Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Library School Oral History Series

Fredric J. Mosher

REFERENCE AND RARE BOOKS: THREE DECADES AT UC BERKELEY'S SCHOOL OF LIBRARIANSHIP, 1950-1981

With Introductions by
Grete W. (Frugé) Cubie
and
Michael K. Buckland

Interviews Conducted by
Laura McCreery
in 1999

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral history is a method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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Grete W. (Frugé) Cubie, Fredric J. Mosher, Evelyn Mosher, and Alexander Cubie on the UC Berkeley campus, March 1991.

Cataloging Information

MOSHER, Fredric J. (1914-1999) Librarian

Reference and Rare Books: Three Decades at UC Berkeley's School of Librarianship, 1950-1981, 2000, xiii, 201 pp.

Family background, education in North Dakota; doctoral study at the University of Illinois; postwar library studies at the University of Chicago graduate library school; head of reference at Chicago's Newberry Library, late 1940s; to UC Berkeley's School of Librarianship, 1950: impressions, loyalty oath controversy, teaching reference and bibliography from 1950-1981, comments on deanship of J. Periam Danton, others; intellectual freedom and the Fiske Report of 1956 on censorship in California libraries; 1960s, 1970s, deanship of Raynard C. Swank, Institute of Library Research, Fulbright in Denmark, the Free Speech Movement; faculty views of computers for librarianship; interest in the history of printing, rare books, and the history of books and libraries.

Introductions by Grete W. (Frugé) Cubie, Senior Lecturer Emerita, School of Librarianship, UC Berkeley; and Michael K. Buckland, Professor, School of Information Management and Systems, UC Berkeley.

Interviewed 1999 by Laura McCreery for the Library School Oral History Series. The Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

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Alumni Association of the School of Librarianship and
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In Memory of Patricia Anderson Farquar:

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Marlene B. Riley
Juanita S. Vidalin

In memory of Fredric J. Mosher:

Ricki A. Blau
Brigitte W. Dickinson
Charlotte A. Tyler

San Francisco Chronicle

June 17, 1999

Fredric J. Mosher

Fredric J. Mosher, professor emeritus in the School of Information & Management Systems at the University of California at Berkeley, died May 30 of a heart attack at his home in Kensington. He was 85.

Mr. Mosher taught in the department from 1950 – when it was called the School of Librarianship – until his retirement in 1981.

He headed instruction in reference and bibliography and taught the history of books and printing. His research centered on the history of books, printing, publishing and early forms of bibliographical description.

Mr. Mosher also was a Fulbright Lecturer at the Royal School of Librarianship in Copenhagen in 1963-64 and worked on the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue in the British Library in London in 1977 and 1978.

Among his publications was "A Guide to Danish Bibliography," which he co-authored with Erland Munch-Petersen, published in Copenhagen in 1965. He also compiled, with Archer Taylor, "The Bibliographical History of Anonyma and Pseudonuma."

While in retirement, he was a major contributor of scholarly articles on the subject of American printing to the revised edition of the "Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens," the leading encyclopedia on the history of books.

The Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office recently recorded his biography. "Fredric Mosher was a dedicated teacher who prepared thoroughly for class and charmed his students with his wry wit and dry sense of humor," said Michael Buckland, a colleague of Mr. Mosher and former dean of the school.

Born in Oakes, N.D., Mr. Mosher received his bachelor's degree in 1934 and his master's degree in English the following year from the University of North Dakota.

He earned a Bachelor of Library Sciences degree from the University of Chicago in 1948. In 1950, he received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Illinois.

Before arriving at UC Berkeley as an instructor in 1950, he taught English at the University of Illinois from 1936 to 1943. He then served in the U.S. Army as a sergeant from 1943 to 1946. Later that year he was hired at the Newberry Library in Chicago as an apprentice librarian.

Mr. Mosher is survived by his wife of 62 years, Evelyn Mosher of Kensington, and his sons, John Randolph Mosher of Tacoma, Wash., and Allan Mosher of Youngstown, Ohio, and three granddaughters.

A memorial service for Mr. Mosher has been held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Berkeley.

Contributions in his honor may be made to the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

TABLE OF CONTENTS--Fredric J. Mosher

SERIES PREFACE--Library School Oral History Series

The Library School Oral History Series documents the history of librarianship education at the University of California, Berkeley. Through transcribed and edited oral history interviews, the series preserves personal recollections of those involved with Berkeley's graduate library school since the 1930s. In the process, the interviews touch on the history of libraries in the Bay Area and California and on remarkable changes to the profession of librarianship over time.

Certain lines of inquiry are central to all the interviews. What were the changes to the School of Librarianship (later the School of Library and Information Studies) over the years? How were decisions made, and by whom? Historically, what is the proper role of and training for librarians? How has that changed? What, in the opinion of those interviewed, is the public's view of librarianship?

Library education at Berkeley spans nearly a full century. In 1901 Melvil Dewey, founding director of the New York State Library School and author of the Dewey Decimal classification system for books, wrote to University of California President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, encouraging him to start a library school on the West Coast. Berkeley offered the first summer courses in librarianship in 1902, and summer training continued intermittently until 1918, when library education joined the curriculum of the regular academic year.

In 1921, a Department of Librarianship was authorized for the College of Letters and Science, with instruction to begin in 1922. The state library school in Sacramento, which had offered courses since 1914, closed its doors in 1921, turning over the training of librarians to the University of California.

In 1926, Berkeley's departmental program became a separate graduate School of Librarianship, which existed until 1946 under the leadership of the founding dean, Sydney B. Mitchell. In the early years, with a staff of two core faculty members, Edith M. Coulter and Della J. Sisler, Mitchell offered both a graduate Certificate in Librarianship and a second-year course leading to the Master of Arts degree. Generally the school accepted only fifty students each year from among several hundred applicants.

In 1933, under new accreditation standards, the American Library Association named Berkeley a "Type I" school, one of only five so designated because of its graduate degree offerings. In 1937 an endowment grant of $150,000 from the Carnegie Corporation assured the school's place among American educational institutions.

After World War II, during the deanship of J. Periam Danton (1946-1961), the school grew dramatically in size of faculty and number of students, while expanding and specializing every area of its programs. The graduate certificate was replaced in 1947 with a Bachelor of Library Science degree (BLS) and in 1955 with a Master of Library Science degree (MLS); Ph.D. and Doctor of Library Science (DLS) degree programs were inaugurated in 1954; and the school developed its own Library School Library as a branch of the main Doe Library.

With the deanship of Raynard Coe Swank (1963-1970) came the school's first attention to computers and automation for libaries, an issue which eventually found its way into the curriculum and was taken up also through the school's Institute of Library Research. Swank's leadership culminated in the school's move from its quarters inside Doe Library to the venerable South Hall, one of two original buildings of the Berkeley campus (and the only one remaining). Throughout the seventies and eighties, under the leadership of Patrick Wilson and Michael Buckland, significant changes came to the curriculum and the faculty, as reflected in the eventual change of name to the School of Library and Information Studies.

In the late eighties and nineties, the school and its curricula were evaluated as part of a larger review of the campus and its mission as a research university. The school had only one permanent dean during this period, Robert C. Berring, who served half time from 1986 to 1989. Much of the assessment took place under a series of acting deans. Eventually the School of Library and Information Studies ceased admitting new students, while the campus administration contemplated whether it had a future.

Although the threat of complete dissolution was beaten back, in part owing to the efforts of alumni and their "Save Our School" campaign, the school was, in effect, compelled to close down its operations. It reopened as the School of Information Management and Systems (SIMS), which graduated its first master's students in 1999. Although a few faculty members have remained, the new school's curriculum bears little resemblance to the old, as it offers an electronically based, rather than print-oriented, training. SIMS did take over the library school's endowment and its location in South Hall. As of January 2000, SIMS also administers the alumni association that incorporates graduates of the former school. To date it has not sought accreditation from the American Library Association.

Meanwhile, schools of librarianship across the country have closed, changed their missions, or been subsumed under other graduate schools. The library systems devised so carefully by nineteenth and twentieth century founders have given way--in academic, public, and special libraries of every kind--to new ways of recording and managing collections and providing service to patrons. The Regional Oral History

Office's Library School Oral History Series provides a strong narrative complement to written records of a key educational institution at a crucial time. With traditional education for librarianship fast disappearing, this series, like ROHO's broader University History Series, can serve as an enlightening case study of changes in education occurring throughout the United States.

A significant gift from Morley S. Farquar in memory of his wife, Patricia Anderson Farquar '53, allowed this series to begin in the fall of 1998. Additional gifts from the Class of 1931 Oral History Endowment and the Alumni Association of the former School of Librarianship/Library and Information Studies, along with important individual donations, have further supported the collection of interviews.

A key to creating this series has been the longevity of the individuals selected to be narrators. The first four interviewees for the series were born in 1914 or earlier and were between eighty-five and ninety years old at the time of their interviews. Two of them were students at the school in the 1930s, and their recollections shed light on the founding faculty members. Two of them had substantial experience in California public libraries. Three had long careers on the School of Librarianship faculty. Other narrators in the series will add their experiences as students, faculty members, and deans. Taken together, these oral histories will offer a rich history of librarianship education throughout the twentieth century and beyond.

Special thanks go to the wise and thoughtful team of advisers for the Library School Oral History Series: Michael K. Buckland, Julia J. Cooke, Mary Kay Duggan, Debra L. Hansen, Robert D. Harlan, J. R. K. Kantor (who also proofread every transcript), Corliss S. Lee, and Charlotte Nolan. Special thanks go also to those whose ideas, assistance, and goodwill helped the series come to life: Willa K. Baum, Anne G. Lipow, Christine Orr, Shannon Page, Suzanne Riess, and Leticia Sanchez.

The Regional Oral History Office was established in 1954 to augment through tape-recorded memoirs the Library's materials on the history of California and the West. Copies of all interviews are available for research use in The Bancroft Library and in the UCLA Department of Special Collections. The office is under the direction of Willa K. Baum, Division Head, and the administrative direction of Charles B. Faulhaber, James D. Hart Director of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Laura McCreery, Project Director
Library School Oral History Series

August 2000
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Library School Oral History Series

October 2000

Grete W. (Frugé) Cubie, *A Career in Public Libraries and at UC Berkeley's School of Librarianship, 1937-1975*, 2000

J. Periam Danton, *Dean and Professor at UC Berkeley's School of Librarianship, 1946-1976*, 2000

Fredric J. Mosher, *Reference and Rare Books: Three Decades at UC Berkeley's School of Librarianship, 1950-1981*, 2000

Flora Elizabeth Reynolds, *"A Dukedom Large Enough": Forty Years in Northern California's Public and Academic Libraries, 1936-1976*, 2000

Oral Histories in Process

Fay M. Blake
Robert D. Harlan
Patrick G. Wilson

INTRODUCTION by Grete W. (Frugé) Cubie

Upon Edith Coulter's retirement the School of Librarianship waited a year before Fred Mosher came from the Newberry Library, Chicago, to join an expanding faculty at Berkeley. The appointment was well worth the waiting because the school gained a worthy successor to Miss Coulter in the teaching of Reference and Bibliography. At the same time Fred's arrival made possible continuation in the curriculum of a course taught by Della Sisler until her retirement: History of Books and Printing. It was offered by Fred and the colleagues who shared with and succeeded him during the many years when librarianship, in its encompassing sense, made up the school's curriculum.

When Fred Mosher came to Berkeley in 1950 his preparation for these subjects was the best. At the Newberry Library his humanistic mind had been nourished and he had found his profession as librarian, teacher, scholar. Rapidly advanced from apprentice to head of reference, he came to Berkeley to share with his students his own fulfillment and pleasure in good reference service. Knowledgeably and with meticulous thoroughness, he went about developing a course that would send graduates into the field with confidence and competence in realizing their expectations. Fred had helped them see the rewards, the stimulation of the search and its often unexpected turns, the exercise of resourcefulness, the sometimes amusing results. Like Edith Coulter before him, he relished such recollections with a chuckle and a slowly spreading smile.

The ready acceptance by his colleagues of Fred as head of a team of reference teachers owed much to his attitude and manner. His reasonableness, his appreciation of what others brought and gave, his personal modesty matching strong convictions--such qualities invited and sustained cooperation. As new teachers joined the team during Fred's more that thirty years of active service, some whose doctoral research he had supervised, his beneficient influence continued. Fred was, and still is, gratefully remembered by many graduates who made a satisfying career in librarianship. Reference librarians among them remember him with special fondness.

When the Mosher family was on its way home from Fred's Fulbright lectureship at the Royal School of Librarianship in Copenhagen (1964-65), they enjoyed some days of travel in Germany, France, and Belgium. For Fred there was a special opportunity to visit the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz and the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp. It was his day in the home and printing house of Christophe Plantin that gave him very special pleasure and was at the top of his traveler's tale when he returned to Berkeley. He had savored the experience of being in

the house where humanists had visited and been published, where all was still intact in its totality and the presses in working order after more than 300 years of use. In the first days of Fred's return to the school there was much talk of this before he got to telling us what else had happened in his year away.

Before long Fred found a way of helping students enrolled in the History of Books and Printing course to realize the meaning of "the art of printing." Together with Roger Levenson of San Francisco he found an 1861 Caslon Albion press to install in the basement of South Hall. Here students experimented with types and typesetting and the whole printing process under the watchful eye of Roger Levenson. They secured manuscripts of modest size and printed them in limited editions under the imprint "The South Hall Press, University of California."

For his recreational and private enjoyment Fred also installed a handpress and well-stocked type cabinet in his study; here he printed gifts for his family and friends. I was the lucky recipient of one, a box of elegant stationery, a retirement present printed while I was traveling in Europe after having taught my last class in 1975. I returned engaged and shortly to be married to Alex Cubie, and so with laughter and a reference to Murphy's Law, Fred brought his gift, fresh from the press but with a soon-to-be outdated name. After it was properly adapted, I enjoyed using it with hundreds of reminders of Fred's intention.

Of all the years I knew Fred I like most to remember him as family man and friend. My memory spans the time from his arrival in Berkeley with his wife Evelyn and their son Randy to an evening's telephone chat between friends only days before Fred so suddenly left us.

When he came to the school it took no time at all for friendship to flourish between the young Mosher family and Ethelyn Markley, a friendship in which I was happily included. Shared views of what matters most in librarianship drew Fred and Ethelyn together, and an affinity in understanding the nature and worth of their respective subjects. They were equally committed to passing on that sense to their students, and as teachers they soon developed a mutual appreciation and regard.

They both had the gift of friendship in great measure. The Moshers' warm welcome into their home soon made it thrive. Ethelyn and I were invited to Evelyn's delicious meals, informally after work and on festive occasions to honor a person or a holiday. The serendipity of Fred and Ethelyn's shared birthday did its part. February nineteenth was their day and was celebrated at the Moshers' with hardly a year missed while Ethelyn lived, and then only when one or the other was away. Evelyn set an exquisite table with gleaming silver, sparkling crystal, and her treasured Danish china, blue on white. Fred's birthday

wish was the same each year, for a prune cake baked with an old family recipe; and each year Evelyn carried it to the table, candles blazing in numbers of some combined birthday formula. Fred would go to the small organ to tune us up for "Happy Birthday."

With my marriage to Alex Cubie the friendship expanded, and with our move to Santa Cruz visiting took on a new dimension. North or south, it brought leisurely days together to enjoy shared interests. Music stood high among them. The Moshers' home on Arlington Avenue had a "music room," perfectly equipped for listening and viewing. Here Fred would bring Alex up to date on his collection of recordings and select what we would all enjoy together, especially when there was a tape of their son Allan's most recent concert performance. As Allan Mosher's career as music teacher and performer unfolded it was his parents' joy to "attend" his latest performance. They had the best possible incentive for taking early advantage of what sound and video technology can bring to the home.

Visits in Santa Cruz gave us outdoor pleasure in summertime, of meals in the garden and walks along the ocean. With fall and winter came holidays and arrival of the Monarch butterfly in Natural Bridges State Park. I look back on Thanksgivings together on Fair Avenue when, dinner preparations made and the turkey roasting, we would walk to the eucalyptus grove where the butterflies spend the winter. Luckily weather was favorable for midday sun to fill the sky with whirring wings, orange on luminous blue. The butterflies became the symbol of Santa Cruz for Fred, who never failed to mention them in letters.

Fred had ways of keeping in touch with friends besides visiting and letter writing. Sometimes the desire to share found tangible expression. Alex's collection of music recordings is enriched by gifts from Fred who, having added a disc or tape of a much-enjoyed performance to his collection, wanted Alex to have one; and a parcel went off in the mail. Once a box of apples arrived to let us taste the "Jonagolds" that had just appeared on the market and on the Moshers' table.

One kind of parcel I remember with particular warmth; it was addressed to me at intervals over many years. When Alex and I took up part-time residence abroad, the kind of printed or typewritten documents that appear in desk baskets ceased to come from South Hall. Ever the alert librarian and thoughtful friend, Fred spontaneously decided to keep me informed by sending what he thought I should read. The parcels tended to be bulky but kept coming, and I owe it to Fred's faithful effort that I did not lose touch with the library school.

When I think back on Fred's last years, I am glad for two events that enriched his life to the end. The first was the joy of attending a performance of Haydn's "The Creation" in Hertz Hall, April 1998, listening to his son's bass-baritone voice a quarter century after

Allan's first appearance on that stage before going east for his conservatory education.

