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This interview was conducted with Mr. Robert Cross, Associate Professor and Associate Director for Public Services, Wilson Library (1969-1987), in the library on April 17, 2003. The interviewer is Tamara Belts. Due to technical difficulties the opening introductions were not recorded and have been added as part of the editing process.

[TB: Today is Thursday, April 17, 2003. I am talking with Mr. Robert Cross, who was an Associate Professor and Associate Director for Public Services from 1969-1987. Could you tell us how you happen to come to Western?]

RC: [I was at] Seattle University, and as director of the library I had no tenure. The university was experiencing severe financial difficulties at the time. I thought it might be well to look elsewhere for employment, although I enjoyed myself very much at Seattle University and was very sorry to leave it. But I had heard that Western Washington State College was looking for an Assistant Director for Public Services. I heard about this through Tom Frazier, a friend of mine, who was on the staff here. I had met Dr. Lawyer in one of these inter-library conferences that happened all the time in the State of Washington, so I knew who he was though I really didn't know him, nor did he know me very well. But I wrote to him, having heard that there was a possibility of an assistant directorship. We met; I was interviewed by the various members of the library faculty, and I came here as assistant director in 1969, Assistant Director for Public Services, I should say.

TB: So what interested you in the position specifically?

RC: Well let me say in the first place that I came here because I didn't want to leave the State of Washington. Under other circumstances I might have looked for another directorship somewhere, but I wanted to remain here. So this just seemed like the kind of job that I was qualified for and was interested in and Western was a growing institution.

TB: It was a new position, I believe, and so was it very well-defined or was it kind of recognized that the library was growing? I think what I'm trying to ask is how much were you able to shape what the position became or was it pretty well defined when you came into it?

RC: That's a hard one to answer. The job was new. There were two new positions at the time, both assistant directors, one for public services and one for technical services – covering the acquisitions and cataloguing side of the library. The reason for those jobs was that the new director, Bob Lawyer, he had been in the job I think two years at that time, was a professor of English, and he wanted to have another level of management in the library so that he did not have to be as concerned with day-to-day library operations as a director normally would be. The jobs were pretty well defined in terms of what libraries do. On the one hand you have the public services, in this case to the students and faculty of the university. On the other hand you have the technical services, through which the library acquires its material and organizes it. These are pretty standard functions, and so there wasn't any real possibility of changing, or enlarging the scope, as far as I can say.

TB: Would you describe (because public service now has really changed), exactly what areas reported to you at the time that you started?

RC: The public service departments of the library consisted of the circulation department, where the books were checked out. Within the circulation department was the reserve book room and also the Xerox copying services. I believe now that the copying services are centralized on the campus, and what's in the library is simply a branch of a campus-wide service. At that time, these copy services were separately organized in each department that had a copy machine. The library had a Xerox machine, and it was in the circulation department. The reference department was the, I suppose you might say, the major public service department, and that at this time included the government documents service. As I recall, at the time I came, the library was not yet a government depository library. I think that happened sometime after.

TB: Canada comes later. According to the annual catalogue when you came, it said we had a hundred additional state and federal documents and other special collections. So whether we were depository or just had some, I guess I can't say. I know in 1976 or something I found it sited where we also added in the Canadian documents, which we hadn't been before.

RC: That's true, yes. I think the depository designation came sometime after I arrived. It may have been very soon after. You'd better look this up somewhere else! So I'm trying to describe the functions of the assistant director for public services, the reference department. Well, the reference department, over the course of time, expanded in that it began to have subject specialists. But at the time, let me go back...the education library was another of the public service functions. I tended to think of it as part of the reference department, but it was a separate department of the library. That must just about cover it.

TB: I'm wondering about inter-library loan?

RC: Inter-library loan was a function of the reference department.

TB: And then periodicals?

RC: Periodicals! How could I forget periodicals? Of course! A major public service, yes. What else is there...well that's about it. Oh, oh! The music library! One tends to forget about it because it was in a separate location, but it was part of our library. The music librarian technically reported to the assistant director for public services. But it always has been a very independent library.

