so on. But, if you looked it up by the series, you would find it this way.

None of this sort of stuff is necessary these days, but I think it's worth talking about for the benefit of whoever will be listening because people, these days, don't know how a library used to operate. I think it's useful, if this tape of mine is useful at all, it's useful to try to show people what things were like and how they changed.

We did, even then, attempt to be up-to-date. When I arrived, we were using a homegrown acquisitions system that ran on the campus mainframe, which I think was a PDP 11 that is about as a modern cell phone; maybe not quite. But it was adequate for running an acquisitions program with, I think, one line of 80 characters per item. This was all input, of course, with punch cards. In those days, there were no online catalogs though.

JG: How did the change over to the online catalog here take place? What prompted it? What was the—?

CM: What prompted the change to online catalogs everywhere was the same two things that prompted the change in a lot of libraries from Dewey to the Library of Congress system: a) it was the modern, new thing to do, and b) people figured it would save money. In the case of changing over to the Library of Congress that was probably not justified, actually, but in the case of an online catalog, it really was. Not only is a modern, public access catalog the obvious way to go, but you really can do a bunch of things with that that you couldn't do with a card catalog. I mentioned a couple of things that you can do with a card catalog, but there's a lot of things you can do with an online catalog, of which may be the most important is keyword searching.

We, as of 1981, I believe, started cataloging—is that right? That doesn't sound like it can be right. No, it can't be 1981. It must be a little later than that that we started cataloging with the Western Library Network. It would be possible to check that, and I maybe should have looked that up to verify it. The Western Library Network has now been merged into the OCLC [Online Computer Library Center] network, but it was, at the time, one of the main competitors of OCLC. It started out as the Washington Library Network. After it left Washington State, it became the Western Library Network, and covered Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana; not all of the libraries, but most of the bigger libraries in those—and Alaska—five states. Its selling point—they were, of course, delighted to have anybody else sign up who wanted to, but nobody else much did, which is one reason that they eventually merged. The selling point of WLN was that they actually had human beings looking at the records we input and attempting to dedupe [deduplicate], something which, as any cataloging students who ever listen to this will realize, OCLC has never really been good at. Even now.

We got terminals for use with WLN in the early '80s. In those days, they were dumb terminals that were just connected by, I think, originally, phone lines to the—one phone line per terminal—main WLN headquarters in western Washington. It was at that point that we had to start actually coding and typing cataloging. Notice that this didn't happen until I'd been doing

the other with the cards for 10 years. Perhaps more than 10 years. I can't remember. The year 1981 comes to mind, which would be 12 years. I'm not certain of that year.

Before then, we had actually had a whole revolution in cataloging: we got rid of the DUUM cards and we started getting proof slips from the Library of Congress. LC used to—back in the days when they were still printing cards that they sent out to people's catalogs—for each card, they printed on thinner paper a proof slip. You could subscribe to all of the proof slips, or all the English language proof slips, or all the proof slips. Maybe, at some point in there, they went all the proof slips in certain languages. For a long time, we subscribed to all the proof slips. We got hundreds of thousands of proof slips in this building. When I left, I was still using some of the leftovers for scratch.

The exciting thing about the proof slips was that we had to file them: a couple hundred thousand of them a year; everything that the LC cataloged. Actually, we threw away all of the Asian language stuff. We threw away, I think we even threw away the Cyrillic. I think we threw away all of the non-Roman stuff, just automatically, if we were buying it. The Roman language stuff: you couldn't tell what you were going to get. We were an academic library. On the basis that you couldn't tell what you were going to get, we filed them: alphabetical order by title. We all had to spend lots and lots of time alphabetizing those; a lot more than we ever had to spend alphabetizing the cards. But it saved money. It really did because you had the things in hand; you didn't have to find them. Because they were alphabetized by title, you didn't have to worry about how LC was actually going to catalog this. In those days, if you were going to order things from LC, you basically had to order them by main entry. As any cataloger hearing this will appreciate, even these days, determining the main entry is kind of a crap shoot; but if you have everything organized by title, you can probably find it.

We were doing that for years before, and I think even for a little while after, we went on the Western Library Network. We stayed on WLN for close to 15 years before we actually got an online catalog. That was not because we didn't want an online catalog; it was because we never got the money for it. WLN also had a much more sophisticated acquisitions system. We bought into that shortly after we bought into their cataloging system. The cataloging system was, of course, in many ways like OCLC is today. You find the record online. You've got this huge database to search from. You can search this huge database any way, including keywords. If there's a record out there, you can probably find it. If there are multiple records out there, which was not as likely, remember, on the WLN system, you can probably pick the right one.