I am glad too that Fred was granted time to enter with zest and finish with satisfaction his series of recorded interviews on the School of Librarianship. Only a few days before his death Fred and I talked on the phone and touched on our just-finished sessions. We heartily agreed on having enjoyed them. With thoughts of Fred, and more thoughts so recently shared, I am glad for having been asked how I remember him.

Grete W. Cubie
Senior Lecturer Emerita
University of California, Berkeley

Santa Cruz, California
July 2000

INTRODUCTION by Michael K. Buckland

Fred Mosher had already been at Berkeley for twenty-five years when, in January 1976, I arrived from Indiana to join what was then called the School of Librarianship. A Graduate Council review committee chaired by John Wheeler had issued a report on the school in 1974. The Wheeler Report urged a broadening of the school's scope. The school was advised to extend its interest in library services to concern itself with information services in other, additional institutional contexts and to be more concerned with what was then called "Information Science." I was recruited as dean with instructions from the Chancellor's Office to modernize the school and to implement the recommendations of the Wheeler Report.

There had been serious and unpleasant disagreements among the faculty and it was very clear that the level of conflict had to be reduced. Fortunately, the faculty themselves had also come to the same conclusion. It helped that I came in as a complete outsider and with quite varied experience. Both factors made it easier to establish rapport with the varied points of view.

Fred Mosher had quite specific views on how and what to teach. He emphasized giving students first hand experience with important reference books, he valued paying attention to the historical development of the field, and he considered the foreign language requirement for doctoral students to be important. But for a decade the pressure had been to move in quite different directions. Computers and information science began to consume large amounts of faculty positions and school resources. His views on what should be taught and how had been losing ground.

He had come to Berkeley with quite specific research projects and he worked hard for many years on them. Unfortunately, in two of his areas of interest he found himself upstaged by other authors who published more limited studies on the same topics, apparently unaware that Fred had been working on them, and so, for that and other reasons, his publications were fewer than his work would ordinarily have warranted.

My impression was that Fred had felt that his contributions and his work had been somewhat under-appreciated for a considerable period of time, but he always treated me very well and he was a constructive influence in the redirection of the school.

As we discussed what new opportunities there might be in professional education for database administration, records management,

archives, corporate information management, and other areas, Fred took a positive stance. Anyone who went to work in these areas, he declared, would have to have the service-oriented skills of a well-trained reference librarian and, so far as he could see, they would almost certainly need to be fluent in finding government information. Such students, he said, would need to take his courses whatever else they might do. It was this constructive attitude by Fred Mosher and others that enabled the school to make a significant strategic re-orientation without the battles, bitterness, and entrenchment that can so easily accompany efforts at change.

Fred also took the initiative to be supportive in practical ways. He thought it important, when I arrived, that I should get to know retired members of the faculty and so, soon after my arrival, he and his wife Evelyn arranged a dinner party in their home, carefully seating me between Grete Frugé and Anne Ethelyn Markley. In 1988 my wife and I left Berkeley for a year abroad and rented out our house. A few days before we left, the arrangements we had made for our son, Anthony, to have somewhere to stay in Berkeley during his college breaks collapsed. Fred immediately invited Anthony to stay in the Mosher home, which he did with enjoyment during his 1989 spring break. We remain very grateful.

By 1977 he was eligible for sabbatical leave and I urged him to make the most of it. It proved possible to arrange for him to be attached to the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue team at the British Library in London, which gave him the wonderful privilege of roaming the library's stacks. This year abroad was very fruitful and resulted in publications and promotion to full professor.

It was very good to see Fred productively and usefully occupied with his research during his retirement years, unfortunately interrupted by failing health.

Part of his legacy is in his work on intellectual freedom in the 1950s, part of it is in his specialized publications, and another part is in grateful students. He is often spoken of fondly when I encounter alumni.

At his memorial service, as several people paid tribute to Fred's positive, resilient attitude, his Christian faith, his caring for others, and that distinctive smile that accompanied his dry sense of humor, I reflected that we should all hope to be so fondly remembered.

Michael K. Buckland
Professor
University of California, Berkeley

April 10, 2000
Berkeley, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

During the planning stages of the Library School Oral History Series, several names came up repeatedly as "must-do" interviews. These narrators were named by their colleagues as essential to any comprehensive history of the School of Librarianship (later School of Library and Information Studies).

Fredric J. Mosher was one of these. In his thirty-one years of teaching, from 1950 to 1981, Professor Mosher oversaw the school's instruction in the pivotal area of reference and bibliography. (His predecessor for these subjects was Professor Edith M. Coulter, one of three people who made up the school's first faculty.) He was also a specialist in the history of books, printing, and libraries.

When I went to Professor Mosher's Kensington home in February of 1999 to introduce myself and the oral history project, I discovered an eager collaborator with a quiet demeanor and a ready smile. Though we sat in the living room at first, we soon chose his downstairs office as the site for our interview sessions. The cozy room would muffle harsh background noises on my tape, and he would have ready access to his bookcases and filing cabinets.

We did not commence interviews until March, as the Mosher home was to be a flurry of family activity until then. Both Professor Mosher and his wife of sixty-two years, Evelyn, would celebrate their eighty-fifth birthdays during February, and his sister Carolyn in Seattle was having a birthday as well. There would be visits from his two sons, Randy and Allan, and the grandchildren.

Professor Mosher sat for oral history interviews from mid-March to the end of April. After a while we settled on Friday mornings as our regular time. Often we worked to the accompaniment of spring rainstorms, and once it poured so hard outside that the sound came through on the tape.

During interviews, we sat at opposite ends of the large couch in Professor Mosher's office, with the tape recorder between us and all our papers spread on nearby surfaces. He always had a few pertinent things to show me from the neat piles he had arranged on the daybed nearby. Between tape sides, he always got up and stretched his legs; he disliked sitting still for long periods.

Professor Mosher's interviews proved thoughtful and appealing. He spoke slowly and deliberately, and he had an unusual capacity to follow my line of inquiry and explore it fully without wandering or jumping

ahead. I came to admire this combination of openness and discipline, and I was delighted by his playful sense of humor.

At the end of eight sessions, we had recorded twelve and a half hours of tape and covered the main periods and issues of his career. Although we touched only occasionally on personal things, Professor Mosher revealed himself as a gentle person whose foremost priorities rested with family and church. In counterpoint, such topics as intellectual freedom brought out in him a forceful manner and strong views.

On May 28, 1999, four weeks after the interviews came to an end, I phoned Professor Mosher to say the tapes were not yet transcribed and to ask his patience during the long editing phase of the project. Though he was glad to know where things stood, he assured me he did not mind delays. I encouraged him to think about who should write the introduction to the manuscript and to select a photo of himself as well.

Sadly, that very weekend, Professor Mosher suffered a heart attack and passed away. Two of his colleagues, Michael K. Buckland and Robert D. Harlan, were kind enough to help with the review of interviews so this manuscript could be produced posthumously. The text was edited only lightly, and no significant changes or deletions were made. All of us who were involved have tried to uphold Professor Mosher's high standards. Now that we have committed his words to paper, we hope this memoir will find the audience it deserves.

Laura McCreery, Interviewer/Editor

March 2000
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Regional Oral History Office
Room 486 The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name FREDRIC JOHN MOSHER

Date of birth FEBRUARY 19, 1914 Birthplace OAKES, NORTH DAKOTA

Father's full name FRED SMITH MOSHER

Occupation INSURANCE AGENT Birthplace ALLEGAN, MICHIGAN

Mother's full name GEORGIE ZERILDA IRELAND

Occupation HOUSEWIFE Birthplace

Your spouse EVELYN VARLAND MOSHER

Occupation HOUSEWIFE Birthplace ARTESIAN, SOUTH DAK

Your children JOHN RANDOLPH MOSHER, ALLAN ROBERT MO

Where did you grow up? OAKES, NORTH DAKOTA, GRAND FORKS, NORTH

Present community KENSINGTON, CALIFORNIA

Education A.B. (1934), A.M. (1935) IN ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA; B.L.S. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (~~B.L.S.~~ 1948), Ph.D., IN ENGLISH, UNIV OF

Occupation(s) UNIVERSITY TEACHER, LIBRARIAN

Areas of expertise REFERENCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY, HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION AND LIBRARIES

Other interests or activities INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM; FULBRIGHT LECTURER, COPENHAGEN 1963-64; CONTRIBUTOR, LEXIKON DES GESAMTEN BUCHWESENS, SECOND EDITION 1984-

Organizations in which you are active

INTERVIEW WITH FREDRIC J. MOSHER

I FAMILY BACKGROUND, CHILDHOOD, EARLY EDUCATION

[Interview 1: March 15, 1999] ##[1]

Grandparents, Parents, and Early Life in North Dakota, From 1914

McCreery: Good morning. It seems to me that you have just had a significant birthday, if I recall from our last conversation.

Mosher: Yes. My birthday is February 19 and I was eighty-five. Born in 1914.

McCreery: Congratulations.

Mosher: Thank you.

McCreery: Let's start right there, then, with having you tell me a little bit about when and where you were born.

Mosher: I was born in Oakes, North Dakota. This town was founded because two railroad lines intersected there, and therefore it was a good place for traveling men to live. There was a lot of that. When the town was founded the only way of traveling long distances was by railroad.

I was born above the movie theater in Oakes, North Dakota, and I've been a movie fan all my life. I don't know whether that has anything to do with it or not. [laughter]

We soon moved to a little rented house in Oakes, and I lived in Oakes until we moved for one year to Minneapolis when I was four and five. Then we moved back to Oakes again and

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[1]## This symbol indicates that a tape or tape segment has begun or ended. A guide to the tapes follows the transcript.

stayed there until I was in junior in high school, when we--this isn't what you want to know right now, is it?

McCreery: This is fine, actually. Perhaps you could just tell me a little bit about your grandparents, if you know much about them. You can start on either side of the family.

Mosher: I saw the only living grandparents I had only once [each]. Both my grandmothers were dead by the time I was born. My maternal grandfather was John Ireland. He had served in the Civil War as a drummer boy, and he was a farmer most of his life. He visited us, just one or two days, on his way from Minnesota to Oregon, where he lived the rest of his life. And I saw him only that once, when I was a just a baby--one or two years old, maybe a little less. I'm not sure.

We went to Allegan, Michigan, where my father [Fred Smith Mosher] had been born and where his father was living then, and that's the only time I saw the paternal grandfather, Albert Mosher. He was born in Vermont and had a butcher shop in Allegan. When I saw him he lived on a farm near Allegan, I think. That's all very dim in my memory.

McCreery: Why did you see him only the one time?

Mosher: Because he was living in Allegan, Michigan, which is a long way from Oakes, North Dakota. And we didn't travel easily those days. Besides me, I have an older brother and a younger sister, and that would mean taking three children along on the train. It would be quite a trip.

McCreery: You mentioned Oakes was a good place for traveling people to live, and I know your father sold insurance.

Mosher: Yes, that's right.

McCreery: Is that how you ended up there?

Mosher: No, he didn't sell insurance then. He sold insurance later on. He was a traveling salesman when I was born. He traveled for a farm implement company, the Moline Plow Company. And he had most of southern and western North Dakota as his territory, so he would be gone from Monday through Friday most of the time and only home on weekends. And of course it wasn't long after I was born when he got a car and wasn't dependent upon the trains any longer. I suppose that's why Oakes, North Dakota never became much of a town. It had around 1,000, 1,200 inhabitants when I was born, and I don't think it's much more than a couple thousand now.

McCreery: What about that year when you were four or five that you left Oakes? What were the circumstances of that?

Mosher: My father went to the head office, the Minneapolis office, of the Moline Plow Company as an assistant manager, and so the whole family went. My brother went to school and I went to kindergarten in Minneapolis when I was between four and five.

My father did not get along with the manager of the office, and I think he quit. And he went back to Oakes, and there he first started selling insurance with an insurance agency in Oakes. But this was the time of the post-World War I Depression, and it hit particularly hard in such places as North Dakota. They depended largely on wheat, the price of which was not so high.

The insurance did not work out, and Dad got a job with the National Biscuit Company selling cookies. He traveled around North Dakota selling the cookies of the Nabisco. We thought that was great because the sample cases he had we could eat when he came back. [laughter] That was every week. But that didn't last long, either, and he got back into the employment of the Moline Plow Company and stayed with them until the Depression, 1929.

McCreery: What kind of memories do you have of your dad from when you were growing up?

Mosher: Well, I felt that I had to do what he told me to do. He was never--there was no corporal punishment involved that I can remember. I'm really kind of puzzled about him--not puzzled, I guess, but I really don't know him so very well because he was gone so much during those formative years. He was sort of a father authority figure that didn't play much part in my everyday life.

McCreery: That was very common, of course, for many people. Tell me something about your mother and where she came from.

Mosher: Mother [Georgie Ireland Mosher] was one of eleven children. Her mother had come from Norway as an infant and she married John Ireland, I'm not sure when. She had eleven children and then died of tuberculosis when she was in her early forties.

At that time my mother was in the fifth grade and sort of in the middle of the group, of the family, and she had to stay home--quit school--and take care of the family. She was eleven years old. And of course, the death of a mother was an awful blow to her, which she never really got over.

McCreery: Where was her family living then?

Mosher: My mother was born in Minnesota. Elbow Lake, I think it is. But my father, or my grandfather, had moved with the family to Glidden, Wisconsin where the lumbering was going on. My mother had older brothers who worked in the lumber industry, and my grandfather ran a livery stable in Glidden.

When her mother died, everything went to pieces, of course. They stayed on in Glidden for a while, and then they moved out to North Dakota, to a little town named Benedict, North Dakota, where my father and mother met.

McCreery: Tell me something about your memories of your mom.

Mosher: I think she was one of the most wonderful people who ever lived. I was very close to her, and I worked a lot with her in the house. I helped her clean the house. And she was subject to migraine headaches and when they hit, why, I would try to take care of her--give her cold cloths for her head and that sort of thing--and just be there to take care of the house. She was usually out of it when she had one of these awful headaches.

She was, nevertheless, a happy person, a jolly person, and looked on the bright side of things. And, well, everyone liked her. She was interested and interesting, and although she'd never graduated from eighth grade even, she read a lot and was knowledgeable about a great many things.

McCreery: Do you get some of your interests from her?

Mosher: Oh, I'm sure I do. Well, she was responsible for most of my beliefs and opinions and knowledge for quite a long time.

McCreery: How much older was your brother?

Mosher: My brother was not quite two years older. He died just--I don't remember now when--three or four years ago, but he had been suffering from diabetes for many years and lived in St. Louis. He was one year and nine months older than I, and I think there was always quite a bit of sibling rivalry there. We both were very good in school, and he was much better at sports and much more interested in sports than I was. I didn't ever engage in any athletic activities--primarily, I realize now--because I wasn't any good at it. [laughter] And I had to wear glasses. My eyes weren't--I couldn't see too well. Well, I was near-sighted. It was sort of interesting that this near-sightedness prevented me from getting a commission in the navy,

for example, and prevented my being included in sports. But since about 1978, I've had 20/20 vision. I don't wear glasses and I don't need glasses to drive. I use glasses only for the small difficult-to-read print.

McCreery: And that's because near-sightedness tends to correct itself in time?

Mosher: I guess so.

McCreery: I have heard that. I keep hoping. [laughter]

Mosher: I noticed it first because of watching TV, and needing my glasses for TV. And suddenly--or not suddenly, I guess over a period of time--I found that I took my glasses off to watch TV. The optometrist confirmed this.

McCreery: Did you maintain much closeness with your brother later in life or see him often?

Mosher: I didn't see him often because we never lived in the same town, except for a short period of time. Before I came out here he was living near Chicago, too. But otherwise, we just haven't seen much of each other. In those younger periods of our lives we were quarrelsome and very unhappy with each other a lot of the time. In fact, everyone thought that we were fighting all the time. But he was larger, of course, and bigger and stronger, and so I didn't win out.

McCreery: Tell me something about your younger sister.

Mosher: Yes, Carolyn. She's still living. She lives up in Seattle. I spent a lot of time with her, taking care of her and playing with her. She quit school--quit going to the university--and got married fairly young after she had only two years at the university. And she had several children and remarried twice, and has not had a happy adult life, except now she's very happy with her grandchildren.

McCreery: Are you close to her, would you say?

Mosher: Yes. Of course, I have a son living up in the Seattle area, and my sister Carolyn has lived up in that area for quite a few years now. She used to live in Denver, but we've seen each other quite a bit. Well, there was a long period of time when we didn't, because we were tied down to our own families at home.

McCreery: Do you know the story of how your parents met each other?

Mosher: Yes, at least I was told my father was a traveling salesman up in North Dakota, middle North Dakota near Minot. And restaurants in North Dakota, I presume even today, are pretty sorry affairs. They were, I'm sure, worse back then, early 1900s. Let's see, my father met John Ireland, mother's father. He was quite a convivial fellow--he liked to talk with people--and I guess grandfather John took pity on Dad and invited him home for dinner. And Mother was responsible, of course, for the home, pretty much, and that's how they were introduced. And it didn't take long for them to get married.

Schooling in Oakes, North Dakota; First Library Job

McCreery: What do you remember about growing up in Oakes and going to school there?

Mosher: It had a good school system, I thought. The teachers were all well prepared and interested in what they were doing, and I learned a lot. I thought, and I still think, it was one of the best school systems I know about or have experienced.