TB: Mr. Mather was hired about the same time. What were the areas that he was in charge of?

RC: Well he came in at the same time I did as assistant director for technical services. That then consisted of the acquisitions department and the cataloguing department. That included the mending, and the book-binding of materials in the library, largely of serials, was a responsibility of technical services department.

TB: Dr. Lawyer was the first outside leader of the library, and how do you feel about, do you have any thoughts about that and how it unfolded? You were obviously hired very early on as a part of that process, and I'm thinking then what Mr. Hearsey's role was? Do you want to describe to me what the administration was then?

RC: Well, Herb Hearsey, under Bob Lawyer, was the associate director of the library. Herb, of course had been here going way back to Mabel Zoe Wilson, who hired him. So Herb had been in continuous employment in the library from the 1940s. I don't remember exactly what year he started, but under Bob Lawyer he was named associate director. You described Lawyer as "from outside" the library...did you mean that he was not a librarian?

TB: Right.

RC: Right. He was a professor of English and had been very active on the campus in the faculty council and so on. He was I suppose you might say, close to Jerry Flora, who was president at that time, and Jerry nominated him to be acting director and then director of the library, instead of them going out to search for a professional librarian somewhere. And I think it was a very wise move because the library frankly had not been well thought of, I think, in general by the faculty on campus. Why this was, I don't know. The director prior to Lawyer was Dr. McGaw, who was a very fine man, and a good librarian. But perhaps lacked some of the administrative ability and the ability to

make the campus, or the library more meaningful to the faculty outside. Which Bob Lawyer was able to do because he had been a member, an active member of the faculty and was well known. Not that he didn't have enemies. Anybody who gets active on the campus is going to have enemies. But he had a lot of friends in the university, and he was an exceptionally capable administrator. So as far as I'm concerned, his tenure, which amounted to I think in total of about seventeen years as director. That's easily checked. It was a very successful period for the library and therefore for the university.

TB: Definitely Dr. Flora, or under the library between Dr. Flora and Dr. Lawyer, the library really did flourish. Can you describe the relationship between President Flora and Dr. Lawyer? Some questions would be, did Flora empower Dr. Lawyer, did a lot of what Dr. Lawyer did maybe come from Flora, or did Dr. Lawyer get the ideas from you and Mr. Mather inside the library and take them back to Flora? Do you know what I'm trying to say? Is it really the outside, just that Dr. Lawyer was responsive or what for, why does it happen or was Dr. Flora really responsive to what Dr. Lawyer presented?

RC: From my perspective I would say that Flora expected Lawyer to direct the library for the benefit of the university and left it up to Lawyer to figure out how to do that, and supported him by supporting the library's budgets and requests and so on. I don't have the feeling that Lawyer was operating under a specific set of directions that Flora had given him, if you follow that. Again, I think this argues for both Flora and Lawyer being exceptionally good administrators. Not telling people under them exactly how to do their jobs down to the details, but simply setting forth a set of goals for us to accomplish. Flora let Lawyer run the library. Lawyer let the professional librarians do their jobs and run their particular programs.

TB: How would you describe Dr. Lawyer's management style?

RC: Well, I guess I partly answered that already. This was a period when there was a lot of talk about participatory management, you know, involving the employees in the management. Lawyer didn't believe in that. He didn't have meetings of all the staff to talk about things going on. But he didn't interfere with people doing their jobs. I sometimes wondered whether it is often not better for a non-professional to be the director of an organization like a library than to have a professional take the job. The professional has come up through the ranks and has his or her own ideas on how jobs should be done, and is liable to keep those ideas forever in directing the people under you. I actually wrote a short paper on this subject which was never presented anywhere, but at the time I came, or at the time just before I came here, I was a director of the Washington Library Association. At a meeting held in Seattle of the directors of the association, one of them had proposed that the association go on record to protest the appointment of a non-librarian as director of the library of a state institution, namely Western Washington State College. In preparation for this meeting, I had prepared a short statement in which I outlined my views on this. Of course, it was rather funny because I was going to work there, I knew that. So my views of this were pretty clear to everybody there. I don't remember exactly how I put these things, but in this short statement I made, I pointed to the experience of many academic libraries and many special libraries who had been headed by non-professional librarians very successfully. These people were capable administrators who did not interfere with the day-to-day management of the job. That was the important thing, I felt, about Bob Lawyer's appointment.