The biggest difference between the way that that was done then and the way that OCLC cataloging is done now was that WLN, instead of using the numeric keys for author, title, and the three-digit 500 for subject headings and so on, they had three letter codes, which was supposed to be easier to work with. It was, except that WLN was the only people in the world who were using it. It was easier to work with. I never did. I stopped cataloging at about the time, just before the changeover occurred; a couple years before the changeover occurred. So I

never did learn all the numeric keys. After your cataloging class, Jordan, you know the numeric keys better than I do. He's shaking his head about that, but he really does.

We tried several times to get an online catalog, but it fell through. It cost a lot of money and it was one of those things that we had a card catalog. We had a pretty good card catalog, if I do say so myself. The money, several times, turned out to be needed for something else. In the early '70s, we'd been really short of money because it was at that point that the enrollment on this campus actually dropped. The baby boom was done and the baby bust was coming along. As a result, there were a couple of years when we literally had no general acquisitions budget for monographs at all. We cut serials considerably, but, even after cutting serials, there was no general money to buy monographs.

We cataloged during that time—we got completely rid of our backlog. One thing that we got rid of, for example—we're talking about the late '70s in here. Maybe up to 1980. We had had sitting around for about 40 years, WPA, Works Progress Administration, project books that were things like bibliographies of various states and so on. They had just been sitting in back in the storage cage in a succession of buildings because we weren't in this building until the mid-'70s. We had been just hanging on [to] these. They had been absolute bottom priority, but we got them cataloged.

Finally, in 1995, we got the money for our first OLPC and we've been our second OLPC now for several years.

JG: How long did you stay in cataloging before moving—?

CM: I stayed in cataloging for 18 years about. I left in 1987.

JG: Ok. How did you end up coming to Special Collections?

CM: The former Special Collections Librarian, Cathy Schaefer, had unfortunately become ill several years earlier. She'd had to quit work for a while. When she returned, it was in a wheelchair. Then, she had to leave again and was never able to return. She died soon thereafter. For a time, we were without a Specials Collections librarian. We did get one woman come in. Jordan actually has some leftover files from her. Came in for a year—I am blocking the name. Was it Janice Pacino(?)?

JG: I'm actually not familiar with this—

CM: You've got them in your desk, if you haven't moved them down below there.

JG: They might be— (goes through desk).

CM: We can check this if we wish. Let's see—I think maybe we can check this. Another advantage of doing this digitally is that, if I take a little break like this, we can edit that out real easily. (Goes through papers)

No, she wasn't listed in here. She might have been in the next volume. No, that's the previous volume. Shall we get that? Shall we try to get that?

JG: I'll go ahead and pause this.

(pause in recording)

JG: Now go ahead.

CM: As I was saying, Janice Pacino was, for one year, on a non-tenure track contract as the Special Collections Librarian. That was the '85-'86 year. She left after that year, and I'm not, frankly, sure exactly why. It was considered, after 18 years, I was getting a little burned out on cataloging anyway. When it was suggested that I might want to leave cataloging, I jumped at the chance to go down to Special Collections. At that point, Coby [Coburn] Johnson, as of the time I'm speaking, the head of Bibliographic Management Services, came back to the library. After she married Dale Johnson, and had kids, she had taken some time off—about 10 years actually—away from cataloging. She came back, first part-time and then full-time, to cataloging.

JG: You mentioned downstairs. At that point, Special Collections was on the first floor.

CM: Yes, at that point, Special Collections was on level one of the library, two floors below ground. Technical Services, as we then called it, was located where Bibliographic Management Services is today. Special Collections remained downstairs until the—it would have been the year 2004—2003, 2004, I think, when we moved up to level 4. You should check that one because this is one of those things that I obviously ought to know, but I don't have anything there telling me how many years was I up here before I retired.

JG: You started in 1985.

CM: I started in 1987 downstairs in Special Collections. As Special Collections Librarian, then, I did pretty much the things I did up to my retirement in 2005, and subsequent to my retirement, when I came back on the post-retirement contract in 2005, 2006. The Special Collections Librarian then as now was responsible for the Montana Collection, the state documents collection, and other books on the state of Montana and the general area. He—I guess I can say "he" still since Jordan is the Special Collections Librarian now. He was responsible for the actual locked Special Collections' items. I also took it on myself to continue paying attention to the microform collection because nobody else was really doing that. I sold a few Montana duplicates and I attempted to be an expert on the campus too, on the basis that a lot of the



things that people are the most interested in are campus-related things and that we need to have one or two people in the library who know about that stuff.