I did well in school, always. My chief ambition was to become valedictorian of the class. My brother, because he didn't pay enough attention, I think, to his studies--he'd skipped a grade and he was only a salutatorian, so I wanted to be valedictorian.

McCreery: [laughs] There's that rivalry again.

Mosher: Yes. The trouble with that was that when I was a junior in high school we moved up to Grand Forks. And you had to go four years to high school in Grand Forks to have any honor at all as far as scholarship was concerned, so I lost any incentive of that sort when we moved to Grand Forks.

McCreery: What size was your school in Oakes?

Mosher: Oh, it can't have been more than two or three hundred. A new building was built while I was going there. I started taking music lessons then and became very much interested in the piano, and of course read a great deal and even worked in the library a little bit.

McCreery: Oh, you did? Tell me about that.

Mosher: The librarian was a good friend of our family, and I liked working with books. I liked books, but after a while I got pretty tired of going in and reshelving books. [laughter] So I just quit. I didn't want to do any more. It seemed like an endless task. Every day it was the same thing.

McCreery: Was this the public library?

Mosher: It was a public library in the school. The school and the public library were the same.

McCreery: Do you remember that librarian's name?

Mosher: Yes, she was Stella Christensen. She was the wife of the local dentist--or a local dentist--who was a good friend of the family, too, and the dentist we all went to.

Attending High School in Grand Forks; Early Career Interests

McCreery: Some of your early roots are there, then, in the library. How did you happen to move up to Grand Forks during high school?

Mosher: My brother was two years older. He was through high school and he needed to go to the university, and so Mother and Dad decided that they would move to where he went to school instead of trying to support him elsewhere, although he had worked in grocery stores, and he probably would have made it anyway.

This position opened [for my father] in Grand Forks as assistant manager of a farm implements company. The successor to the Moline Plow Company was the Minneapolis Moline Power Implement Company, and this was its first year, 1929. We just got moved, started school, Dad took over his job, and the Depression hit. [It was] a brand new company and still all based on farms, and the bottom dropped out of everything, so he lost his job right away. Eventually he took various minor jobs traveling around, but he became an insurance salesman and stayed an insurance salesman then for the rest of his life.

McCreery: But that grew directly out of the stock market crash and the Depression?

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: What did you think of Grand Forks upon arriving there in the midst of high school?

Mosher: Oh, I, of course, hated to leave Oakes and all my friends, because I did have some good friends in Oakes. You know, I had lived there all my life. And I guess I should say the first year was simply miserable. I was very unhappy, didn't know anybody, and I spent all my time on school, my courses, and of course got superior grades--none of which did me any good as far as becoming a valedictorian. [laughter]

But I should have said, in connection with Oakes, that there was a math teacher at Oakes--Thelma Swinkle, from whom I took algebra, and she made this course so interesting. You know, algebra simply was so interesting to me that I decided that I was going to become a math teacher. That was my ambition from then on, until at the university I did not get an A in calculus, I think it was. And I had A's in practically everything else, especially everything in English, so I decided I would major in English instead of math. But I got a minor in math and physics. I was very much interested in science, too.

McCreery: Did that interest persist?

Mosher: Well, yes. Of course it does. I never took any more courses after the university, but in a strange way it played a part in my being drafted into the army. I didn't want to be drafted in World War II, and the University of Illinois, where I was then, had a program for what they called ASTP--student servicemen would come there for courses, and they circulated the university asking for anybody who could possibly teach physics or math to volunteer. Well, this would keep me out of the army, so that's what I did. And I actually started teaching physics until I was classified 1-A and drafted. Just two or three days [of teaching], was all that was.

McCreery: That's kind of a surprising use of your math interest there. Before I forget, what was your religious upbringing as a child?

Mosher: We were always Presbyterians, and that's where I was baptized and became a member of the church. I was quite active in the church as a child. We went to church faithfully every Sunday and to Sunday school, of course. And most of our social activities centered around the church, which was a good experience. The pastors were nearly always interesting and good people, good with children.

My mother always wanted me to become a minister. She thought that's what I should do. And I had no interest in that at all, no call whatsoever, but she wanted me to go to the Presbyterian university, Carleton [College], in the same town as St. Olaf [College] in [Northfield] Minnesota. But at that

time ministers weren't allowed to smoke or drink or play cards or dance. [laughs] That wasn't the kind of life I was looking forward to. [laughter]

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McCreery: Tell me a little bit more about how you adjusted to living in Grand Forks. You said the first year was a big adjustment.

Mosher: Yes. I made a kind of reputation the first year, particularly with the English teachers and anyone who had me in class, I guess. One morning, early in the fall of the second year, a student came up to me and asked if I was Fred Mosher and introduced himself as Bill Kruger. He was the editor of the *Centralian*, the high school newspaper, and he said he had been asked by Frank Clement, the adviser to the paper, to look me up and see if I didn't want to work on the high school newspaper. Well, I thought that was a great idea, so I said I certainly would.

And so I reported to Frank Clement, and then Bill and Frank gave me my first assignment, which was to go and write a story on the high school band. I still remember it. And then I became assistant editor of the newspaper, and that made all the difference because Bill Kruger became a good friend, and he's still my best friend. He visited here just a couple months ago.

Frank Clement was the physics teacher at the school, and he lived with the family of the girl that Bill was going with at the time, and whom he later married, so he spent quite a bit of time, Frank did, with Bill and Helen, driving around. He liked to drive in the rain at night, and he liked to go out and get hamburgers and this sort of thing. And I liked to play cribbage and so did Frank and Bill, and we became cribbage players and got all involved.

I remember the first night I stayed over with Frank and Bill, we didn't come home before eight or nine o'clock or whatever, and both my brother and my mother were very much worried about me. Well, what could have happened to me?

The rest of the senior year was just full of activities, mainly centering around the *Centralian*; however, I also got involved in lots of other things. There were clubs that I joined. I became a member of the debating team and I entered a speech contest, which became a statewide contest and I organized--or my teacher organized for me--a piano recital, just for me, in the spring. And let's see, I'd written a story

for my English class and the teacher had entered this in the state contest, and the story won the state contest. I also entered the piano contest for the state. It was just one thing after another.

I didn't get anywhere with the state piano contest, and that convinced me that I really didn't have the talent to become a pianist, which I would like to have been. And I did not succeed in the speech contest. The debating team was reasonably successful. I think we won most of our debates.

These various clubs had dances and so on that had to be organized. I think I was president of one of the clubs, so the senior year was full of activity, and I didn't spend very much time on my studies. I couldn't see any necessity for getting good grades, or better grades than the rest of the people, since they wouldn't do me any good, I thought. But I got good grades anyway. I just didn't spend so much time, but I still learned very quickly and had the reputation of being a bright student and so on.

McCreery: But you still wanted to be a math teacher at that point?

Mosher: Yes, that's what I thought I would be.

McCreery: Was it a given that you would go on to University of North Dakota?

Mosher: Pretty much, because that's where we were. And I certainly wanted to go on. I really wanted to go to the university. And both Mother and Dad wanted all of us to go to the university, to higher education.

McCreery: Now the Depression was of course in full swing by this time.

Mosher: Yes, '31 is when I graduated from high school. But by 1931, I guess my father hadn't decided to be in the insurance business yet. That was later.

University of North Dakota; Courting Evelyn Varland

McCreery: But you and your brother were both able to attend University of North Dakota right away?

Mosher: Yes, we both finished the university in three years, with summer school. So he went for three years and then he was an

accountant, and he got a job right away down in Oklahoma with a friend of my father's. And so he was gone from about 1932 on.

We had to move from the house we had rented in Grand Forks --it was very large and a very nice house--to a much smaller and less nice house in 1931, I guess, when I started the university. And then I finished in 1934. I took a lot of courses. I don't know how I managed to do it, but I did, because in 1931 Evelyn and I began to go together.

McCreery: Now how did you meet?

Mosher: Well, that's a fairly long but interesting story. It turned out that when we moved to Minneapolis from Oakes, Evelyn's family moved into the house we'd been renting. They came up from South Dakota, and when we came back from Minneapolis to Oakes, they were still living in that house. We bought a house somewhere a couple blocks away, so we know we must have played together--just a couple blocks apart. But Evelyn's family left to go back to South Dakota for a while, so we didn't really strike up any kind of acquaintanceship. But her family moved up to Grand Forks after two or three more years in South Dakota, and she was in Grand Forks when our family moved up there.

Both Evelyn and I were in a history class. We were seated alphabetically. I was in the front--Mosher, middle of the front--and because her name was Varland, she was way back in the room. I turned around and looked at her and thought, "Oh, I've never seen an angel before. She looks just like an angel."

Well, that was just that, because she became ill with pneumonia and had to drop out of school that term. I didn't really see much of her again until--she was the best friend of Helen Pederson, who became Bill Kruger's wife. And on one of the drives with Frank Clement, Bill and Helen and Frank stopped and picked up Evelyn before coming to pick me up, and that started it. That was in the spring of 1931.

McCreery: Okay, so when you first met her in that history class--I know you're both the same age--how old were you then?

Mosher: Just sixteen. It was 1929. Fifteen? It was 1929, so I guess we were fifteen. But we didn't really--we never had a date out with each other, separately, until '31. It was all very closely tied up with Frank Clement, this physics teacher, and with Bill Kruger.

Another thing that happened that needs to be mentioned here, I guess, was that we needed money. And there weren't any jobs. The only job I could find was delivering newspapers. *Grand Forks Herald* was the daily newspaper in Grand Forks, sort of famous recently because of that flood. They kept publishing the newspaper, even though there was hardly anything left to Grand Forks.

Anyway, I had a morning route and an evening. In the morning I usually left the newspaper office about six, six-thirty and the evening about four, four-thirty. So I'd go to the university and then I'd take these paper routes. For the next, oh, let's see, five years, I guess, that's how I managed to get tuition and so on for the university. I don't know why I began to think about that, or why I thought it was necessary to bring it in right now, but at any rate, that kept me pretty busy even as I was taking a double load of courses, more or less.

And I don't know, somewhere along the line--well actually what happened was that I decided I wanted to get married, and I didn't think I was going to do very well--I thought I would probably be better able to find a job teaching English, or what I really wanted to do was to write. I thought that teaching English would give me an opportunity to write. Completely wrong, of course, but that's what I thought at the time. And so I switched. I decided, well, my major was going to be English.

I didn't think there was any chance of my ever teaching at a university or college, but I thought maybe I should get a job teaching in secondary schools, so I better take some education courses and get a teaching credential. So I did the three-year bachelor's degree and then decided to do a master's degree in English, and I did that. Then I was offered a job teaching English at the University of North Dakota, so I taught there for one year.

II GRADUATE STUDIES, THE WAR, AND THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY

Marriage, 1936; Doctoral Study at University of Illinois, 1936-1943

Mosher: I realized by that time that if I was ever going to do anything more than teach--well, even if I was going to do nothing but just teach at the University of North Dakota, I had to have the doctorate.

Now Bill Kruger at the same time had just finished a bachelor's in physics and he had been writing around for possibilities for a degree in physics, a Ph.D. And he got one at the University of Illinois. When I learned that he had found this position at the University of Illinois, I told him, "Well, if you can get an assistantship--I think they called them--I'm sure I can, too," so I wrote to the head of the English department and got the job, [laughs] because they needed, oh, something like--well, I don't know how many assistants there were, but they needed a lot because everybody had to take freshman English at the University of Illinois, and they opened the doors to any graduate of the Illinois high schools. Anyway, I was offered the position and took it--which caused a wedding that fall [laughter] and a honeymoon trip to Illinois, which was a nightmare.

McCreery: How so?

Mosher: We traveled by bus, really very poor buses. We couldn't afford to stay anywhere except with relatives in Minneapolis, and we didn't have any place to live in Urbana, Illinois. We had no idea that it would be hard to find a place to live, but in a university town trying to find a place to live in September--no. So it wasn't comfortable honeymoon. Then, well, that's still quite a bit ahead of the story, I guess.

McCreery: That's fine. You took your master's, then, in English at University of North Dakota and taught there?

Mosher: That's right.

McCreery: So this must have been around 1936 you got married?

Mosher: '36 we were married.

McCreery: Okay.

Mosher: The bachelor's degree in 1934 and the master's degree in 1935, and I taught '35 to '36. I could have stayed on, but Evelyn agreed that I should go on since I had a job at Illinois.

McCreery: Yes. I'm wondering what you recall about the larger events during that period. You've talked about the effects of the Depression, of course, and that was reaching out to everyone. What about, for example, when [Franklin D.] Roosevelt was elected?

Mosher: Yes, I wasn't able to vote yet. My mother and father were both Republicans. My mother thought that Prohibition was one of the greatest goods in the world. Roosevelt came in and took away Prohibition, which she thought was a great mistake. So she didn't like Roosevelt. And I tended to follow her opinion, so I didn't believe in alcohol either and I thought--I didn't understand what Prohibition meant by way of crime, so I was all against Roosevelt. In fact, I never voted for Roosevelt--not that I voted for the Republicans. I voted for Norman Thomas. I don't know what party he was part of, but he ran for president nearly all the elections I can think of back then. Of course, you see, I was delivering papers all this time, so all the news--

McCreery: Yes, you were keeping up pretty well.

Mosher: I was keeping up with the news, yes. We even had to sell extras occasionally.

McCreery: What about your own writing interests? You mentioned switching to English partly out of an interest in writing. What did you want to write?

Mosher: Probably fiction. I guess what gave me the impulse was winning this contest. See that little book up there [points to bookcase]?

McCreery: Oh, yes.

Mosher: Very top shelf. That's the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, and that's what I won. That was the prize for winning the contest. It gave me the idea that maybe--I liked to write, and I'd written a lot of stories for classes, but I didn't have any burning desire to write. Nothing was compelling me to write anything in particular, and I guess that's one of the reasons why I never did. I can put words together in a clear and meaningful way, but I don't have the ideas, I guess, as far as fiction goes.

McCreery: As you said, you found out that teaching English didn't leave you a lot of time for other things.

Mosher: That's right. It had nothing to do with writing.

Life in Urbana, Illinois; Teaching English

McCreery: It's interesting that you essentially followed your friend to Urbana to take a job there. What did you think when you and Evelyn were newlyweds and arrived there? What did you think of that community?

Mosher: I thought it was awfully hot in September. [laughter] We liked it of course, although we were very lonely. It helped to have Bill there. He lived in some local fraternity house of graduate students, and they didn't serve meals on Sunday or weekends or something. At any rate, he was very often over at our house. Of course, he married the next year--unfortunately for him, I think, because he announced to the head of the [physics] department that he was going to be married, and the head of the department said, "You can't have your job next year, then. We won't employ anyone who's married." So this made Bill angry enough to just quit his job. And he started teaching physics then up in Naperville, Illinois. They were married one year after we were.

Urbana, at that time, had these tremendous elm trees. [There were] all kinds of opportunities for hearing music and seeing plays--and lots of people in the same department, about the same age, and the same position I was. We made a number of good friends. And that was our first year of marriage, and we enjoyed it thoroughly.

McCreery: And you solved your housing problem?

Mosher: [laughter] We finally did find a place. It was far from a good place to live, but it was adequate. The landlady was fond of telling everybody--the local president of the WCTU--is that right--yes, Women's Christian Temperance Union--she wouldn't have any alcohol in anything she owned, any house. She made us sign a two-page document telling us what we could do and what we couldn't do, when we could brush our teeth. There were other people living in the house too, you know. We shared a bathroom with somebody. And it worked out, but it wasn't a very happy situation, as far as our landlady was concerned.

The next year we lived with one of the English teachers. There was an English teacher who had her own house not far away from where we first lived, and we lived with her for a year.

McCreery: What did you think of the university?

Mosher: I was impressed of course, and rather dismayed by how little I knew. To do graduate work in English, I was plunged into courses that I wasn't really very well prepared for, because the preparation at Grand Forks, or the faculty there, wasn't so great. And we had at Illinois the top-most Milton scholar, Harris Fletcher--the top-most in the world, I would say. And Spenser scholar H. S. V. Jones became my adviser. He was there, and oh, I could go on and mention about ten others who were really tops in English at the time. And of course the other students were, most of them, ahead of me in preparation.

But I decided early on in my master's degree at North Dakota--you had to have a dissertation, and the dissertation was an edition of a Middle English manuscript of Wyclyfite sermons, which I transcribed. We had a manuscript from the British Museum in photostat. I had to transcribe it and then edit it. And as it turned out, enough time had elapsed--I decided I could do only half of it, so I did only half of the manuscript. Meanwhile, the head of the department wanted me to get my master's degree that June. So I pushed it through. They allowed me to do only half of it.

For my Ph.D. I was going to do the whole thing and really edit it properly. Well, that's what I started working on with H. S. V. Jones, because he was at that time the only Middle English, early English, specialist. He taught the courses at Illinois. I began to investigate and discovered that these Wyclyfite sermons had already been done, so I couldn't--they'd never been edited [but] they had been, I guess, a dissertation of someone at Yale, maybe. And so I had to find something else for a dissertation. And I wasn't in any hurry to do that, but I decided to stay with my early [English] field, anyway.