TB: He must have been the first one in the state then, in our state, to have been a non-professional to lead a university library.

RC: One of the academic libraries? I think so, I think so. Well I raised this question at the meeting, which was attended among others by Mary Ann Reynolds, who was a member of the, in fact I think at the time she was chairman of the directors of the Washington Library Association. She was the state librarian. And my argument to begin with was that the rule that a public library must be directed by a professional librarian did not apply to academic libraries. That was my understanding of that law. That it meant the Bellingham Public Library, Seattle Public Library, Tacoma Public Library, those by law required professional librarians as their directors. But Mary Ann Reynolds argued that the law applied to any publicly supported institution. But, she agreed with me that there was no point, that it was silly for that organization to protest Lawyer's appointment. And that ended the thing.

TB: What did you consider your own management style to be then when you dealt with the other areas of the library? I mean I know that you were very well-liked by the staff that worked under you, at least the classified staff.

RC: That's very kind of you to say.

TB: Well I, they definitely – I don't want to answer your question for you – they always appreciated, I think they said you walked around every day, you'd find out what was going on and what they needed and were very good, but I...

RC: Well, I think my theory of management anyway was the same as Bob Lawyer's. I expected people to do their jobs and wanted to make it as possible as I could make it for them to do their jobs. I tried always to assume that people wanted to do a good job and I don't recall ever in my working life having anybody working under me who proved otherwise. And yes, I did go around the library every day, talking to people and so on, just seeing how things were going. But I think I didn't interfere or tell people how they should accomplish their jobs. If they needed my advice or help, it was there. We had a remarkable bunch of people working in the library I think.

TB: How did you feel, how was your working relationship between Dr. Lawyer, Mr. Mather and yourself. And I guess I'm thinking what was the role of your morning coffee? Was that sort of like a time when you guys touched base or you were really just having coffee (laughter)?

RC: I always felt it was just a mutually agreeable thing to have coffee together every morning. Of course we talked about the library, but we also talked about a lot of other things. We had a lot of things in common, the three of us. We agreed politically, we had the same taste in music and so on. But of course, there was talk about the library inevitably. In the early days, the coffee break included Herb Hearsey, too; the four of us. And after he retired, it was just the three of us.

TB: Did you have other more formal meetings?

RC: No, I don't recall ever having that. We saw each other frequently during the day. At any time, anybody in the library could come and see Bob Lawyer, as long as he was free at the time. His door was open and of course it was equally open to us. Any time we had problems, anything we needed his thoughts on, we went to him. And if it was something that affected the relationship between public service and technical services, obviously the three of us would talk about it.

TB: We did talk about Dr. Lawyer and Dr. Flora. Did anything change when Dr. Olscamp became president? And of course there were major budget cutbacks during that time so...?

RC: Yes well, the budget problems were *always* there. I can't recall anything specific about the effect of the change in administration on the library except it's obvious that since Lawyer and Flora had a long time relationship, close relationship, a new president was not going to have that kind of relationship with Bob Lawyer. Before Flora left, we had a central administration that consisted of deans. We didn't have an academic vice president. The man who was the academic dean...

TB: Not R.D. Brown?

RC: R.D. Brown, yes. He was a professor of English. He and Bob Lawyer had a very close relationship. With the gradual enlargement of the administration, to the time when we had a provost instead of an academic dean (I don't remember whether that happened under Olscamp or before, I think it must have happened under Olscamp, and I think if I remember, Jim Talbot, came in with Olscamp and he was the first provost), my memory is that from that time forward, Lawyer's real contacts with the administration were with the provost. That continued on with the next administration, which was...

TB: Dr. Ross.

RC: Ross.