At that point, Special Collections was all a closed-stack area; not only the things in the Special Collections' cage, but the regular Montana Collection was also kept locked away. That was a circulating closed stacks collection. You found in the catalog something that you were interested in or you asked us and we would try to give you additional suggestions. We got it out for you, and you checked it out and took it home. There were actually two such collections. You can see fossil remnants. As I speak in 2006, you can see fossil remnants of this. In the stacks on level 4, the stacks of the Montana Room, some books had an "M" at the beginning of the call number for "Montana Collection;" others had an "S" because they were state documents. When we moved upstairs, we merged those two collections.

We never merged them when we were downstairs because it frankly seemed like more work than it would be worth. We were real, real short of space anyway. It was a lot more convenient to move these things—we were just able to move, say, everything from 900 to 910, for example. I don't remember exactly what ranges of numbers we used, but something like that. We moved the 900 through 910 M collection books and the 900 through 910 S collection books and just merge them on the shelves. That went pretty quickly. If you didn't have a third place to move them to, but tried to interfile them, it would have taken weeks and weeks of somebody's time, and, all during those weeks and weeks when they were an open stack collection, it would have been difficult to use them. I did get awfully tired of explaining the difference between the M and the S collections, though, during the years when I had to so.

As Special Collections Librarian, I was of course responsible for ordering material for those collections and also ordering material for the Special Collections. One big order that I put in at the beginning of the time right after I took over, I discovered that there was about \$25,000, I think, of money sitting around from the Phillips Collection bequest. That produces several thousand dollars a year and it apparently hadn't been touched for almost 10 years when I took over. I could have bought something really impressive with that money. One thing that occurred to me was getting a set of the original 1814 edition of the Lewis & Clark journals. At that time, in the late '80s, I could probably have gotten a set complete with the folding map for around \$25,000. These days that two-volume set with the folding map, which is not in anywhere near all of the copies, is in the \$150,000 and up range. But I concluded that that was one book that people weren't going to look at that much and that we had serious gaps in our Western history collection. Instead, I bought the microfilm series of the—

JG: The Evans?

CM: No, it's the Yale series. The 517 reels. What is the name of it?

JG: Yeah, I can't remember off hand. We can—

CM: We can look that up. You can put that in. You just go downstairs and look in 973 for 517 reels and you can stick that in quicker than we can get it here because I'm blocking it. To go on with the part you're going to leave in—

That series gave us a lot of material that we don't have yet, except in that format. Eventually, that will probably all be available online, but not for a long time because there is some—it actually that is 20<sup>th</sup> century and there's some of that stuff, a little of it, that I think is still in copyright as of 2006. It's not all available yet. We have, subsequently, got a lot of it that is of most interest to Montana in hard copy, either by purchase or by gift and either in reprints or as originals. There's even some of the Montana stuff, I'm sure, that we don't yet have. There's a lot of the stuff in the rest of the series because it covers the entire trans-Mississippi West from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on up.

Buying the entire thing in hard copy was totally impossible. It wouldn't make any sense anyway because we've got other priorities for our money. Spending \$20,000 on the microfilm seemed to me and still seems like a good deal. Even though people don't like to use microfilm these days, it is still there, and, these days, it is all listed in the catalog too, so people can find it. In those days, it was not in the card catalog. You had to go to a bibliography volume, which we had in reference. In fact, we've still got those bibliography volumes around, but nobody looks at them.

JG: Can you talk at all about Special Collections before you came: all the way back to the beginning, how it started?

CM: Sure, I can talk a little. The first person we ever had who was designated as Special Collections Librarian was, as I think I said earlier, Cathy Schaefer. At that point, this was only a part-time job. The reference librarians, in those days, each spent on the reference desk probably around 20 hours a week. We had multiple reference desks. When we got to this present building, the Mansfield Library building, there were—we opened the building with only three floors: levels 1, 2, the two below ground, and level 3. Levels 4 and 5 were totally unfinished. We started out with an information desk, which was staffed a lot of the time by professional librarians. Downstairs, on levels 1 and 2, were all of the books, magazines, in the building. Each of those had a reference desk. Level 1 was for documents and social sciences, if I recall correctly; level 2 for the humanities and sciences. They were pretty full too.