But I had a lot of catching up to do in early English literature. I was teaching, of course, three courses a semester. It was freshman English. And each of them [were] required [to write] a theme a week, each one of the students, so I'd have about seventy-five to eighty themes to read every week. This got old pretty fast. I decided after a couple of years that I really didn't want a degree in English anyway, if that's what it meant. But I didn't have any particular interest in any particular literature, so there were a lot of decisions to be made.

I decided somewhere along the line that maybe what I really seemed to be interested in was language, and that I might become a lexicographer. I wrote around and talked to my adviser about the possibility of--but later on there were other reasons why I didn't go into that.

McCreery: Did you enjoy teaching in general--the students?

Mosher: Not especially.

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McCreery: We were just talking a moment ago about how well you liked, or didn't like, teaching freshman English while you were studying at the University of Illinois. What was it that you didn't enjoy so much?

Mosher: I didn't feel I was able to teach them much of anything. It was very hard to measure improvement. By what measures we had, you could see that there was some improvement maybe, but the students in general were uninterested. They'd had twelve years of it and didn't like it well enough to learn the simple basics. It was awfully hard to get them interested enough to do anything. It was required, they had to do it, so they did it as well as they could, but you couldn't help them much. I don't think you can teach people how to write. Either they are able to or they aren't able to.

One of the discouraging things about the situation at Illinois then was that proficiency tests were administered at the beginning of each year, and everyone had to take that proficiency test. If [students] passed that proficiency test, [they] didn't have to take freshman English. So what you got were--you didn't get any of the good people, or any of those who naturally were good writers; you got only those who were bad enough so they needed more help at the university.

There was even further segregation in that there were certain classes, certain sections, reserved for engineers, so you'd have a class full of engineers--most of them are not very literate at eight o'clock in the morning--taking a course they didn't see any use for, had no interest in. I thought it was hopeless.

McCreery: Was there any opportunity for you to teach anything besides basic composition?

Mosher: No. That's all. Well, yes, what I did was to give them a reading program. They had to read certain books and we tried to--one of the chief reasons they didn't want to write was that they weren't good readers. They'd never read much of anything, so one of the purposes of the course was to encourage them to read. But you know, it wasn't a course in reading, it was a course in writing.

Deciding on a Dissertation; Considering Librarianship

Mosher: Now, as I said, I just gave up on it, really, and decided that that wasn't what I wanted to do. I suppose that was maybe the only fortunate thing about the war coming along. It gave me an opportunity to get away from it. Although, before I went into the army, I decided that I would become something else. And I thought of being a librarian too, as well as being an lexicographer.

McCreery: Where did that idea come from, do you remember?

Mosher: Librarian? Yes. I was walking home with one of my fellow assistants who knew another graduate student who was going to library school. And Gibbon Butler, my friend in the English department and fellow assistant, said to me, "Why don't you think of becoming a librarian? So-and-so likes the school." And it sort of was illuminating to me. I hadn't even thought of library work as a possible profession before. And so that started me thinking, well, maybe that would be better for me than teaching. So before I left Illinois I had the idea of becoming a librarian.

McCreery: It's interesting how a chance suggestion can have a big effect sometimes.

Mosher: Yes, that's right.

McCreery: Meanwhile, you were working your way towards your Ph.D. Tell me a little bit more about the person who became your adviser and your mentor. Jones, you said?

Mosher: H. S. V. Jones. I don't really know what his first name was. Everyone called him H. S. V. Jones. [laughter] He was a Harvard graduate and the world's most respected Spenser scholar. Well, he was very remote and rather a cold person, I thought. Whenever he met or passed anybody--any woman that he knew--on the sidewalk, he would take off his hat and bow and be very formal. I don't think I had any meetings with him except in class or seeing him about the necessary paperwork--no talks about what I was doing or what I wanted to do or anything like that.

He did see me through. I did finish the preliminary examinations for the doctorate. It took me a couple years after I started, because my written examinations weren't as good as some members of the committee thought they ought to be, and I was told to wait for another year before taking the oral.

Professor Jones stood by me all the way through that, didn't give up on me. I did finally pass the oral examination, and the next job was to find something for a dissertation. And since he was my--I don't know whether he suggested it or not. I guess maybe he did suggest that I take a subject he was interested in, and that was the early English translations--or I guess it was the fifteenth-century English translations of the Psalms. He thought this was an important bridge to modern English. It would bring together the interest in words and interest in early literature, and he would be the adviser.

I got that title accepted and started collecting new translations and working on getting some kind of idea of what the dissertation might be, when Professor Jones died of a heart attack. I was really up a tree or something then, because he was the only one on the faculty who would be able to guide that dissertation. I didn't know enough to do it by myself.

Then I decided that maybe I would forget about the Psalms and do something more lexicographical, and I decided on the subject of "The Syntax of Roger Ascham." Now Roger Ascham was an Elizabethan writer who was the tutor of Queen Elizabeth. He wrote on various--well, "The Syntax of Roger Ascham" indicates that he wrote on the subject of grammar--English grammar and so on. This was an early stage in the development of modern English. And this meant that I should change my advisers. I had to change advisers anyway, but a new member of the faculty had just come in who was an Old English and Old Middle English

scholar, Henning Larson, from the University of Iowa. He became my adviser, and I started out on the idea of "The Syntax of Roger Ascham."

Later on the war intervened, and later on this became--this is jumping way ahead of the time.

McCreery: That's okay.

Mosher: I thought a lot about becoming a librarian while I was in the army, and I wrote to the head librarian--I was stationed in the Hawaiian Islands for quite a while--I wrote to the head librarian of Hawaii for suggestions and so on. And I wrote to [Sydney B. Mitchell], the dean of the University of California library school, asking about being able to come to California and what he thought of my plans. And it became obvious that really I ought to finish the doctorate, since I was that close. It didn't seem to me that a dissertation entitled "The Syntax of Roger Ascham" would be of any benefit to a future librarian, [laughs] so I gave that up. I wasn't very much interested in it anyway.

Working at the Newberry Library and Attending Library School, 1946-1950

Mosher: The opportunity to become a librarian evolved in a strange way, too. I wrote to Henning Larson, told him I was planning to change to librarianship. Before I knew it--this is after I'd been discharged from the army--I got a letter from Stanley Pargellis, who was the head librarian at the Newberry Library in Chicago, telling me that he had been talking with Henning Larson, who was my adviser and who at that time was dean of liberal arts at the University of Illinois. Henning Larson had suggested that I might be interested in working in a library, and Pargellis was just desperate for librarians. There weren't any. Library schools had not been functioning--librarians had all been drafted, or most of them had--and he needed someone to stand behind the reference desk. Henning Larson thought--[the Newberry] is a library in the humanities--that I might be able to do it.

So Pargellis offered me a job, basically. And that seemed to satisfy a good many needs for me. It would get me back to Illinois where I could finish my doctorate. It would give me library experience. And it turned out that Pargellis had a scheme of making this an apprenticeship under the G.I. Bill of

Rights. I would work at the Newberry and go to the University of Chicago library school, get my degree and experience at the same time, and the Newberry would provide me with experience in all departments of the library, from binding preparation to cataloging.

Seemed like a good deal, and so we went back to Urbana and stayed with friends, and I went up to see Pargellis and he was all for it. I started work the next day. [laughter] That's practically what I did, and it was no problem at all. I knew enough to be behind the reference desk--I could help people--and I liked doing it. I liked Pargellis and the Newberry Library. I had been at the Newberry before when I was a student at Illinois, so I knew what a good place it was. I enjoyed working, did well, went to library school--and thought that was awful.

McCreery: Ah! [laughter] Well, how do you mean?

Mosher: Well, it was a very, very poor library school at that point. They had lost to the armed services most of their faculty, one way or another, and they were just managing to get along by having people from the community teach or people in the library school--they didn't have much of a faculty left, really, so it was some of the worst courses I've ever had. And I thought at the time that it was the worst educational experience I'd had.

Of course, it didn't bother me much because I was working in a library, and of course I had taught, you know, how to use a library in the freshman English course. They all had to write a library theme, pick a subject on how to use the library, so I knew about using libraries besides from just my own experience. So at the very beginning of the summer of 1946--Evelyn and my older son Randy were in Urbana staying with a friend, and I could not find a place to live in Chicago. There just weren't any places--nothing in the newspapers.

I was allowed to stay in a YMCA for a certain number of weeks, and then I couldn't stay there any longer. I have to mention another person at this point who went to the Newberry with me from Illinois--Ben Bowman. He was also an English Ph.D. candidate and was searching for--he had failed his tests, his preliminary exams and doctoral exams at the University of Chicago, and his wife was teaching at the University of Illinois during the war, so that's why he was in Urbana.

The two of us that Henning Larson had suggested went together to be interviewed by Pargellis, and both of us decided to accept his plan. So we started together on this venture. I

don't know why I thought I had to bring him up now, but--oh, he and I both were staying at the YMCA. We couldn't stay there any longer. This was during the summer, and Pargellis, whose family spent the summer in Maine, had a large apartment in Chicago. He suggested that we just come and live with him until we found a place to live.

We lived with him all summer. We couldn't find any place to live, but toward the end--in the meantime I'd been corresponding with Sydney Mitchell of the library school here in Berkeley. And the university had for graduate students at that point--I guess it was what they call University Village now--it was just being started. I had applied for one of those, thinking, "Well, if we can't find a place to live in Chicago, we'll have to go to California."

But just then, the Lutheran pastor--oh, what do you call it--who had made Evelyn a member of the church in Grand Forks was then living in Chicago at the old Chicago Lutheran Bible School, which was in the area just west of the loop. There were dormitories there that were now being used as dormitories for Lutheran theological students. There wasn't any Bible school anymore, but the dormitories were rented to Lutheran students, and Evelyn found out about this. A good friend of Evelyn's who lived in Chicago found out about this and told us about it. We applied for one of the flats in this dormitory--it had been converted into apartments--and got one. Just then learned that there was an opportunity to get a place in California, but we decided we'd better stay in Illinois because of the doctorate problem.

And so we rented the place. It was three bedrooms around one bathroom and a hallway. It needed painting and so on, and I did that while Evelyn got ready to come. She and Randy came up in September then. From then on we were pretty well set in Chicago. We stayed there for a couple of years and then we moved to--the Newberry Library had an apartment building close to the library itself where we finally were able to get an apartment, but it was hard to get anything in those days. You had to be put on waiting lists and you couldn't get a gas stove for a long time. We finally did. A refrigerator and so on were just impossible to get, so we put things out the window.

McCreery: To keep cool.

Mosher: We had a little electric pan on the stove--no, that isn't the right word for it--to cook on.

McCreery: Kind of a hot plate?

Mosher: Yes, a hot plate.

U.S. Army Service in World War II, 1943-1946

McCreery: You had the one son by then? And where was he born?

Mosher: He was born in Champaign, [Illinois]. Oh, I skipped over all that, eh? Yes, in 1943 he was born in Champaign. And three months later I was drafted and had to report to Michigan in June. He was born in March.

McCreery: You got to meet him first?

Mosher: Yes, I saw him for three months and we took him--both Evelyn's parents and my parents were living in Grand Forks, so we decided that she'd better go to Grand Forks and live with Randy, because she had a baby. I went back to Grand Forks with her and deposited Evelyn and the baby, and then I had to come back to Michigan for entrance into the army.

McCreery: What happened in your army service?

Mosher: It was mostly just waiting and being useless and hating every minute of it. What could they do with an English teacher? [laughs] Nearly all the English teachers that had become my friends and so on were able to get commissions one way or another, but nobody would give me a commission because of my eyesight. In fact, I even had a position lined up to become an English teacher at Annapolis. When I happened to learn of an officer who was an English teacher at Annapolis, and he was being called to active duty--active sea duty--I thought I could replace him. Everything went fine until my eyes were examined, you know, so no commission for that. I was just waiting to be drafted, and I was drafted into the infantry--just drafted into the army, I guess.

But I had been told by other people that maybe some English teachers [were] doing jobs as classification people, interviewing new entrants into the service, seeing what kind of jobs they could handle. Since I'd been a teacher, I ought to be able to talk with people and find out whether they were truck drivers or what. As it turned out that's mostly what they wanted, the truck drivers. Anyway, the person who interviewed me agreed that would be fine and sent me to Camp Lee, Virginia, for basic training--a special kind of basic

training, not the regular infantry training but a special kind of training for clerks, I guess, mainly.

That was in July. Camp Lee, Virginia. I'd never experienced heat like that before. But anyway, then I went to a school in Washington--Jefferson University or College? [Washington & Jefferson College] It was near Washington, Pennsylvania--for six weeks or a couple months, and then I was shipped out to Fresno to a reclassification center there at the fairgrounds.

And Evelyn and Randy, after I'd been there for some months, were able to come out. I got out there, they came in March, and we were together there near the fairgrounds until the next January. Then this replacement depot was disbanded and I was put into a group to be disposed of one way or another and was sent to Dayton, Ohio, where I waited, oh, a few weeks for them to decide where I could go. Finally it was decided to send me to Hawaii, by way of Salt Lake City and Seattle. I don't know. I didn't feel that I was accomplishing anything. All during that time it didn't make any difference about this classification bit, really. It was just something the army had to go through, I guess. So I stayed in the islands until--well, the group I was with had been assigned to go to Guam to establish a classification depot there on the first of September.

We had all been given carbines. Up until that time I'd never had a gun except when we were in basic training or learning how to shoot a rifle. But we were given these and they needed to be cleaned up. I was out behind the barracks, cleaning up my carbine, when the radio announced the first atom bomb. So we weren't sent to Guam on September the first. I was eventually sent back to headquarters of Haycomb Field as a clerk typist. By the time I had enough points to be discharged, I was about the only one there who could write a letter. [laughs]

McCreery: Do you remember your thoughts upon hearing about the bomb?

Mosher: Oh, I thought it was wonderful. I didn't know anything about what had happened, you know, what was involved, but [it meant the] end of the war.

McCreery: Yes, just that fast, everything changed, didn't it?

Mosher: Yes. It surely did.

McCreery: Was there anything redeeming about your army experience personally?

Mosher: The time that Evelyn, Randy, and I were together was good--didn't have anything to do with the army. What I was trying to say was that I don't think I did anything except harm the military capabilities of the United States. I had no interest in become a hero of any sort.

[Interview 2: March 19, 1999] ##

McCreery: When we finished taping our last session early this week, we were talking about your service in the army during World War II, and of course the war had ended by the time you were released in 1946. You were talking generally about your thoughts about the war and the military and I just wondered if you could add any postscript to that.

Mosher: Oh, all my life I objected to the idea of war, and from as early as I can remember I vowed never to participate in one. But when it came right down to it, I couldn't see putting Evelyn and my newborn son Randy in a position where they couldn't support themselves in any way, or I would probably be unable to support myself, so I didn't seriously consider conscientious objection. In fact, I hardly knew that there was such a thing--real formal conscientious objection.

I had to take ROTC at the university--Reserve Officers Training Corps--and I detested that and tried to get out of it every way I could. And I was called before--and I pleaded conscientious objection when I was a sophomore I think, or junior--one of the years I was going. And I wasn't allowed to --I was brought before a committee and asked the question, "If some German soldiers or enemy soldiers came to your house and raped your sister, would you try to stop them?" And I said sure. "Well, then obviously you're not a conscientious objector," so I was denied being a conscientious objector for ROTC, and I had to go on taking the courses.

But a very kindly dean of liberal arts suggested that I try to get out of it by some other means. I was, I told you, delivering papers every afternoon, and this was very inconvenient to ROTC because they had drill after school. I petitioned to get out of ROTC that way and it worked, [laughs] so I never did finish ROTC. But I guess maybe that experience convinced me that I wouldn't be able to validate myself as a conscientious objector. I didn't know how it worked.

But although I really--I can't think of anything during my service in the army that I in any way enjoyed in connection with the army itself. I met some people who became friends. I liked to play cribbage, and I found someone who liked to play

cribbage and we played cribbage every night, but otherwise, I could only look forward to the day when I was no longer a prisoner, as I considered myself.

McCreery: You were a sergeant upon discharge?

Mosher: I became a sergeant, yes.

McCreery: What were your feelings then, when you got out?

Mosher: About this time I was beginning to feel not so unhappy--after I said I hated it every minute of it and so on, but I did enjoy Hawaii so much that when it came right down to it, I thought even of staying on in the army so that I could stay in the islands. But I had enough reason to observe that where you wanted to be in the army was not probably where you were going to be. So anyway, I didn't seriously consider it. I just wanted to get out and be responsible for myself.

As I mentioned before, I was trying to figure out how I could become a librarian rather than a teacher. And by the time I had enough points to get out, I had corresponded with various people and pretty much decided to try to become a librarian. I knew that meant going to a library school. I think I told you something about corresponding with Stanley Pargellis at the Newberry.

McCreery: Perhaps you can just pick up then upon your discharge from the army. Did you return immediately to Chicago?

Mosher: No. Evelyn and Randy were both in Grand Forks yet. I was discharged out here in California, and off the boat I took a train immediately to Grand Forks and just waited to see what would happen. I went out to the university, and they were looking for tutors for students who had come back to the university and needed special help.

McCreery: In Grand Forks?

Mosher: Yes, in Grand Forks, so for the rest of that year living in Grand Forks, I tutored in some kind of government program. I could have gone back to teaching at North Dakota, and of course they wanted me to come back at Illinois, but I had decided pretty much that I didn't want to teach freshman English any more.