TB: And then actually Dr. Lawyer retired soon after Ross came, January of '83.

RC: Is that when Ross came?

TB: Yes, and then Dr. Lawyer apparently announced his retirement in August of '83 and said that was going to retire effective July 1st, 1984.

RC: I remember he had a year off, a kind of sabbatical in 1982. I came back from my vacation, which included a trip to Europe, in the summer of '82, and found that I was acting director of the library. Bob had designated me as acting director for the first half of his year abroad, and Dan for the second half. So I came back and I was stuck with the acting directorship until the end of December '82, then Dan took over. I remember we were both, with our wives, invited to a party at Jim Talbot's house for all the deans, because the library director was a member of the Deans' Council. There were two of us acting directors who were acting deans, so we were up there with the big boys (laughter).

TB: Going back to the library organization when you came, there were a lot of other new hires at the time I think. Marian Alexander was hired in 1970, Marian Ritter...

RC: Marian Ritter was hired about the same time I was. Bob Lawyer had hired her. Another new librarian was Molly Mignon, who was in the reference department. She was new that year. I don't remember whether she was on when I came or whether she came shortly thereafter. Marian Frier, who became Marian Ritter, was hired as the music librarian. And Marian Alexander was hired later that year. I think Bob had met her at an American Library Association conference or something. He had met her, and we were looking for a serials librarian. Bob had made that choice, hoping that Dan would approve. I remember after Dan had met her (I think Dan was on vacation at the time this took place), I remember him coming out of the passage way to meet Bob and me who were going over to coffee, and he came out and kicked his feet together – a little dance – approving, signaling to Bob that he had approved the appointment.

TB: Did Dr. Lawyer hire most of the faculty at that point, or normally did you and Mr. Mather hire the people in your area?

RC: Well normally Dan and I would have been involved and indeed other librarians would have been involved in the appointment, but there were these cases; I think in Marian's case we were looking for a librarian and Bob met her at a conference. That's my memory. Now she would know whether she came in, I don't remember whether she had any interviews with any of the rest of us beforehand or not.

TB: Okay, then the library expansion. What was the library like when you first came? Was it still only the Thiry addition to the library?

RC: The library consisted of the original building and the additions put on in 1962, designed by Paul Thiry of Seattle, which were kind of odd looking wings tacked onto the building with colored glass windows, different colors on each floor. There was a yellow floor, a red floor, and a green floor as I recall, or a blue floor, maybe there were all four of those colors, I just don't remember exactly. These colors were glass inserts in the windows, just about halfway up the window, so that no matter where you were sitting on any of those floors you couldn't really see out a window because the colored glass was in the way. If you really wanted to see what was going on outside you had to bend over or stand up, which was an annoyance to everyone. That also gave rise to the labeling of book trucks which were assigned to each floor, and so there was painted on the ends of the book truck the color and wing, the west wing or east wing. And so you had "West Yellow" or "East Green" painted on the book trucks. It was an ugly building to my taste. But the main reason that the planning of the new addition came about was the need for more space because that space was quickly filled up.

TB: Were there other complaints people had about the building other than not being able to see out and the colors?

RC: I don't remember.

TB: Were there things people really liked about that building?

RC: Of course, by the time I came, I doubt if there were many complaints coming in. The complaints had already been accepted. The plans were drawn for expansion of the building, which meant the destruction of the walls and windows. I don't know what kind of complaints there may have been, if any.

I do know one complaint though that came, but this had nothing to do with the building, it had to do with the tolerance of smoking. We had smoking in the building on one floor of the library, which happened to be the floor that the science collections were on, and it was a member of the chemistry department I remember that registered a complaint about smoking on the science floor. As I recall, the end result was that that was the end of smoking in the library. We were a lot more tolerant of smoking of course in those days. But we still smoked in our private offices. Dan and I were both smokers in those days. We smoked in our coffee in the morning with Bob Lawyer. But both of us gave up smoking I think about the same time. I gave it up because my children had been brainwashed at school and they kept hassling me about it. I had already cut back quite a bit, so I just quit, about 1972. I think Dan quit about that same time. And the library, of course the public areas of the library had long since forbidden smoking.