The original plan had been that we would have four reference desks when we finally occupied the entire building. The original plan had been postulated on the assumption, which had probably actually been told to our then-dean of Library Services, that we would have 15 or so reference librarians. If we'd had 15 or 16 reference librarians, we could have manned four desks, even with the heavy schedules that they maintained in those days. We weren't open as many hours then as we are not either. We were probably only open about 80 hours a week. So it could have been done. The problem was we didn't have the reference librarians. Instead, by the time we were moving in, enrollment had stabilized and begun to shrink. It was quite

apparent when we went upstairs that we would not have anywhere near enough librarians to cover four reference desks.

In one of the earliest faculty meetings that we had, we concluded that the only sensible thing to do was to have one reference desk near the front door and have all the reference books up on level 3, the front-door level. The reference books had been split between levels 1 and 2, of course. The theory had been that the space, which was sitting there empty where reference books are housed today in late 2006, to the right of the front doors as you come in—that space had been planned to be used as a reading room. Our then director of Technical Services had the idea that there should be a room for pleasure reading for people. It might have been a nice idea, but we never really built it. Instead, as I say, we moved the reference in there and had one reference desk.

Cathy Schaefer spent a lot of her time on that. Basically, she did that and she did some ordering. Most of the things that were in Special Collections had just sort of drifted in over the years. There wasn't any serious attempt to buy things for Special Collections because there wasn't any money to do it. I believe Janice Pacino may have been the first one who actually had any money to buy anything for Special Collections because I don't remember if Cathy did. She might have.

In those days, the library was run on a quite different basis than it is now. For one thing, up until the mid '70s, there were no library faculty meetings at all. We had—this was in the days of Dean [Earle] Thompson. Dean Thompson was an old-school head librarian. He had him in the head office, and the Director of Public Services, the Director of Technical Services, one secretary, and maybe one student assistant. And they ran the library. There wasn't thought to be any real need to have things like faculty meetings. It's interesting that, at that point, we did have a Library Staff Association, which had regular meetings. People got—they were not just faculty members, but staff members. People got together fairly regularly and did things like the maintenance of the staff lounge and so on, and paid more attention to that sort of thing than they do now.

Eventually, there were people who complained about this. I was not one of them. I never cared that much. We did start having real faculty meetings, and also real staff meetings with the—we continued to have whole staff meetings and even some meetings of the dean with the people who work here who aren't faculty members.

Getting back to Cathy Schaefer and Janice Pacino. Cathy did not have that much time to do this full-time. Janice was, as I say, only here for a year. I'm not even sure if it was an entire year. When I took over, nobody had been doing that much. There were, for example, many thousands of pamphlets, which had just been—there used to be a pamphlet file, but there hadn't been for one a while until I reinstated it. Nobody had done anything with the money from the Phillips Collection and so on. I did some of that stuff.

JG: Books that were originally, before Cathy even, placed in a separate location for Special Collections—was that just reference librarians? Who sort of decided those were useful? Were they were the original library books? Did just find old books?

CM: People didn't certainly look for all the old books. I don't know. I know that a lot of things were pulled out by somebody. I don't really know who. In those days, Technical Services had very little to do with Public Services. There was a greater separation than there is now, in part, because there weren't any faculty meetings in a lot of that period. Also, because the—as in most academic libraries, the people in Technical Services didn't know that much about what the people in Public Services were doing and vice versa. We were not, at that point, even doing the sort of faculty evaluation that we do today where you prepare elaborate documentation every year and all of the faculty read it. That was not being done during the time period I've been talking about. It wasn't that people were really unfriendly. You have the case, for example, of Dale [Johnson], who was the archivist. Of course, Dale was special because he didn't think of himself as being a librarian at all. You have him marrying Coby, who was in Technical Services. Everybody knew everybody's name, but we didn't really know much about what each other did.

JG: You mention archives. Can you speak at all about early days of the archives? Its foundation?

CM: The person who needs to speak about the early days of the archives is Dale Johnson because he started the archives. You ought to get him in and talk to you. I can tell you that the archives was started as a result of an initiative by K. Ross Toole, which is why this is named the K. Ross Toole Archives today. I can tell you that Dale Johnson was the first archivist, succeeded by Jodi Allison-Bunnell, and succeeded by the present archivist just a couple of years ago. You ought to get Dale to talk about this.