Then this letter from Pargellis came, and so I decided to go back to Illinois and see what it was all about at any rate. I did know that if I was going to stay in academia, I'd have to

have a doctorate. I'd come too close to that to just give it up.

McCreery: What did that letter contain, exactly?

Mosher: I wish I had it. I do have it somewhere. I spent quite a bit of time this past week looking in old boxes, and I've got all the correspondence between Evelyn and me ever since we first knew each other, I think, but I can't find the correspondence about the Newberry Library or any of the early library experiences. And I know they're around somewhere.

Anyway, it simply reported that Pargellis had been to the University of Illinois to see if there was anyone there who could be a reference librarian at the Newberry. That dean, who was my adviser then, suggested my name and Ben Bowman's name. We were both graduate students in English. So he more or less offered me the position and suggested this way of getting a library school degree, by going to the University of Chicago library school while working at the Newberry in a kind of apprenticeship deal and at the same time being able to work in various departments--all the departments of the Newberry library--while going to library school.

It seemed like a good deal to me, so we went back to Urbana and stayed with friends. Ben and I went to Chicago and talked with Pargellis and decided to accept his offer. And that worked out very well.

I think I told you about the difficulty of finding housing and so on, but the library experience was very good. I did work in every department of the library. I got an excellent idea of what goes on behind the scenes. And I was able to, I think, do a good job as reference librarian. I could answer most of the questions that came in--lead people to the right sources.

McCreery: By apprenticeship, they meant the chance to work in all departments?

Mosher: Well, yes--they meant go to the University of Chicago library school and work in the library at the same time--some kind of financial business there worked out between the G.I. Bill of Rights and the Newberry Library. As far as I know, Ben Bowman and I were the only two who ever took advantage of it. I never heard of anyone else who worked in a library and went to library school, under the G.I. Bill of Rights at any rate.

McCreery: Do you recall your salary as an apprentice at the Newberry? I think it may be on your c.v. or something.

Mosher: I guess I don't. It was oh, thirty--I'm trying to think. I think I came to Berkeley for $4,200 and I think I was getting $3,600 at the Newberry. This was after the apprenticeship was over. I had my degree from the library school and the apprenticeship part of the library program was over with, too. In fact, both of us had been appointed heads of the reference department by this time, and so we had regular jobs there.

Finishing the Ph.D. after the War; Revising a Book for Publication

Mosher: There's a lot more to be said about what happened at the Newberry besides just working in the library. I was determined to finish my degree, and I didn't have a subject. The Newberry Library had a program of fellows and the Newberry Library fellow professors or scholars could come to the library for a certain period of time and work and advise the library on purchasing and on the quality of its holdings. And one of these fellows had been John T. Flanagan, a professor of American literature from the University of Illinois. And one of the jobs of these fellows, also, was to locate material for the library and to get acquisitions for the library.

It seemed to Pargellis, and probably other people, too, who were involved in acquisitions that it would be a good idea to try to get the literary papers of the Chicago authors. Chicago had a kind of literary renaissance, with a lot of rather famous American authors writing in Chicago. And also, the most important magazine of literary criticism, of book reviews, during this period from 1880 to 1930 or something like that was *The Dial*. And Flanagan and others at the Newberry got in touch with the heirs of Francis Fisher Browne, who was the editor of *The Dial*, and got his papers, so they were at the Newberry.

Flanagan, knowing this--I mean, that these papers were there--thought they ought to be investigated and suggested *The Dial* as a subject for a dissertation under him, which sounded good to me. I liked Flanagan, although I didn't know him very well. He was gone, I think, before I came to the Newberrty. It seemed just sort of ready made and an especially a good subject for a fellow who was going to be a librarian. Literary review magazines seemed to me to be a much better subject than

"The Syntax of Roger Ascham," so I switched to that and everybody approved it.

I started reading *The Dial*, oh, I don't know how many volumes, and I also began to collect further papers. The papers of William Morton Payne, who was the chief literary editor of *The Dial*, were not at the Newberry, but I found out where they were and managed to interview the lady, whose name I can't remember right now. Anyway, she gave his papers to the Newberry Library, so I had access to them, also. I interviewed everybody I could think of who was still around.

So that settled the problem of the dissertation, finally. I had my final examination on the dissertation just before I left for California, September of 1950. I came out late because I had to have this meeting at Illinois about the dissertation, which was just a formal thing. You probably wouldn't have to have it nowadays, but in those days you had to have certain meetings.

At the Newberry Library, when I was working on this dissertation--this was not part of the Newberry. I did my work at the Newberry separately from this. This was on my own time, of course. While I was there I got involved with still another project. Archer Taylor, who was a professor of German here at Berkeley and who had retired from the University of Chicago and was rather a famous scholar, had written a book on *The Bibliographical History of Anonyma and Pseudonyma*--that's how I got into that. Well, Archer Taylor was out here in Berkeley and the Newberry Library had agreed to publish his book on anonyma and pseudonyma, and the copy came in to the Newberry and Pargellis had me take a look at it just to make sure it was okay to be printed.

As I looked through it, I found all kinds of mistakes--just typographical mistakes--and I thought it needed to be proofread and I also, from what little I knew about bibliographical history and so forth, noticed a number of--well, I began to check up--a number of errors involved and questions that needed to be answered. I pointed out enough of these to Pargellis so he said, "Well, looks to me as though you'd better go over this and revise it as much as it needs to be."

That wasn't a simple short task because I didn't finish doing it until I was out here. It meant really redoing the whole thing because it was so loaded with--mostly just superficial errors, you know, but Pargellis said, "I don't want the Newberry Library to publish anything with any errors, and certainly we should avoid as many of them as we can."

Then I began to correspond with Archer Taylor, and he agreed that this ought to be done. I was writing the dissertation and actually writing *The Bibliographical History of Anonyma and Pseudonyma*, and working at the library from, oh, about 1948 to 1950.

The Newberry Library: From Apprentice to Head of Reference

Mosher: I don't know where to bring in the idea of coming out here. Should I talk more about the Newberry?

McCreery: Yes. If you don't mind, I would like to stick with that for a moment. Let's return to when you first came to the Newberry in the apprentice position.

Mosher: Yes, the first thing was standing behind the reference desk and taking care of that.

McCreery: Can you describe the atmosphere there for me?

Mosher: Yes, I certainly can. It's a library restricted to the humanities. It began as a general library which collected everything and then somebody else--well, then Chicago began to think of libraries as important and left enough money to establish a library. Well, they didn't want to establish two general libraries, so the second request was for the John Crerar Library. The John Crerar Library became a science library, and the Newberry gave up the science and even transferred books to Crerar. Two very excellent research libraries.

So it was always intended to be a library for scholars. It was supposed to have research materials that scholars would be able to use, and it wasn't intended to be a library for the general public, so the general public didn't use it much. Most of the patrons of the Newberry Library were scholars from the surrounding universities, particularly in Chicago, but [scholars from] anywhere in the middle west or all over the country would come there and use the materials that the Newberry held.

But some people did come to the library to just use it as a library--come and sleep over the newspapers or the magazines--and created problems of various kinds.

But most of the questions that you would get at the reference desk would be from scholars who had come to use the particular materials of the Newberry. They would like to go through them as quickly and easily as possible, and so the people at the reference desk would help them find the materials. And there were card catalogs and so on, but they had to be--as a special service to scholars, which meant all readers, if you wanted a book to hold a book in your hands, it would have to be paged for you. In other words, the stacks were not open. They got very good service, and a great many of the questions at the reference desk were just about how can I get these materials. So you learned quickly the setup of the library and the stacks and how to find the materials in them, which is different in every library.

McCreery: Did you enjoy reference service?

Mosher: Oh, yes. It wasn't long before I decided I'd just as soon stay there the rest of my life. And well, I would have, I think, because I thought it was a wonderful library and I liked working there.

But it was in the center--you know, 1000 North in Chicago, so it was really not quite the center of Chicago, but very much so, very close to the center. And we managed all right, because the Newberry had an apartment building of its own. It was the first building built for the library while the library building was being built. It was made into the Irving Apartments and rented out mostly to Newberry employees, but possibly other people, too.

McCreery: Where was that building?

Mosher: It was only two blocks from the library. It's on North Clark Street.

McCreery: You and your wife and son were able to live there starting in '46, was it?

Mosher: No, '46 there was no room in the Irving Apartments, so I think I mentioned that we found a place at the Chicago Lutheran Bible School, '46 to '48. Then I guess it was '48 I became head of the reference library, head reference librarian.

McCreery: What about the Newberry building itself?

Mosher: There was just half a building at the time. Only half of it was built with the idea that there was, of course, land for the rest of it. It was an entire city block, and just half of the

building was built. Then when the library needed more space, it was much too expensive to build the same thing again--build in the same way--and so it just sat there for a long, long--well, I've forgotten now. It was after I had left there that they sort of added a second part to it. Still, it was not built of the same materials. As a matter of fact, I haven't been back there since it was redone.

The departments that I was particularly interested in were the rare book department that Gertrude Woodward was head of and the Ayer Collection that Ruth Butler was in charge of. Ruth Butler was the wife of Pierce Butler, who taught at the University of Chicago. I think I must have mentioned him. Maybe not. Anyway, I had courses under him at the University of Chicago library school, and he and his wife lived in the same apartments we lived in, the Irving Apartments that belonged to the Newberry Library. We were not in the same building, but this building was built around a courtyard, which made it pretty good for children.

But I was beginning to talk about why I left the Newberry. Well, here was Randy, and this was not a very good place for a child--1000 North, no, I said Clark but it's North State Street. He was beginning to start school, and it was a pretty awful school. No playground. They would--I can't think of the word--rope off the street for recess periods, and this was a really--un-"anything you can think of" place for kids. I wouldn't let Randy walk to school. I took him to school myself and at noon, fortunately, when I had my lunch, I could go and pick him up and take him back home again, because it was a dangerous street. Traffic was terrible, and the people who lived around there were not very law-abiding, I guess you might say. It all worked out.

McCreery: I can see why that was not ideal, though, for raising your son.

Mosher: No, well, that's right. So the only thing we could do if we stayed on at the Newberry, eventually, would be to live in one of the suburbs and come in by train. That meant a daily commute of some time, and I didn't want to commute. I didn't want Randy to go to school where he was going, so I decided we'd better leave.

McCreery: The stage was set for your finding an opportunity elsewhere?

Mosher: Yes, I was looking for another place. Of course I was too busy to bother too much about what I was going to do next. I had all these projects going at the same time. I could stay on at the Newberry as long as I wanted to, but Pargellis said that

the library could not afford both Ben and me, and it looked as though I would have the better opportunity to find another position. So that was sort of the way it was put. He'd keep us on for a while, both of us, but one of us would have to go.

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McCreery: Before we talk about your coming to California, let's talk a little bit more about your time at the Newberry Library--specifically, what were the circumstances that led to your being promoted to head of the reference department?

Mosher: Both Ben Bowman and I came in at the same time. Basically what the Newberry needed was someone to man the reference desks. Well, the reference librarian had been there for many years--his name was John Windle--and was a highly respected librarian, but he really had become tired of working in a library. He and his wife both liked antiques and were working toward opening an antique business, and so he would come to the library late nearly every morning and sometimes he wouldn't come at all. Sometimes days would go by without our ever seeing him.

The mainstay--the one who was really the reference librarian during all this time--was a woman named Bess Finn. I often told my classes when I was teaching reference that all I learned about reference was from Bess Finn. She really knew how to handle reference situations, and she knew her collection very, very well. She knew all about Chicago history. There were so many people who would come in--just the general public --and ask about some feature of Chicago history, because the Newberry library was in Chicago and history was its chief subject. At the desk of the Newberry Library there would be files of typical questions that people would ask about the area and about the library.

McCreery: She set those up?

Mosher: Yes, she had set them up. She was a very good librarian, although she had never gone to library school. Most of the people in the Newberry Library had never gone to library school.

McCreery: But that was common then, was it not?

Mosher: Well, yes. I suppose so.

McCreery: Or you tell me. I don't mean to put words in your mouth. [laughs]

Mosher: Certainly a library like the Newberry--see, many libraries run by governments require the library school degree in order to fill a position as a librarian; the Newberry had no such reason for insisting on library school graduation, because not a penny of support for the Newberry ever came from government. It came only from its original bequest, which was mostly near-northside Chicago real estate, so it didn't really diminish in value much. I think the Newberry thought that it had enough money forever to do whatever it wanted to--proved not to be true, but that's a story after I left there.

Anyway, Bess Finn agreed with Ben and me that Windle wasn't doing his job and was interfering with our ability to do our jobs. Pargellis, of course, the chief librarian, was aware of all this--that he was coming in late and wasn't very much interested anymore. He saw the opportunity of getting rid of Windle, giving him enough money to establish his antique business, and putting us in as permanent employees, at least one of us eventually. So that's what happened.

I never did like it very well that we came in and Windle went out, but you couldn't blame anyone except Windle. He just wouldn't do his job. By that time, I had worked with Mrs. Woodward, Gertrude Woodward, in the rare books room, which was a fascinating place. It's a wonderful collection of rare books. She had made a bibliography of all the incunabula there--one of the big collections of incunabula in the country.

Ruth Butler, too, although I wasn't much interested in the Ayer Collection. It was a library of anything to do with the American Indian, basically. It was such a good bequest, by the way, that by the time when I was there, Ruth Butler was buying almost anything that mentioned an Indian. [laughs] It was a wonderful collection, and I liked working with it.

McCreery: How did it come about that you and Mr. Bowman sort of shared the duties of head of reference?

Mosher: That was simply when Windle left and they wanted--we were both there and both sort of sharing the whole business anyway, because Windle wasn't bothering with it much. And I don't know why they didn't make Bess Finn head of the reference department. She deserved to be, but she just wasn't.

McCreery: Was it just the three of you, then?

Mosher: No, that was another reason why I became a teacher in a library school. They employed people to stand behind the reference desk, and they had been successful in the case of Ben and me.

Pargellis, particularly, would just see somebody, someone would ask for a job, and he'd give them a job, and we didn't have any say about it, at first, at any rate. They didn't have any library school education, didn't know anything about libraries, and we had to give them library school, really.

That made me think, well, maybe there is something to library school. I think I mentioned once that I felt that library school was largely a waste of time, but I began to revise my opinion when I learned how much library school did teach to someone who didn't know anything about libraries.

McCreery: I take it, then, that you had to supervise these people that Pargellis hired?

Mosher: Yes, yes. Well, they'd come in and they'd be working with us [laughs] mostly doing--well, they obviously couldn't do it. You know, they'd have to call upon one of us all the time, or on Bess Finn, and they didn't know the operation of the library, so that convinced me that library schools fulfilled an important function.

McCreery: How did you and Mr. Bowman split up your duties?

Mosher: I don't think we did. We just--whatever came up we really--see, actually we weren't heads of anything, we were just working there. That was just a title. Pargellis did all the important things like budgeting and hiring and all that. Bess Finn was still there, too, to do the--well, she was there all the time. But there wasn't too much--it wasn't too complicated a business. It all ran by itself, pretty much.

McCreery: Do you recall the size of the total staff of the Newberry at that time, about?

Mosher: I never thought of a number. There were probably no more than fifty. Let me think. There was a genealogy department, a separate library on another floor. It was very active. It had a large collection of family history, but it had no more than three or four employees. There were a lot of--you might call them student assistants. They would be going to school somewhere and working at the Newberry in the meantime.

Further Recollections of Attending Library School, 1946-1948

McCreery: In light of the comment you just made that you began to see value in library school, let's return just a moment to your own experience in library school. We did talk about that a little bit last time. I think you said the courses were terrible.

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: But tell me just a little bit about the school there. Wasn't it founded by Louis Round Wilson?

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: Was he still there?

Mosher: No, that was the problem. The faculty had been dispersed and not replaced, and so there were just people who didn't know how to teach or organize courses who were teaching. They were just very, very poorly done. Of course I would have to keep reminding myself that I was different from most of the students, because I had had so much experience. I was having experience in a library and I had had so much experience teaching how to use a library in the freshman English courses that I knew most of what they were--well, all I had to do to get through library school was to attend the classes. After the first two classes I was excused from attending them and given the opportunity to take special courses under Pierce Butler.

At one point, Ben and I both decided that we didn't need the degree; we'd just quit going to library school. So we talked to the dean of the library school about us quitting, saying that it wasn't going to do us any good. He didn't want that to happen. I can't think of his name now. He became librarian at Stanford, eventually. But he suggested this. They wouldn't require us to take all these required courses that we didn't need to take, [laughter] that we already knew all the material--and to take courses under Pierce Butler, who graciously agreed just to--the courses weren't being offered at that particular time, but he would meet with us once at the beginning of the course, and we'd write a paper and that would be it.

Pierce Butler was very deaf and it was hard for him to teach regularly. I remember the first time we ever met with him, he had a great big hearing aid and he put it out on the

table and said, "Talk into that." [laughter] I didn't feel that he taught me very much, really.

So anyway, the one who taught the library administration at that time in the University of Chicago library school was the Chicago Public Library librarian. She was, oh, maybe a little past middle age. She'd never done anything except come up through the ranks in the Chicago Public Library. She didn't know anything about teaching, or she didn't know what to teach. She certainly didn't know very much about administration of any libraries except the Chicago Public, which was not a very well-run library at that time. So that was sort of typical of the courses we took.

The wife of one of the professors who was a librarian taught a course, also, and she tried very hard, but she didn't know how to teach. So, as I said, the whole thing was simply a waste of time.