TB: The second addition was in the process of being planned at the time that you came, and yet at the same time in my mind there were a lot of changes going on because we hired you and Mr. Mather, and it looked to me like we hired several other new librarians. Do you remember was there a lot involved in planning almost as the construction was going on, or making major changes to the plan that had been proposed?

RC: Boy, I really can't remember details like that. There were meetings constantly during the construction because everything that was going on was affecting library operations in some area or another, and so there were meetings every day between the contractor and the architect's representatives, and people from the library, people from the physical plant and the architect's office on the campus. Just constant as the files show, these meetings were continuous. As you can imagine, this kind of construction sooner or later affected everybody working in the library. Every department had to move at least once during the construction phases. The reconstruction, the new construction and the destruction of the old affected, in the end, every room in the library.

TB: I believe phase one was the east side and can you describe a little bit about that, what portion was phase one and what you remember of the shifting?

RC: To me, phase one and phase two were all one thing. I can't remember in any detail how these things came about. What happened was that they had to construct the framework on the outside walls of the new addition before tearing down the old. They had to have some security, outside security of permanent wall before you could take the old walls down. Now somewhere there's probably a record that shows when each wing was done. As far as I'm concerned, it was all one thing going on. The smaller expansion was on the east wing, and the west wing went out considerably further, all the way to the street. But it was the destruction phase, which went on interminably, that was the most disruptive because when they were jack hammering those walls down, you couldn't hear a telephone ring let alone hear what was being said on it. That was pretty hard. Ear plugs were furnished to everybody. I really can't recall in any detail those phases of construction.

TB: You told me before, but it would be nice to get it on the tape here, some of the heroes that you thought were involved, like Carolyn Mendenhall and people who had to deal with a lot of the shifting?

RC: Everybody in the library as I mentioned sooner or later had to move around, but it was the people in charge of the shelving of the books and the periodicals who had the most to do. Carolyn Mendenhall was the stack supervisor who was responsible for the re-shelving of books. At various times they had to pick up whole areas of book collections and move them somewhere else temporarily, before they were moved back into the new stack area that was being developed. Kay Crocker was the periodicals supervisor and had to do the same thing. Of course it was their student assistants who did the physical work under their direction. And then the reference department had to vacate its area. At different times, not only was the whole periodical collection laid out, all the bound volumes on the floor of the big reading room upstairs, but at another time the reference collection was laid out there. To make room for that, all of the tables in that big reading room had been moved into storage. Of course in fact a lot of them had already been put into storage because the education library was in that big reading room. So a lot of the old tables had been moved into storage even before that to make room for the strange place that the education librarian had developed on that floor.

TB: Do you know how long the education library was on that floor?

RC: How long it was?

TB: Yes.

RC: Well, it was there when I came in '69, and as I say I have no idea when it was moved there. But it was moved up to the fifth floor on the west wing on completion of the 1972 addition, and then later it was moved onto the second floor west. But at the time it was moved out of the big reading room, the reading room then was restored. Eventually, many years later, new lighting was put in to replace the hideous fluorescent lighting that Thiry had put in or somebody had put in.

TB: Do you have any other specific memories of any part of the construction project, or relation to the architect's constructive crews, anything else about that addition?

RC: The relationship between the library staff and the contractor's people was pretty good, considering the strains on both sides that naturally existed. I think the people in the library bore up pretty well under the noisy conditions. The contractor's people had to give way at times because they had to make sure that they had as little impact on the people around them as possible. The relationship was good enough that at one point the women staff in the library, a group of them anyway, had gotten together and organized a big lunch for the workmen of the contractor's crew. I don't remember whether this was maybe toward Christmastime or something like that, the holiday season that they wanted to observe this way. But anyway, they had cooked up a pretty nice dinner for these guys, as a result of which the workmen had made up a big banner saying, "Women of Wilson, we love you!" or some words to that effect and had it plastered up I think in one of the main open areas of the library.