JG: Let's talk about the collections themselves. Can you think offhand of one or multiple items that, when you first started, they struck you as the most interesting, most valuable? What did you sort of notice when you took over the collections.

CM: When I took over, of course, I didn't really—this is one of those cases where I basically learned on the job. I've always been interested in books. I've always done a lot of reading. I got a chance to see a lot of books. One way that some books got into Special Collections when I was cataloger was that I or anybody else who spotted something that they thought should be locked up just locked it up and put it in the Special Collections. We would lock it up for a variety of reasons. There was one book I remember very early on. It came in and we looked at it. This is early 1970s. We looked at it and said, "Oh, no, we've got to lock this up." It was because it cost us \$75.

JG: Do you remember what the book was?

CM: No, I haven't a clue. It was something in the—I think it was something in the sciences and I don't think it's locked up anymore, although it might be. I don't have a clue what it was. At that

point, an ordinary novel cost about \$4.95. An ordinary textbook cost maybe 10 or 12 bucks. \$75 for a not particularly large book was just an incredible price, so we locked them up for that reason. We locked things up that were tiny. We locked things up that were likely to get swiped for any reason. If somebody spotted something that they thought was valuable and that could include something that was in the stacks, they would just say, "Why don't we lock this up?" I believe that—we didn't do this all that often. I think a lot of things were locked up. Somebody before I got here, and I honestly don't know who, if it was Janice or Cathy Schaefer, because I don't recognize the handwriting—somebody pulled a bunch of the books out of the regular M collection stacks and locked them up in M Special Collections. The Phillips Collection, of course, had been set up as a Special Collection.

There were plenty of other things that were in Special Collections, but nowhere near as many as there are today because we weren't buying anything for Special Collections in those days, specifically. Or almost nothing. We had a bunch of old Montana items that, as I say, had been moved from the one collection to the other. Over the years—remember, by the time I took over, the library was already 90 years almost. Let's see, yeah, 90 years old. Over 90 years old. Over the years, things had sort of filtered there.

There was never—I think I was the first one ever to come out with a finding aid, which described the nature of Special Collections, what is in Special Collections. You've got later versions of that. If you go through all of the stuff—I'm speaking to Jordan now. If Jordan goes through all of the stuff I left him, there's even some earlier versions of that finding aid, dating back to some very early ones.

JG: Are there particular books that you remember enjoying? Particular titles?

CM: That I—

JG: That's always a hard question.

CM: Particular titles that I enjoyed that were there when I arrived... It's hard for me to remember what all was there when I arrived and what's come since.

JG: The follow-up question—

CM: One thing that had come was the Capper Jones (?) books. Those had been given in the early '80s before I came to Special Collections. Those, of course, included a lot of Arthur Rackham books. There were also special collections of Faulkner, Maurice Sendak's illustrations, and Rockwell Kent's illustrations. Plus a bunch of other things. Those were some of the nicest books we had in the humanities. I remember we also had, by that time, the Mansfield books. We had most of the Mansfield books by that time because he, of course, took over as ambassador to Japan in 1977, after he left the Senate in 1976. We'd been getting those

Mansfield books, adding them to Special Collections—lots of lovely Japanese art books—for some time.

Before the Mansfield collection arrived and the—I'm not sure how many books there really were in Special Collections. It would have been several bookcases full surely—30 or 40 feet of shelving probably, but I don't know. It was nearly as many as there were afterwards. Even the Mansfield books made up a lot of the addition, probably. There must be at least 30 or 40 feet of them. Even just the gift from the...the Capper Jones (?) gift must have been 20 feet or more; maybe 30 feet. A lot of books.

JG: During the time that you were running Special Collections, what do you think are the most important or interesting (*inaudible*) items that you've added or bought?

CM: The most important books that we've added since I took over—I mentioned, of course, the one really important addition that I did earlier of the microfilm, but when we get to real books, the most important would be the things that we've added in Montana history, particularly relating to Lewis and Clark. When I arrived, we had already the Patrick Gass journal that we've got now and we had the partial set of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> British edition of Lewis and Clark. I added the first edition of Lewis and Clark and the other things on early Western exploration. I added them with the Steele-Reese gift. I added a lot of other things over the years that cost less than that.