McCreery: Who taught reference and bibliography, which became your specialty?

Mosher: Well, that's a good question. I think we were excused from that course, because we both were working in reference. We did take some additional courses or separate courses under the chief reference librarian at the University of Chicago, whose name escapes me now--she's a well known reference librarian--but it was just, you know, a very perfunctory account of how she did reference work at the University of Chicago, which was not very good because she didn't stand behind the desk and do reference work; she would work with the faculty members who needed help. I learned, frankly, nothing that has been useful to me about working in a library from going to a library school.

McCreery: Now the degree you took was a BLS?

Mosher: That's right. That was another problem there because, see, the University of Chicago library school was founded in order to give graduate experience or more than one year of library school. Actually it was founded to give the doctorate in librarianship, and it was the first library school to give doctorates.

There wasn't any first-year program when it started. There was a program for a second year of librarianship study, and so that this first degree was a master's degree, and then most everybody who went to the University of Chicago library school

was in it for the doctoral program. A very large number of very good librarians went through that doctoral program.

Just at the time that Ben and I went there, they decided to give a first-year program, a bachelor's degree. We were one of the first classes to have to get the bachelor's degree in librarianship. That's why I have a BLS instead of an MLS. Of course, that was all that was being given here in Berkeley until some years after I came.

McCreery: Did you have much interaction with the American Library Association while you were in Chicago at any time?

Mosher: No, I did not. I didn't have time. As I said before, I'm not a joiner, and I didn't like having to go to meetings. And I wasn't particularly interested in library association business. They seemed to be interested only in public libraries, and I didn't think that I would ever be in interested in public libraries at that time. At that time I was going to become a university librarian. That's what I wanted to be. I didn't want to have to fuss around with the problems of public libraries. Oh, I attended, I think, some meetings of the ALA when they met in Chicago--very few, though. I did not have time to, and I was completely uninterested in most of the subjects.

I went to meetings of the American Library Association after I came out here. The school always sent someone to represent the library school, particularly at the mid-winter meeting. So I did not have any experience with the American Library Association in Chicago.

McCreery: We've talked about how you were finishing up your Ph.D. at this same time that you were head of reference at the Newberry. You told me you ended up with the topic about *The Dial* publication, and so on. Who ended up your adviser?

Mosher: Flanagan.

McCreery: Flanagan, the person that we just talked about this morning.

Mosher: Yes.

III ON THE SCHOOL OF LIBRARIANSHIP FACULTY, 1950S

Coming to Berkeley's School of Librarianship, 1950

McCreery: Now you say the Ph.D. degree came, or the final exams came, in September of 1950. By that time it sounds as if you had already lined up the job at Berkeley?

Mosher: Well, I was on my way out here.

McCreery: Perhaps you can just tell me how you first began considering the job at Berkeley and how the contact was made and so on.

Mosher: Yes. It was in the summer of 1950. I was finishing my dissertation. I think I had it all written and was just getting it approved. I had it in my mind, of course, the fact that at least within a year or two I was going to have to find a job somewhere. The first job I think I ever asked for--well, library job--was I thought I'd like to be at Boulder, Colorado. I'd heard a great deal about it from a friend, and so I wrote to the head librarian at the University of Colorado library and asked for a position, explaining all the details. "Sorry, we don't have any position to offer you." So that's all I'd been able to do.

One day I got a letter from then-Dean [J. Periam] Danton at Berkeley asking me if I'd be interested in a position teaching at Berkeley, at the library school.

McCreery: Were you acquainted with him at the time?

Mosher: No, I'd never heard of him before. He had gone to the University of Chicago library school, got his doctorate. He knew Pierce Butler. I also know that they needed new faculty members. He had corresponded with all the library schools.

McCreery: Do you know how he got your name?

Mosher: Yes. He got my name from Pierce Butler. Pierce Butler suggested to Danton that I might be able to teach history of the book. What he wanted was someone to teach history of the book. Well, he did have someone, had had someone--[John] Barr Tompkins was on the library school faculty. He resigned from the faculty--stayed on as a librarian at The Bancroft Library, but he resigned from the faculty--because he did not approve of Danton's marital problems.

Danton and the wife of the Assistant [University] Librarian had fallen in love and had gotten married--divorced and married--and it was all blown up. You could hardly believe that anything like this could happen nowadays. Well, it couldn't happen nowadays. But it created a real scandal, especially in the library and the library school. And, well, most of the librarians and the library school faculty were not on speaking terms even, with Danton, for a while.

Barr Tompkins resigned, as I said, because of this. He didn't want to be associated with Danton anymore. I mean, it must have been real hard feelings if you quit your job in sort of a moment's notice. Anyway, Danton was left to try to find someone to teach history of the book, which was a required course. There weren't many people around.

I must have been at the bottom of the barrel, because [laughs] I had never taught history of the book, didn't know much about the history of the book. But I talked with Pierce Butler about it, and Pierce thought I could handle it and he said, "Anyway, it would get you out there to California, and you'll be able to find a library job once you get out there." So I agreed.

I did want to come out here, and of course I was really--it was a hard time putting together, you know, the fact that I had quit teaching English because I didn't want to teach--I vowed that I'd never teach again, and I'd gone into library work to get out of teaching--and here was a job teaching! But I did want to come to Berkeley. [laughs]

Danton wanted someone to interview me before they employed me. [laughs] He was going to the American Library Association convention--I think it was in July and I think it was in Cleveland. And nobody flew in those days. He came by train and he had to change trains in Chicago, so his train was due to arrive at Union Station or whatever in Chicago at a certain time and, if I were there, we could walk together over to where his train would leave for Detroit or Cleveland, whatever it was. [laughs] So this happened. We met and walked to the

train he wanted to catch--and well, I don't think he said anything right then and there, but I soon got a letter from him offering me the position.

I think I had--I didn't bother him very much. I should not have accepted the position as instructor, because I was going to have my doctorate and if you had a doctorate, you ought not to be hired as an instructor. At any rate, that settled that. The salary was good enough, $4,200, and the university would pay my moving expenses, and I'd have time enough to get my doctorate absolutely completed. This was July, I think.

McCreery: Do you remember much more about your interview with him in the train station?

Mosher: No, I don't remember much of anything. Well, he just looked me up and down. I think he just wanted to see that I wasn't a [laughs] monster and that I had clothes on, or something! But he just sort of looked me up and down and I don't know whether he said, "You'll do," or not, but he inferred that. [laughs]

McCreery: He was offering a full-time job, however.

Mosher: Yes, it was a full-time job as instructor.

McCreery: Did you know what else you would teach besides history of the book?

Mosher: I did not even know that. Well, no, that's right, I did know that--but that would be the second semester. I didn't know what I would teach the first semester. That's one of the reasons why I was able to be late in coming in the fall. I didn't have anything to teach.

That same year--the fall of 1950--there were three new additions to the faculty: Reuben Peiss, and Will Ready, and me. Both of them were there, had already come, and Will Ready had been appointed to teach reference. Reuben Peiss was teaching--well, I think, introduction to librarianship or something like that, and I was to teach history of the book the second semester. The first semester I was to teach methods of research along with two other members of the faculty--LeRoy Merritt and I guess Peiss, I don't remember right now--but that was a course that not many people would be taking. It turned out, I think, there were two people who took it. There were three faculty members and two students. [laughter] So the first semester I was here I had nothing to teach, nothing to do, except prepare for methods of research in the spring semester.

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McCreery: Let's continue our discussion of your decision to accept the library school job at Berkeley.

Mosher: Well, I did try to find out more about what the situation was here.

McCreery: Before you came out from Chicago?

Mosher: Before I came out. A graduate of the library school worked at the Newberry and told me that there was a big scandal involving the dean, and that the faculty and California librarians in particular were divided about this.

McCreery: Did you know what she was referring to at the time?

Mosher: No. She told me then that it was a matter of the dean having got divorced and remarried and having married the wife of the assistant librarian at Berkeley--who later went on to become librarian of Harvard College, by the way. There were people who said, [sighs] there was good reason for the divorce because Lois's--Lois Danton's--first husband didn't want to have any children, and she did [want children]. That was why she was willing to marry Danton, under what was considered at that time scandalous circumstances. Also [the fact] that--I can't think of his name, I could look it up--but the assistant librarian [Douglas Bryant] went and cried on everybody's shoulder and made a big fuss about it--didn't go through the divorce graciously.

The Loyalty Oath Controversy; Early Impressions of Berkeley

Mosher: But there was another reason why I hesitated, or why I thought there might be a problem about coming to Berkeley, that this was the beginning of the oath controversy.

McCreery: Yes, the loyalty oath.

Mosher: It was a really serious problem here, of faculty resigning and lawsuits. I didn't know anything about this really until I got faint glimmerings of it from people I talked with in Illinois, but I was accustomed to signing the same statement. The University of Illinois required every faculty member to sign a statement saying he'd never been a member of the Communist Party. Well, what's all the fuss about? Everybody does it. I realize now that if I'd known all the circumstances, it would

have been a big factor in whether I would come or not, but by the time I found out about it, all the arrangements had been made. That's perhaps enough about "before coming to Berkeley."

McCreery: You had been stationed in Fresno and you certainly knew California, but what were your impressions of Berkeley, the place, when you first arrived?

Mosher: I liked it very much, of course. The climate and the--I've always thought it an ideal place in which to live and one of the most beautiful spots I've ever seen. I liked particularly the climate because I don't like hot weather. I don't like cold weather. [laughs] And I've sort of felt ever since I arrived like a prisoner of the fog. I don't like to get very far away from it. [laughs]

I love fog. I don't like warm, sunny weather. I suppose this is my North Dakota upbringing. But anyway, we sort of were in the same situation as when we first went to Illinois. We didn't have any place to live. August, and even September, are not good times to find places to live in Berkeley. But fortunately I had a cousin who was an insurance agent in Oakland. He was then still single, and I called him up and told him, look, Dean, you have to find us a place to live, and I specified what I wanted.

At the same time Evelyn's parents decided to come out to California and live with us. Evelyn's mother's mother had recently died, and Evelyn's father was the victim of a stroke and couldn't talk and had a hard time getting around, so she had him to take care of--and, well, just decided they'd come out and live with us, so we needed a house big enough for two families, sort of.

My cousin found a place around on Del Norte Street, a large house with four bedrooms and a view and a fireplace, all the things that I'd specified. [laughs] Furthermore, Dean--that was his name, Dean Whitesel, my favorite aunt's son--went on vacation back to Minneapolis where his parents lived, where he'd grown up and left his Studebaker convertible and his apartment for us to use while he was gone the first couple weeks. [laughter] So we came by train, and after stopping in Colorado to visit my sister for some time--not very long, because we didn't have very long--and arrived at night, stayed in Dean's apartment that very night. The next morning I had to be at The Faculty Club for a luncheon in my honor.

McCreery: In your honor.

Mosher: Well, you know, first time anyone had seen me except Danton. I remember driving from Oakland to Berkeley--wait a minute--yes, that's right--and parking on the campus, not far from the library. And after the luncheon and various other things--getting a library card and so on--I got into my car and had to stop a passerby to ask how do you get out of this place? [laughs] I didn't know which way to turn or how it would be possible to get to a public street. I was sold.

McCreery: I'm glad to hear you got a library card on your first day.

Mosher: Yes. The only assistant librarian at that time was Marion Milczewski, and after lunch he took me to--the library and the library school used to have lunch together frequently at The Faculty Club--and gave the authority for me to get a library card. Yes, I needed that right away because I was working on the *Anonyma and Pseudonyma*, yet. And then I was shown to my office too, on the fourth floor of the old [Doe] library. Of course, that's where the library school was then.

McCreery: That must have been right around the time they moved to the fourth floor. Or perhaps they were in the process of moving? Do you recall?

Mosher: Let me think. I guess it hadn't moved yet, and it wasn't on the fourth floor, but my first office was up on the fourth floor.

McCreery: In any event, it was around the time you came.

Mosher: Yes. Yes, I had thought we were going to move--I had been led to believe by Danton that the library school was going to be in the annex, was going to have a brand new building, but it turned out that, of course, we weren't. We stayed where we were for a while. I think maybe just about the time I came they were moving.

The First Semester at Berkeley

McCreery: Perhaps you could just say a little bit more about what your duties were right away, since you were coming late after the semester started.

Mosher: As I reported, I had nothing to do except attend faculty meetings, which there weren't very many of, and to get acquainted. As I said, I was working on the *Anonyma and*

Pseudonyma book. That kept me very involved, and I didn't have anything to do by way of courses, except this one course that we divided up the three of us into--I don't know who took the first part of the semester. I think I had the last part of the semester, so I didn't have anything to do the first two-thirds of the semester.

McCreery: Again, that was you and Mr. Ready?

Mosher: I'm not sure--no, it was Mr. Merritt, LeRoy Merritt, whose house by the way, this was, before we moved in.

McCreery: This house we're in now?

Mosher: Yes. This was LeRoy Merritt's house. Not then, but we bought it from him. And Reuben Peiss, I think.

McCreery: The course was shared by three, who each took a part of it.

Mosher: Yes, that's right. And in different time intervals.

McCreery: So you had some time to get settled into your new house and so on?

Mosher: Oh, yes, and we needed it, too, because Evelyn's parents didn't come until--it was 1950--Korean War--our furniture didn't come for, well, until the very end of September. We moved into this house that was rented for us. We had a house, but there was no furniture in it. The next door neighbor was an elderly lady who was very friendly and whose son lived a couple blocks away. They lent us couple of army cots and some bedding.

McCreery: Pretty spartan?

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: What did your wife think of all of these changes in your lives?

Mosher: She has always liked Berkeley, and we were so glad to get out of Chicago. And for Randy--the very first day he went--he was late to get into school, second grade, and his teacher was a lovely young woman. He had had an old battle axe in Chicago, [laughter] who'd been there for years and years. We had had her over for dinner one night and you could see why--well, she wouldn't be a real inspiration to the first-graders. But both Randy and--I think something a little bit long here--not long, but we stayed at my cousin Dean's apartment for the first couple weeks. It wasn't too bad there. We had time to get acquainted with our next door neighbor, and Evelyn had time to

do a lot of housecleaning and get sort of settled in the neighborhood before our furniture came.

Then around the first of October, her parents came and their furniture. It was all, well, just really delightful because the weather and everything pleased us so much. And there were no particular problems at the library school. Everything was functioning all right. And certainly no problem for me because I didn't have anything to teach.

McCreery: [laughs] Well, you did start teaching, though, later in that semester. Can you describe your first teaching experience here?

Mosher: No, I've said there were only those two or three students, so we just sat around and talked. I didn't know anything about the methods of research except, you know, what do you do? What are the methods? They had some guidelines from the others, but they hadn't taught the course either. Maybe LeRoy Merritt had --I think I just drew on my own experience on what you do in research. I don't remember the students at all. At that time we didn't have a doctoral program, but there was a second-year master's program and the first degree was a bachelor's degree.

Early Experiences at the School of Librarianship; Colleagues

McCreery: What were your impressions of the library school itself when you were in your first year, do you recall?

Mosher: I liked it, of course. After I started teaching the history of the book, I began to realize that my previous teaching experience had been very one-sided. I had students before--only students who were not very good and forced to take a required course; here all the students were graduates of a university before they came in my class, and they all were very much interested in the subject because this was going to be their permanent occupation, and this was the only education they had. So they were all eager and anxious to learn and all very much stimulated and unqualified. So it was fun to teach them.

Barr Tompkins had left me a set of notes indicating what books the library had that would be useful in the history of the book course. These were all in the so-called rare book room, which was just an extra room where--we didn't have a rare books department. So I spent quite a bit of time from before

the spring semester just finding these books. Every week I had an exhibit of the books that I was talking about in the course, and the students loved this.

It's a very interesting subject, the history of the book, and I said I didn't know very much about it, but I had learned a great deal at the Newberry, working at the rare books library. Mr. Pargellis had often given me groups of books to decide what to do with, which included a lot of rare materials, so I had begun to learn something about it.

The students were just fun to work with. I liked Berkeley and the university and the library school and the whole situation well enough, so I decided I didn't want to do anything else--especially didn't want to move away from this climate.

McCreery: [laughs] Tell me something about your faculty colleagues in the school.

Mosher: The teacher of cataloging was [Anne] Ethelyn Markley, and we were fairly closely associated because we needed to correlate our courses. Cataloging students needed to know where to find information about the books they were cataloging, and so I needed to teach in reference--now I'm jumping ahead of myself. I wasn't teaching reference then. Anyway, I didn't get so well acquainted with Ethelyn the first year. We did correlate courses, and so I taught what she needed and she taught what I needed. I needed some information from the cataloging courses. I think she was about a perfect cataloging teacher, that's what I think, and a very friendly and intelligent and helpful colleague.

I don't know whether--well, it turned out, not at first, but we learned that we both have the same birthday--February 19--and so we began to celebrate our birthday together. That usually meant that we'd have dinner together that Evelyn prepared at our home. Sometimes we'd go out.

Grete [Frugé Cubie] was on the faculty, but I had very little to do with her because she was just the assistant to Ethelyn.

I've already mentioned LeRoy Merritt. I think he was not a good teacher. I felt that he didn't belong on the library school faculty. He had a bad stutter and he was not self-confident. And anyway, he was not well liked as a teacher. I liked him all right, got along fine with him, but I didn't ever think he was a good teacher, nor did I respect his publications

very much either. But he was interested in stuff that I wasn't interested in.