We had various people from the outside that worked as liaison. One of them was employed by the architect as I recall, Nels Roselund, who was a structural engineer, came from California I believe. He worked to kind of represent the library in dealing with the contractor. The contractor had a young Englishman named Rodney Broom who functioned in that same way on the contractor's side. These were people that we had daily dealings with. I wish I could remember the name of the foreman of Cawdry and Vemo Contractors who was the general foreman over all the specialized crews who was a really fine old pro. Who was later on in life after this job was killed on a construction site through some unfortunate accident. But he was a really good man.

TB: What about Bassetti? Did you have very much to do with Fred Bassetti?

RC: Yes, we saw a fair amount of Fred Bassetti, though his meetings with us were more social -- just to touch base with the people who were going to live in the house he was building. But he was of course a very interesting guy. Lawyer was the sort who could really talk to people like Bassetti. We had good relations with Bassetti.

TB: So basically was the building additions process a positive time? I mean obviously there are always interruptions, but I mean after that, mostly your relations with the people involved were positive?

RC: Oh yes. Yes, I think so.

TB: What about the dedication? What are your memories of the dedication and those festivities? I know that Senator Magnuson came to be a speaker, which is pretty impressive to me.

RC: Yes, he and a member of his staff came. He [Magnuson] sat down at Bob Lawyer's desk while the rest of us, and some other guests were sitting in the conference room adjacent, and he was writing up his notes for his talk. While this was going on, the staff member who was with him was coming on very strong to Sue Rossiter, the library secretary, who was a very attractive young woman. We just had the impression that here was a guy who used his influence through his job with the senator to make contact with whatever he wanted. He didn't get anywhere with Sue though (laughter).

TB: After Bassetti I know there was still some other building changes that in '78, '79, you, I believe, oversaw, quite a development of the fifth floor. You changed it from being education to special collections area. Any special memories of that?

RC: Well, I just remember that we had moved the education library out of there to much better quarters, more suitable quarters on the second floor. This was really a means of bringing together a bunch of things that were in the library into what amounted to a new department of special collections. That's about all I remember, I mean it wasn't that big a deal.

TB: Had there been a real archives area before? I know that Mr. Hearsey really just saved a lot of stuff.

RC: That's basically what it was, yes. So this kind of formalized the existence of that collection of library archives.

TB: What about just other people you thought were special friends of the library? I know you've mentioned Don Cole before...?

RC: Well Don Cole was during the Ross' administration, I don't remember how long Don Cole had been Vice President for Finance, but he was really an asset to the university and he was on the library's side, if you want to put it that way, on a lot of things. I remember him being over for coffee in the director's lounge.

So you're talking about support of the library from elsewhere on campus? I think Jim Talbot was certainly supportive of the library.

Back in the old days, before personnel became as all-powerful as it became, we had good relations with Theresa Olbrantz in the personnel office. I guess what I'm really getting at is that over the course of time, bureaucracy got bigger and bigger on the campus and you tended to feel that you were losing control over your own operation because the personnel department had its fingers in everything. And it was particularly noticeable in dealing with student help. We used to hire our students or fire them if they weren't capable, that hardly every happened. They started the work-study program and personnel got involved in that and...I'm trying to remember the details of that. We tended to hire a student when the student was a freshman, and as far as we were concerned, if the student was satisfactory and wanted to continue, he would be there in the library until he graduated, or she graduated. Well personnel was inclined to want to take the work-study people out to give them other kinds of work-study experience, not just be stuck in the library. Well we got people working in the library who *wanted* to work in the library. Most of students who came here really wanted to work in the library. It was a desirable kind of job. We had this struggle as I recall with personnel over pulling people out because they wanted this "work-study experience." To us, study was one part of their university experience that they got in the classroom and in their non-working hours. The work was a job that paid them something to help put them through school, but it didn't have anything to do with study, it was a job to do. The personnel department's philosophy of work-study was different. Then it came up as a matter of budget. The work-study people were paid out of a federal fund, whereas our regular student help was paid out of our own budget. Well there came a time when the work-study people were to be given a raise in the minimum wage, as I recall it was that way. But the students on the regular payroll were not getting it because the state wasn't raising the minimum wage, something like that. But we had already budgeted for our library help, on the library's budget, a raise for the regular students as well as the work-study. I remember this came up as a major protest that we couldn't have students doing exactly the same work and discriminate against those who were on the state payroll, against those who were on the work-study payroll, whichever way it worked. As I recall, because we had budgeted, and our budget was there to cover it, we were able to get away with it. I wish I had a copy, I remember sending a memo to Mary Robinson at the time, protesting this. But anyway, that was the kind of thing that became a real aggravation as politics and everything else entered into it.