The most important additions to Special Collections have come through gift money because we have never had more than a few thousand dollars a year; not enough to buy even one major book. The only times when we have been able to get major books in the \$10- \$15,000 range were if we a) already had them or b) we got gift money. There were some of those that we already had. When I took over, I can't say that I really even scarcely knew about them. They weren't worth as much then as they are now, a lot of them: things like the Captain Cook's *Voyages*. That's worth a lot of money now, and, when I took over, it might have been worth a couple of thousand dollars.

There were things we didn't get too. One thing that I uncovered before I became Special Collections Librarian: I discovered that there was back in that cage I was telling you about—this happened actually when we were cataloging all those left over books when we had no money for acquisitions—I discovered a copy, a grungy, nasty copy, of the second folio of *Audubon's Birds of America*. The second folio is the chromolith version.

We had been keeping it around. It was awfully grungy. I think the reason that they hadn't broken it up was because it seemed like too much trouble. I did some checking and, at that point, that book was worth was \$7,000 probably. At least, I found a copy that was worth \$7,000. Maybe this one wasn't worth quite that. Nobody else had realized that it was worth anything at all. I brought that to the attention of Dean Thompson. We were, as I say, real short of money at that point and we sold that. That's why we don't have an Audubon folio here.

We had the text volumes that went with it too: the quarto text volumes. It's not as nice as the earlier one because the chromolithography that they used to print from the original plates does not give as pretty a result. The colors are gaudier. It's a shame we don't have it anymore, but were real short of money then. I didn't have any, I was just the cataloger. I didn't have anything to do with whether we kept something like that or not. I was doing my duty by explaining to people that we had this and it was worth a lot of money. What should we do with it? I was not Special Collections Librarian and wasn't going to be for I don't know how many years. 10 years maybe.

JG: As far as policies, just sort of general changes to Special Collections: what do you think the biggest changes are? What do you feel most proud of as far as—?

CM: What I'm most proud of—actually, perhaps the thing I'm most proud of in my whole career here is that it's because of me that we have a mist-type sprinkler system in this part of the building, the Archives & Special Collections area, instead of the showerhead-type system that we have over the entire building.

Actually, I suspect I may be responsible for the fact that there's a sprinkler system in here at all. The then-dean, Karen Hatcher, asked me one day, "How much is our collection worth?" She asked me because I was the Special Collections Librarian because I was supposed to know that sort of thing. I thought a little and I said, "Average book replacement costs are, nationwide, something like \$30, and we've got about a million volumes here. The actual replacement cost of everything in the building, when you count cataloging too, which you would have to, must be somewhere between \$30- and \$50 million dollars."

Then I didn't hear anything more for a year, or 18 months, but, all of a sudden, in the governor's budget one year, the governor's spending budget, there was this line that moved something that had been a campus priority about 20<sup>th</sup> on the long range building program for this campus, which meant of course that it was never going to happen, up to I think second or third—we could look it up if you're curious enough—in the whole long range building program for the state of Montana. One line: "\$550,000. Sprinkle library." If that wasn't because somebody had suddenly noticed that, no we don't have sprinklers and, yes, it would cost a ton of money if the library ever burned down, I don't know why. I don't know that I did this, but I think I might have.

Sprinkling the library actually made for a bunch of changes. One thing that it made for was that those of us in Archives & Special Collections on level 1 of the building no longer wanted to be on level 1 of the building because, should there ever be a major release of water, it's all going to wind up on level 1 after awhile. Actually, thinking about it now and knowing more about sprinklers than I did then, I suspect that a fire hose might have wound up causing more release of water than a sprinkler fire any place is likely to anyway, but it reminded us too. We were

more worried then. You tend to worry more about a sprinkler system going in before it goes in than after, if there aren't any problems.

One thing that did bother me, at least, was the notion that Archives & Special Collections would be subject to a regular sprinkler system, which is essentially little showerheads over all of the ceiling. If one of those little showerheads goes off right over the most valuable books in the collection, it can trash them. Instead, since it's no longer feasible to use the gas-type fire suppression systems, mist was a logical alternative. I should explain for the benefit of people who are not into this sort of thing that a lot of libraries used to have Halon systems that spray out gas that keeps the oxygen away and keeps the fire from burning up your rare books. These cost about as much as sprinkler systems. The gas that is released is dangerous to greenhouse gasses and, therefore, those are no longer in use any place that people have been able to get the special collections' librarians to give them up. Jordan might know better than I do—have some better sense than I do how many gas-type systems there are still out there. I know there are some.