McCreery: Mr. Ready came at the same time you did?

Mosher: Yes, Mr. Ready. I was trying to think of the ones who were there before. I guess it was sort of a new slate of people, wasn't it?

McCreery: Yes, Mr. [Carleton B.] Joeckel was there, I gather, for a short time.

Mosher: Yes, but he was--he taught one course, maybe, and he was not very important in the faculty, although he came to faculty meetings and he was a very likeable person. Of course, he had tremendous experience and authority and background, and everyone looked up to him as one of the czars of the library profession, sort of. And I think his knowledge and everything about him was very good. His wife was a sociable person and invited people to their home, and we had many good times with them.

Will Ready didn't belong on the faculty. He was a Canadian and had not had much experience with American libraries at all. In fact, I don't think he had had any. He was from Canada, so his being put in to teach reference was a real mistake. He should never have taught reference in an American library school.

McCreery: Were you and he asked to share that duty at first?

Mosher: At first it was thought that we were going to, but when I came late, he'd already started and he said he'd prefer to just do the whole thing himself, so I never taught reference the first year. It wasn't until he left that I taught reference.

He was more interested in writing than in librarianship, and his students felt that he had given them short shrift. He stood up in front of the class and told stories instead of teaching reference. But who knows, I don't know what teaching reference--there are various ways of teaching it. But the students didn't like him.

Reuben Peiss was not well all the time. He died, of course, two years later. He had been involved with a number of important library areas. The most recent thing he had done was, after the war, organize collecting for American libraries the books that had been published in Europe during the war. And particularly he was involved with Portuguese and Spanish

books--Portuguese, especially. I can't remember the details now of his life, but he was a very, very brilliant person. I think he was a good librarian. He was a good teacher. And of course he was acquainted with practically all aspects of librarianship and knew all the librarians in the county, I think, of any importance. That's an overstatement, but I think he was an important part of the faculty that first year. Anyway, I had great respect for him and very little respect for Will Ready and not much respect for LeRoy Merritt.

Deanship of J. Periam Danton

Mosher: I don't know, that first year, just what I thought about the dean, Danton. He seemed to do his job well. Certainly he worked hard at it.

The office was very well run, partly because of his staff, which consisted of one person. The school size was limited to fifty students that first year, only fifty students. This [staff member] Annette Goodwin, of course--ever since Danton came at any rate and probably before that--had been the mainstay of that office. She knew all the workings of the university and especially as it related to the library school. She had no student assistant help or temporary help and so on, but she was the one that knew how to work with the university. Danton was very good at this, too. He did his annual reports and kept his correspondence up to date and was on top of everything that happened at the school.

I don't think [Danton was] ever well liked by the students. I don't know exactly why. But he never got any good reports about his course he taught--he taught administration of libraries, but there was the introduction to librarianship course that he was mostly involved in. I thought he was a good teacher, but I think that there was something about him that students just didn't like. I don't know what. Perhaps he was too autocratic.

Maybe a good example, or some kind of example, of what he was like. Every student had a desk in the fourth floor corridors of the library, and Danton would walk through and if anybody didn't have a coat on or didn't have a necktie, he would point this out to them: "Well, you'd better dress the way a professional person dresses."

That's another thing. He got that much involved with making them, well, correspond to what he thought was right. But that first year I really didn't have much contact with him and felt that things were going along all right. I wasn't interfered with, at any rate.

Recollections of Edith Coulter and Della Sisler

[Interview 3: April 2, 1999] ##

McCreery: When we met last time, a couple of weeks ago, we ended talking about some of your colleagues in the library school during your first few years there, starting in 1950, and also about the courses you were teaching at that time. One of the things I wanted to do today was to ask about your recollections of the early faculty of the school. I wanted to ask in particular about Miss Edith Coulter, who I gather was still around at the time you arrived. Can you tell me a little bit about her?

Mosher: Yes. She shared an office with Miss Markley and Mrs. Frugé [Cubie], which was in the same corridor as my office. She came to faculty meetings pretty regularly, or I often saw her at lunch at The Faculty Club. I didn't really have much to do with her, except that I talked with her as you talk with any faculty member. When I asked her if she had any suggestions for teaching reference, which I had never done before--and I knew that she was a very successful and very popular teacher of reference and bibliography--she said, "Well, I really don't want to tell you anything about how to teach reference. I think you ought to decide how you want to teach it and what you want to teach. I'm willing to give you information, if you ask me for it, but I don't want to tell you anything about it." So I didn't, although I was feeling very--well, I really didn't know what I was doing the first time I taught reference. I had to develop my course the way I thought it ought to be.

Mr. Ready, who had taught it the previous year, had presented a very formless course, in which he basically just stood up and talked about reference, as I understand it. I didn't visit his classes. I didn't think that was the kind of course I wanted. I thought that they ought to know the basic reference materials, and I thought the course ought to make them learn about them.

The only time I remember Miss Coulter telling me anything about teaching reference was when I started teaching the

government documents part of the course. I think that she actually volunteered this information to me. She came into the office and told me that she knew that I was teaching government documents and she thought California state documents were very important. She told me about a work that was a very good bibliography of California documents and that I ought to be sure to include that, which I did then, because I didn't know anything about California documents at that point.

McCreery: What was the name of it?

Mosher: I can't tell you right now. Otherwise she was a very pleasant person to be around. She and her sister, Mabel, lived together in a house on Hawthorne, I think it was. And we were--Evelyn and I were invited there for a meal, or meals. The whole faculty was occasionally, I think. And so we became very friendly.

I remember the time she was elected or appointed for some honor from the American Library Association for reference work, and she was very pleased about this. It had been announced at a faculty meeting which she attended, but she was not feeling good at this point. I remember, coming from The Faculty Club back to the library school, she had to sit down and rest a while.

She was not a very great influence on my work. I think that Miss [Della J.] Sisler would have been more of an influence, because she taught the history of the book and that's what I was most interested in, but I practically never saw her since she avoided the university and the library and the library school most of the time. I don't think I had more than a few words with her ever, just because she didn't want to be involved with the library school she was no longer part of--which I think she felt unfairly deprived of somehow. So she had frankly no effect upon my work, and I didn't know her very well.

Teaching Reference and Bibliography

Mosher: We mentioned Barr Tompkins before. He had left me a list of books that he had shown as examples of the books that the course was about, but that's all. He had no notes or anything of that sort. He wasn't unfriendly, but he was very busy as head of the Bancroft reference service. And I don't think he was particularly interested in my being successful anyway, because he had resigned in protest and the conditions under

which he was protesting were still in effect. But he was always outwardly cordial and friendly and I really didn't--I had to develop these courses all by myself in other words.

McCreery: How did you approach that task?

Mosher: Well, first of all, I thought that experience, actual experience with the reference works was important, so I developed a series of assignments of questions that were mimeographed and given to the students to do each week. At first I did this all by myself, but later I was able to have help from the office in mimeographing and typing the copy from which you mimeographed, and mimeographing the stuff. The office provided one person, part time.

I think the first class that I taught in 1950 was the last one limited to fifty students. Then we began to accept more students--about as many as we could get, because libraries were clamoring for more librarians. They had to come through the library school, so we increased the number of library school students as much as we could. In fact, we admitted many students I thought should not have been admitted, but they were admitted because they were so needed in the field.

The first few classes were very, very good, I thought. That's why I was inclined to stay in the position, because the teaching was so much different from anything I'd done before. I had sworn never to teach again, but I liked teaching library school students.

I had more than one opportunity to leave during that time. Ray Swank, who was the head of the Stanford library then, offered me a job as an acquisitions librarian, which Will Ready accepted; I turned it down. I don't know whether--well, he offered it to me, at any rate. And I was offered a job that I almost took at the University of Kansas, in Lawrence. Bob Vosper, who had been at UCLA, asked me to be his assistant librarian.

Promotions to Assistant and Associate Professor; Meeting with Clark Kerr

Mosher: I said that if I were made associate professor at Berkeley I would stay. I had just been made assistant professor, just then.

McCreery: Yes, because you came in as an instructor, you said last time.

Mosher: Yes, that's right. I'd just been made, after two years, an assistant professor. And it was hard for the administration, hard for everyone, to then immediately make me associate professor.

McCreery: How so?

Mosher: Because obviously they didn't know what they were doing, I guess. [laughs] I'm not sure why. That's the indication I got. Well, [sighs] I suppose if I started talking about this, I might as well go ahead, but it finally came to the point where everyone agreed--the faculty, the library school, and so on, that they'd like to have me stay at Berkeley.

So Clark Kerr, who had just been appointed chancellor of the university, called me in. He said it was his first task as chancellor, was to talk to me about this problem that the administration had. He suggested a plan that would up me to a higher salary the first year and give me the promise of being reviewed for associate professor the next year. And this would please the administration and everyone. So anyway, it made it possible for me to stay on. Otherwise, I was just at the point of going.

McCreery: What was the administration's problem that he described to you?

Mosher: That it would make them look foolish, or it would interfere with the operation of promotion, and so on. Generally, if I were just made assistant professor, it would seem as though they didn't know what they were doing [to have] me become an associate professor immediately. That was the idea I got. It was okay to become associate professor, but not immediately. Because associate professor, of course, got tenure, and that's what I wanted. I'd been there long enough to see that you had to have tenure to really--

McCreery: What were your impressions of Clark Kerr at that meeting?

Mosher: I liked him very much. He was young and very knowledgeable and very persuasive, and had obviously considered the problem and sought a solution which was acceptable, so I liked him.

McCreery: Had you met him before that?

Mosher: I don't think I had ever met him, no. And I didn't have much to do with him afterwards.

McCreery: So you were able to work that out with him?

Mosher: Well, sort of. You might call it blackmailing on my part. [laughs] I've been told that that was held against me for a long time, because they don't like to have promotions forced. They like to have the promotions scheduled along regularly. I didn't feel that I was doing anything very bad, because I thought I should not have been only an instructor for the first two years, but that was the way it worked out.

I, of course, was very reluctant--although I liked Bob Vosper very much, I was very reluctant to leave Berkeley for Lawrence, Kansas, especially since Evelyn's family had come out to Berkeley to live with us. Nobody wanted to go back to the middle west.

So there were two decisions I had to make the first couple years of teaching. I was pleased, of course, that people wanted me to stay, and I was pleased that the courses were going along and the students seemed to like the way it was all operating.

Teaching the History of the Book; Summers in the Rare Book Room

Mosher: The history of the book course was very popular, and the students enjoyed it thoroughly because they got actually to handle these very rare and historical books from the Bancroft. We had an exhibit every week in the--well, not in The Bancroft Library because they weren't in The Bancroft Library then. I think it was called the office collection or something like that--and stashed away in a sort of store room, but right next to the room where I taught. The library school had a classroom on the third floor. It was right next--well, it's all been changed so much now--I don't know, unless you want to talk about all that.

McCreery: That's fine.

Mosher: The rare books were in this particular room, as I think I mentioned before, all in no particular order. And because I needed more than $4,200 a year, I asked for and was given the opportunity to work during the summer--there wasn't any summer school then--in the rare book room, just surveying it and making a report on what was there and rearranging it so that it could be used. So that's the first summer, I worked at the rare book room as, I might say, a rare book librarian. But

there was no rare books department, and these books were just labeled as office collection, I think.

I can't remember the date, but one night there was a flood. It wasn't the first year. A sewer pipe, or some water pipe burst above the room where the collection was housed, and I was called at something like eleven or twelve o'clock at night, because I was presumably in charge of this collection. I dashed down to the library and steam was coming down, and water was coming down from the ceiling. A number of staff members had been called, too, and we all immediately started pulling the books out of the so-called rare book room and into what was the library school classroom.

They did get the water stopped and not very much was damaged because on the top of the shelves were a collection of not very important books--a collection on the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*--I think they'd been given to them, or another similar, not-too-important collection. The really rare books were not much damaged at all. They had been put out of harm's way. And the next morning after, the library staff was there drying them out, page by page, and so on.

Then they had to move them someplace, and that's when they started to become part of the rare book room. Well, that's when the rare book room was established, I think. They didn't become part of the Bancroft for years after that.

Impressions of Students; Admissions Process

McCreery: Let's return to your teaching for a moment. You were preparing these courses pretty much from scratch.

Mosher: That's right. Entirely from scratch.

McCreery: But they were going well.

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: As you began teaching, what did you think of your students?

Mosher: Oh, yes, the reason for liking what I was doing was the students. As I mentioned before in teaching freshman English at Illinois, there were no good students. All the students that knew how to write, that had learned anything, had taken the proficiency test and had been excused from it. But here

the students at the library school were all graduates of a college or university and had decided they wanted to be librarians. This was the only training and education that they were going to get, so they were all eager and more or less excited, I think, about a new profession that most of them had little experience with--although a number of them had had library work--so it was a lot of fun to work with them. They were enthusiastic and intelligent and knowledgeable and interested, and most of them were very good.

McCreery: Do you remember any names that stand out--again, just from your first few years or so?

Mosher: Yes. Let's see, I hate to mention anyone because there were so many of them whom I thought were very good. Pat Anderson was one of them. Pat Anderson, who became Mrs. Farquar, was one of the students who stood out.

McCreery: She graduated in '53, I think.

Mosher: Yes. The class of '53 was an especially good class from my point of view. There were a number of good students who liked history of the book. I think I probably just got to the point, after a couple of years, of teaching reference pretty well and they liked it. I remember toward the end of the year I told the class that I was getting a little tired of standing up in front of them and talking all the time, and I thought some of them ought to talk about some of the subjects that they knew about like philosophy, that I didn't know too much about. I asked for volunteers who would teach that particular subject.

The most important of those who volunteered and who did teach or lecture--I think it was only one session, one or two, was Pat Wilson. In fact, that's actually why he became part of the library school, because I was so impressed with his ability as a teacher that I suggested that he do some lecturing. He had been working in the library and he had been working toward a Ph.D. in philosophy. And he's a good teacher, but I think that's probably the first time that he ever tried to, well, pose as a teacher in class. [laughter]

I have a list of all the students I've ever had back there that I can look over and point out names. I can't think of his first name, but his last name was Black. He went to Humboldt State College Library at the same time I guess that Pat Anderson went, or maybe she went a year later, I'm not sure of that. He was a very good student and could have gone to a number of libraries, but he decided he wanted to go to Humboldt State because of the opportunity to get out into the country.

He loved that part of the country. Don [Donald V.] Black, I think, was his name. He didn't stay there. He later got into computers down here somewhere. I think he had his own company.

But another 1953 class member was Portia Hawley [Griswold]. Portia Hawley later became--I've forgotten her official title--a member of the faculty of the school and then married Ray [Raynard C.] Swank. So she became Mrs. Swank. She was librarian at Reno [Washoe County Library in Nevada] before she came here. She was working toward her doctorate at one point, but she started teaching and never had time to work on it, I guess. She became the librarian at Richmond [Public Library], too. She had a very successful library career before she started teaching reference. No, she didn't teach reference, she taught public librarianship.

McCreery: You mentioned a few minutes ago that as the school expanded and began taking more students, you noticed that there were some students you thought should not have been admitted. Can I ask you to talk a little bit about the admissions process to the extent you knew about it?

Mosher: I think that at one point--particularly the period that we're talking about when librarians were in such demand--that we began to accept almost anyone who had a bachelor's degree and at least a C average--whatever it was--and who had had a little library experience or who just expressed an interest. But we were particularly concerned with people with subject interests and people who'd worked in libraries. We often admitted some who had no particular subject experience and no subject knowledge and no experience in libraries, just because we needed people. At one desperate point, I think all over the country there were probably ten vacancies for every library school graduate every year. It was really amazing how the library people--librarians, administrators, and so on--from seeing the problem [of high demand for librarians] then began to lower their requirements for positions. They didn't have to have a library school degree, and that helped.

We also had a couple other problems that led to admission of students who weren't as good as they ought to be. One was blacks, when the furor over opportunities for blacks came about. The university wanted to admit as many blacks as possible, and so we would admit black students, even though there was so little demand for them. Very few libraries wanted black staff people.

The other was Orientals. There were--I don't know exactly what officially prompted this, but there were a number of

students in Oriental countries who applied to the library school so that they could presumably go back to work in their own country. But once they got here, they usually stayed.

They, of course, were a problem because of language. Most of them were very, very smart and intelligent, but they had no idea what a library was, really. They had an awfully hard time with learning English while going to library school, which is what many of them were trying to do. So it was difficult to grade them along with the regular students and to graduate them so that a librarian would understand that they were able to go into a library and start working. That's what the purpose of the library school was. They weren't able to go into a library and start working unless it was a library of their own language.

So that was hard. But we were being asked by the university administration to admit as many students from the Orient as possible, and as many blacks as possible. So the administration was no help in keeping these students out. They were qualified, and so they were admitted. They had to have some kind of language test which they had passed.

Well, those are the problems I remember about admittance. But I guess I never did have the power to admit. I acted as associate dean, more than once, and the associate dean was often responsible for suggesting the names for admitting, so I read a lot of the applications. I think the applications were sent around to all the faculty, as a matter of fact.

The Deanship of J. Periam Danton; Establishing Doctoral Programs

McCreery: We were just talking about the process of admitting new students once the school began to grow so much in the fifties and so on, and about the role of faculty in making those decisions. Let me ask you something else about faculty relations. I'm interested in faculty meetings and other times that the faculty may have gathered to discuss admissions or anything else and how those kinds of activities were conducted and how they were led by the dean.