TB: I know that the 1970s had a big RIF [Reduction in Force], well not only a RIF but major budget cuts in terms of serials or something like in '74; do you remember anything about that? I'm not asking a very good question because I don't know very much about it, I just know that when I started in '77, there was lots of talk about serial cancellations from I think it must have been '74.

RC: No, I can't remember. I do remember, I think we managed not to have to lay anybody off. I really don't recall canceling serials, maybe we did.

TB: I could have something wrong in my memory, because again it was before me, but I worked in serials later and I kind of remember there were some things that would always kind of went back to that.

RC: I just don't remember. That's why I wish Dan were here. He would have a better memory of that. Even though I would have been involved in it, I can't help.

TB: That's fine. What are your last comments, anything we haven't touched on that you'd like to speak to or...?

RC: I'll probably think of all kinds of things later!

TB: Well we can always do an appendix!

RC: I don't think I've been of very much help.

TB: No, you have, everybody has a story.

RC: I guess I would just say that by the time I left the library administration I was ready to leave because it had begun to be too much the same thing year in and year out, or biennium in and biennium out, worrying about the budget. How do we keep going? How do we maintain a level of service that's satisfactory? How do we maintain a level of book buying that is needed to support the educational program of the university? And it was getting tougher and tougher. I have no idea where you are now, but...

TB: I think we're in a lot of the same positions. I just know it was interesting to talk about the growth that happened while you were here. This is using the school catalogue, but in the 1969-70, they said there were 185,000 catalogued volumes and microforms, and 100,000 additional state and federal documents and other special collections, and 2,500 current periodical subscriptions. When you retired in 1987 then, there were 500,000 volumes of books and periodicals over a million units of microforms and 400 current periodicals and newspapers; a pretty incredible growth, at least in my mind, during the time that you were here.

RC: Did you say 400?

TB: 4,000, I'm sorry. 4,000 current periodicals. That's 1,500 more than they said we had when you came. So you definitely presided over a period of growth.

RC: Yes, we did. And of course, we put off getting involved in...

TB: Automation?

RC: Automation. Of course we already had our IBM system for checking books out and so on. But we felt, this was the joint feeling of Lawyer and Mather and Cross, that we should be building up the collection as the primary source of growth in the institution. But sooner or later of course, it was inevitable that we automate. But we still had the card catalogue at the time I retired!

TB: We didn't get rid of that until '95.

RC: I know, it took a while. Well, I guess it's a lot of work to replace it. Now, of course, the library is a strange place to me. I'm satisfied that we did the right thing at the time, that we didn't jump into automation too quickly because it would have been costly. It would have interfered with the continuing development of the collection because we didn't have any extra money to put in it. And I think going into it at that time would have meant inevitably more changes in the future. Of course, once you're in it, you keep having to change I guess.

TB: But it's true, we haven't migrated systems. We went with Innovative in 1995 and we're still with Innovative. And I think people who started, perhaps started earlier, a lot of those systems didn't stick around and people had to migrate to other systems. So I think personally that we went with a good one that has obviously serviced our needs now for eight years, which I think in the technology world is pretty good.

RC: Yes, that's right.

TB: Anything else?

RC: No, I'm afraid this hasn't been of very much help to you but...

TB: It's been great. I appreciate it and thank you very much.

RC: Well you're very welcome.