JG: I know that there are quite a few that are still grandfathered in, but I think they're—

CM: Nobody's building any.

JG: —more restricted to vaults.

CM: In a vault, of course, it's not as big a problem because it doesn't get out as much, at least not until you open the door. The vault is smaller.

JG: They kill fewer people if they go out. (unintelligible)

CM: That's the other problem, as Jordan points out. If there are people in the stacks, and the Halon goes off, it gets rid of all the oxygen, which kills all the fire and kills any human beings or other creatures who might be in there. Whereas what we've got is a mist system, which lets out essentially a thick fog in Special Collections, the Montana Room, the work room back here, and this office of Jordan's that I'm in. It will just make it foggy in here. The fog is dense enough that it does put out the fire, but, in a climate like this, just evaporates and doesn't do much of any harm, I would certainly anticipate. We've never had a release, but I don't anticipate that it's going to hurt much of anything at all. It's not good for the books to suddenly get moist and then dry out again, but it's not nearly as bad for them as burning up. Not nearly.

I got—I mentioned that this was a possibility to people. I got the campus architect on our side. I got the campus engineer on our side. I talked to the people from the construction company and the people who were designing this for us. Because the architect and the engineer were on our side, and I talked to these other people, we were able to get a mist system in a small portion of the library. I wish we had a mist system in the entire library.



The other thing I wish we had—I'll mention this one on the tape and hope that it doesn't jinx us. I hope that the bracing for earth quakes that we have done is satisfactory. That was another thing that I pushed for all the time I was here. I did get them to spend money on that. It's not ceiling bracing, however; it's floor bracing. I hope that it keeps the stacks from going over when there is an earthquake here. Not if, but when.

There will be an earthquake here—a major earthquake, some time. Very likely, the world being as it is, this library will still be full of books and book stacks when that happens. If anyone is still using those books in book stacks at that time, which I suspect some people will be, although probably not as many as today, and there is an earthquake, and it happens the 12 hours or so a day during the school year when there are a significant number of people here, if the book stacks go over, people will die. Unpleasantly. So I hope the bracing works. I did my very best. I did finally—I pushed hard enough on that one that they did spend some money on bracing.

What else am I proud of? I'm proud of getting the books on Montana and the exploration of the West that we got in the Steele-Reese grant that I applied for and that we also got because we were getting books. I did a lot more of this sort of thing under our most recent dean—not our present, but our most recent dean, Frank D'Andraia—than I did under the other deans. A lot of deans take the attitude, "Oh, there's a Special Collections; isn't that nice." Some of them don't quite understand what the difference between a Special Collections Librarian and an archivist is. A lot of them just sort of ignore the Special Collections, and the archives, too, probably, unless something strange comes up. Dean D'Andraia believed in this as a way of getting other gifts for the library and of getting people impressed about the library. If you get those gifts there, then you can spend lots of other money on automation was his attitude, I believe.

We wound up spending not too much, but getting a lot of gifts on this, and spending some money of the University's. I don't know, I don't think your present dean is as interested.

JG: I guess we'll find out.

CM: Ok. How often does she come upstairs?

JG: She makes her way up when she can, I believe.

CM: Ok. We can edit some of this out. That's another advantage of digital.

JG: Final thoughts. Anything else you want to get on the record or want to say about Special Collections?

CM: About Special Collections?

JG: Or the library generally.

CM: I haven't talked about the library generally. I could give you all sorts of dirt on past deans. I did a little of that already. The library in general, I would say that these days things are very different than when I came. We had faculty rank and status when I arrived here, but it didn't mean much. The truth is that it didn't mean as much probably to the faculty as a whole as it does now. There was a tendency in the library in the years before I got here—there were some people who, I suspect [thought], we can't give you a raise this year, so we'll make you a faculty member of the library instead of just a staff member.

We had—when I arrived, there were several people who were in senior positions in the library and were listed as librarians, but were not library school graduates. Of course, there were other people who were library school graduates, but, in those days, it had been a bachelor's degree because the master's degree for librarianship didn't come in until after the Second World War. We still had Mrs. DeLand and Mrs. Midgett, who were the people in charge of cataloging. Mrs. DeLand was just retiring and she had been the head of cataloging for I don't know how long before that—20 years—which would have been back in the '40s.

JG: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today. I enjoyed it.

CM: And thank you for having me.

[End of the Interview]