Mosher: From the time I got to the library school there were, I think, pretty much regular faculty meetings. I can't remember how often they were, partly because most of us ate at The Faculty Club--or most of the men; women weren't allowed in The Faculty

Club except in the outer portions--so that every noon we ate at the same table with people from the library staff and other faculty members. Often business would sort of be conducted there, and so I don't remember when--I think probably once a month we had a faculty meeting.

At one point we had faculty meetings at The Faculty Club. This must have been after women were permitted to enter the hallowed precincts of the club. We sometimes even met at the Women's Faculty Club, had faculty meetings, usually over a lunch, then. We'd sometimes have faculty meetings in the dean's office, too. The first faculty meetings, I think, were at the dean's office.

Well, Danton, who was the dean, of course, when I first got there, was a good leader of such meetings, and he usually had an agenda. And he always had the paperwork all up to date and was very aware of what the administration needed from the school. He always had a plan, I think.

One of the big and most important ideas he had during those first years was the inauguration of a Ph.D. program for the library school, which he was unable to push through the university administration. He was turned down at least once after trying very hard to get the permission to have a doctor's degree. He thought this was really important for the school.

McCreery: What did you think?

Mosher: Oh, I wasn't in favor of it. I didn't think it made too much difference. I thought that it was too much for the faculty and I thought that very few--I didn't think that a doctor's degree in librarianship was really worth bothering with. That's what I thought then. I had a very poor idea of library schools. I think I mentioned that before, that it seemed to me they were mostly a waste of time--that you'd be better just to go in a library and start working. And I thought that probably the best thing for someone who wanted a doctorate in librarianship was to start working in a library and get a Ph.D.--if that's what was wanted--in the subject field.

But I don't think I expressed that clearly and strongly. I went along with the idea of the doctorate. As it turned out, the very first student doctor's degree was in history of the book. And to go back further than that, the second or third time that a committee was appointed to decide whether the library school should have a doctorate or not, the committee reported that, well, they didn't think that librarianship deserved a doctorate, had the material for a doctorate.

But they were convinced by the history of the book and history of libraries, which we were very strong in at that time. The history of libraries--Danton and Held and so on--there were three or four people who could teach history of libraries and that was their field. So the committee agreed that a doctorate should be inaugurated, but that it ought to be very carefully guided. And there had to be two or three members from outside the school--at least one--on the doctoral candidate's committee. They had to have a preliminary examination on the field of librarianship, which turned out to be very difficult for some students, because they hadn't paid much attention to the basic stuff in librarianship. They'd been working in libraries.

One of the doctoral students I thought most promising flunked his preliminary examination on librarianship, because he just hadn't paid much attention to it and he just couldn't make a convincing case. That was Lloyd Lyman, who was disappointed enough to quit librarianship after that--not quit preparation for the doctorate. He became an employee of the University of California Press under Gus [August K.] Frugé and stayed in the University Press the rest of his career. I thought he was an excellent librarian. He would have deserved a doctorate in librarianship if anybody did.

McCreery: How did it come to pass that the first Ph.D. granted in librarianship there was in history of the book, and what was your involvement?

Mosher: His dissertation was a history of a magazine started in San Francisco. I can dig it out somewhere here. He was interested in the history of publishing, and I was his adviser. Grant Skelly was his name. He managed to get his dissertation written and accepted before anyone else did, partly because he was older, he was a good writer, and he had all the necessary qualities for--he later, what he did was to join the University of Washington faculty in Seattle. I think he stayed there--I'm not sure whether he did or not--but he taught the history of the book there for years.

McCreery: Were you won over to the idea of a Ph.D. program?

Mosher: Oh, yes. It seemed to work out all right. I still have even now the opinion that a doctorate in library administration--how to run a library sort of stuff--is unnecessary. And I don't think that many degrees awarded have been up to the standard that the University of California should offer for a doctorate, but I'm conservative that way. I never taught library administration, and that's not what I'm interested in.

McCreery: Now Berkeley, of course, offered really two doctoral degrees, the Ph.D. and the Doctor of Library Science.

Mosher: Yes, that's right. That's the other thing that was involved. This committee decided it would be okay for us to have a doctorate. It was decided that for library administration subjects, it had to be a DLS--Doctorate of Library Science, I think it was called. And that, of course, was not very popular. Everyone wanted a Ph.D., not a separate degree. But a number of people started, and most of us thought that that would be the first doctorate finished, but it didn't turn out to be. Partly because, I suppose, it was a new thing, and nobody knew exactly what was involved in it, what conditions--no, there weren't any conditions. We didn't have an organized setup for what the preparation for a doctorate might be.

McCreery: You mentioned that students had to take a preliminary exam in the field of librarianship.

Mosher: Yes, the first year, I recall. Yes, the first year of librarianship.

McCreery: Yes. For the doctoral degree. What kinds of things were included in that general exam?

Mosher: Oh, reference and bibliography and library administration, and I think history of books and libraries. At one point, at any rate, I think history of the book was required of every graduate. And history of libraries, I'm not sure whether that was required or not, but it may have been. Everything you learned the first year of library school--it was an examination on those subjects. And I've forgotten now, exactly--and frankly, the whole curriculum was required at one point.

McCreery: Yes, that's true. But that whole approach assumes that there is a specific body of knowledge that librarians should master. What do you think of that idea?

Mosher: I agree with it. I did then. It's a lot different to talk about librarianship back in the 1950s than it is now, or has been in the last ten years, even. So yes, I think the whole faculty--and we voted on this, of course. It was a faculty decision on what should be required and all of us pretty well agreed. There were hardly any objections as to what we should include in the basic curriculum. It wasn't until we began to bring in computer specialists and start talking about information instead of librarians that the requirements went out. Very few courses were required after that, except cataloging.

McCreery: We will talk about that. You were talking, though, about faculty meetings and faculty involvement in admissions decisions and so on. Tell me a little more about how Professor Danton was received by the faculty as dean.

Mosher: My impression and the impression of the faculty I admired most was that he was considered to be--that he knew how to keep the paperwork going, but that his relationships with students and his relationship with many of the faculty was not very good. I don't know how to phrase it. It seemed to me that he was interested mainly in himself and not in the school or the students, and that he made many judgments that were against the best interests of students, especially, because of his own personal feelings.

Well, I guess it just boils down to the fact that we didn't like him personally. He was--I don't know what word to use. He was personable and likable in many ways, but he did not seem to me to be conducting the library school for its best interests most of the time. But this is all--I can't put myself back in that time and place now. I do remember feeling very much opposed to him and what he was doing. I don't have much respect for anything he's done, except some of his publications are okay--nothing, certainly, exceptional. It always has seemed to me that he was concerned mainly, as I said, with himself and his position, and his decisions were made basically on that position: that is, what good would it do him, or what harm would it avoid.

McCreery: Are you thinking of any decisions in particular that weren't in the best interests of students, for example?

Mosher: I'm trying to think of the one that really tipped the scales in my opinion, and now I can't. I know it got to the point where the dean was being automatically reviewed. It was rather strange. He was supposed to be reviewed every five years. He hadn't been reviewed for I don't know how long--ten or fifteen. Somehow or other a review process had started and something in particular happened that made me feel that he just didn't deserve to--I couldn't work under him any more. Something in connection with a student, which I may think of. I went to the point of writing a letter to the review committee, saying that if Danton were to continue as dean, I would resign. So I felt pretty strongly about it.

McCreery: What happened?

Mosher: I met with a member of the review committee. I suppose he was the chairman of it--he's now dead--whose name I've been trying

to remember, but I can't. I told him what I felt or what I thought. Well, he was not continued as dean, Danton was not. They started looking for another dean, and that's when Swank became dean, eventually. LeRoy Merritt was acting dean first.

McCreery: Did Professor Danton involve himself in your actual teaching?

Mosher: No. No, I don't think that he interfered with anybody's teaching. I never heard of that, at any rate. He left cataloging to Ethelyn Markley, and he could hardly object to anything she did. He left history of the book and reference to me. He didn't know anything about them and he didn't know--well, I shouldn't say that. I never had anybody tell me anything of how to teach or not to teach, or what to teach and not to teach.

McCreery: That would hardly have been allowed at Berkeley at all, would it? [laughter]

Mosher: No. It would hardly have been. [laughter]

Loyalty Oath Controversy

McCreery: You mentioned last time that one of the concerns you were alerted to before you came to Berkeley was the loyalty oath controversy here. Now I'd like to follow up on that and ask, once you arrived and were teaching in the early fifties when this was going on, what were your experiences with that issue?

Mosher: You know, I'm trying to remember when the oath was removed. I know I signed the thing every time I got a contract. I didn't know anybody--well, Danton was very much opposed to the oath and involved in the committee, I think, against it. I don't think we ever discussed it. My memory doesn't tell me when or how the oath was removed.

It didn't have any effect on me personally. I signed the papers and everything was fine. And by 1950, the heat had been removed somehow, so there weren't demonstrations or meetings or anything of this sort. It was all, I think, in the law courts, pretty much.

McCreery: Other than Professor Danton, do you recall were the other library school faculty members particularly passionate about the issue, or involved?

Mosher: No, I don't remember that.

McCreery: You don't remember one way or the other?

Mosher: I don't remember that they were passionately involved, no. I don't remember anyone talking to me about it. No, we all thought it was a disgraceful political business, but none of us got stirred up enough about it to think of resigning or--it just didn't seem to make much difference.

McCreery: The concern that you had before you came to Berkeley didn't really materialize into anything substantial?

Mosher: Not in any way at all. I now sort of regret that I didn't say, "No, I'm not going to come to this university that insists upon an oath," but of course, frankly, every university in the country had some kind of an oath. I've forgotten--this oath was in addition to another oath or something, and therefore it was more obnoxious, which I didn't understand at the time. I understood it later, but I wasn't angry enough about it to want to do anything about it. Anyway, I'm not a passionate protestor. [laughter]

McCreery: What about, again, just any memories that you have or impressions--what about in the larger campus atmosphere? Did you feel the loyalty oath matter had died down quite a bit by the time you were there or not?

Mosher: Yes. It had died down, I think, quite a bit. But you also must remember that--I must say--that the library school was a very small group. Most of the campus didn't even know that it existed, and I seldom had reason to be involved with anyone out of the library school. I was very, very busy just doing what I had to do in the library school, so I did not participate in matters outside the library school. I was on practically no committees. I didn't want to be, especially. Well, I didn't want to be because I didn't think I had time. I was also trying very hard to uphold the research part of my contract.

McCreery: Yes, I'd like to ask you about that. But just to finish up, keeping in mind your comment that you stayed quite a lot within the library school, can you describe for me the general atmosphere on campus the first few years you were there, just your impressions?

Mosher: It was all really very quiet, I thought, and nothing to get too excited about.

McCreery: Anything to compare, or to stand out from your time at University of Chicago, or University of Illinois?

Mosher: No. Nothing, no. Later it was quite a different matter.

McCreery: Yes, it was. Okay.

Mosher: But I didn't think there was anything.

State Aid to California Public Libraries

McCreery: Let's turn to your research interests of that early part of your teaching career here. I happened to note on something you gave me, I think, a publication very early on when you were here, June 1951, in *California Librarian*, titled "State Aid: A Challenge to Librarians." Do you recall that particular one?

Mosher: Oh, yes.

McCreery: Can you tell me about it?

Mosher: That was the first publication after I came to the school. I was asked--I think by Coit Coolidge, who was then librarian at Richmond [Public Library] and who was involved in some committee concerning state aid with the [California] State Library, which was then headed by the daughter of James Gillis.

McCreery: Mabel Gillis?

Mosher: Yes. Mabel. It was felt that the State of California needed to support public libraries, and I think that's what the state library thought, too. Many of the public librarians in the state felt this was the wrong thing to do, that public libraries ought to be supported by their clientele, by the libraries that owned and operated them and that state aid would only result in state control, and they didn't want this. So there was a very strong opposition to state aid for public libraries.

So I was asked to--I think I had said something somewhere that I was in favor of state aid, because it would seem to me ridiculous not to be, and I was asked to write for the *California Librarian*, the California Library Association publication, an article on state aid to public libraries. I was all for it, and I wrote the article you mentioned. I have

a copy of it. Would you like to see it? I'll get it out for you later.

McCreery: Thank you.

Mosher: I remember I gave it to Coit Coolidge. He was the one that asked me to do it. He told me that if he could write as well as that, he wouldn't be a librarian, he'd spend all of his time writing for library journals. [laughs]

McCreery: Oh, how nice.

Mosher: Well, I didn't take him up on that. I didn't have time. Anyway, it was used in the campaign for state aid, I know that. And state aid became a law very soon.

McCreery: Who made up this strong opposition to state aid?

Mosher: The public librarians of the state, particularly in the south, particularly librarians that already had enough money just from their locality. You see, they didn't need any money from the state, and they didn't want the state library butting into their business. And also there was rivalry among the librarians, who didn't want somebody from the state library to come in and tell them what to do. They had all sorts of silly reasons for it. Maybe they weren't silly if I knew what they were all about, but it seemed silly to turn down money. I understand certainly there were lots of libraries in the state that needed financial aid and needed state help in organizing and selecting their collections.

McCreery: But those opposed seemed to be concerned about interference from the state?

Mosher: That's right. That's what the problem was. That's why it was a challenge to librarians, you see. So I guess that was the only time I published anything in the *California Librarian*.

McCreery: Do you remember the reaction to your article?

Mosher: Just from those who were in favor of it. They used it for advocating state aid. This was not only in California, it was pretty well all over the country about then, the question of--local libraries had always been a matter of local financing. And people worried about it.

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McCreery: We were just talking about your article in *California Librarian* on state aid. While we had the tape off, you have pulled out the article and I've been looking at it. Perhaps you could just finish that topic by telling me what happened after the article came out and the issue went before the state legislature and so on.

Mosher: I've forgotten the details, but I know that very quickly, within a couple years, state aid was approved by the legislature and it became the law. I don't think I had anything more to do with it.

McCreery: I take it once that aid was in place, it continued?

Mosher: Oh, yes, it still is. This is the law that gives--well, what it actually did, I think, was to unify the state library with the public libraries of the state. And I think this is one of the reasons why librarians were against it. They didn't want the state library interfering with what they were doing or be forced to work with the state library in collection building and so on. They wanted to be independent of the state library. They didn't see the advantages, evidently, of having a unified state collection, but the legislature made an integrated system, really, out of the state's public libraries with the legislation that had passed.

McCreery: I saw one of the points you made in the article was that the state's population had grown tremendously and that circumstances were now so different that this change was called for.

Mosher: Yes. It just was becoming necessary for good public library service to have better professional librarians available for consultation, and to help all these new libraries that were starting up and to make the collections of all the libraries in California available to all the other libraries in California. And this was the beginning of that, or the beginning of state aid for doing that at any rate.

The state library has always been very much involved in public libraries in California. I think there was a cataloging service available, and the state library had published statistics of all the public libraries. I think it still does publish statistics for the public libraries in California.

Recollections of State Librarians Mabel Gillis and Carma Zimmerman Leigh

McCreery: In talking about the state library a moment ago, you mentioned Mabel Gillis. Can you tell me a little more about her?

Mosher: I don't know how long she was state librarian after I came here, but I attended meetings with her. I remember sitting at a table with her at some convention or conference, and she was feeling very chilly. I think she didn't have a wrap and nobody else seemed to have one, and so I put my arm around her to try to keep her warm. She was shivering.

She was, I think, pretty well--she still seemed to be very much in command of her job and what she was doing, but I didn't really know much about it. Maybe two years at the most before she died, I think.

McCreery: Yes, it says here in my notes that she retired in 1951 and then Carma Zimmerman took over in 1952. So you're right, it wasn't too long after you came. But what kind of a person was Mabel Gillis?

Mosher: I can't really say, except that she was friendly and able to be in charge of things, when I knew her, and seemed very much respected by everybody and just a nice woman and obviously a good executive. Everyone sort of bowed down to her. They thought she was--even just because of her historical position, they thought she was--I did at any rate--thought she was pretty great. I can't really tell you much about her personality.

McCreery: While we're on the subject of state librarians, Carma Zimmerman, later Carma Leigh, took over. Did you have occasion to get to know her very well?

Mosher: Oh, yes, I did, indeed.

McCreery: Can you tell me a little about her?

Mosher: She was, I thought, a wonderful librarian and very much on top of everything, an excellent state librarian. She seemed to get along with most people. I don't remember hearing any problems with her. I certainly liked what she did, and wrote, and thought. And anything I had to do with her was--I appreciated her and liked her. I thought she was about a perfect state librarian. I thought California was very lucky to have her. She did all the right things, I thought.

I think she championed state aid--she must have been responsible for the actual passage of the state aid bill. She worked with the legislature--of course the state librarian in California is practically an official of the state government and legislature. She seemed to know the whole library world very well and how to get things done.

She developed a staff at the state library that was excellent, I thought--just really great. And I think that the staff began to go around to all the libraries in the state--maybe they already had been to some extent, I don't know--and they were very much appreciated by the state's public librarians. I don't think there was any opposition to state aid to public libraries after it once got started. I don't recall hearing anything about it, at any rate.

I didn't know Carma Zimmerman well enough to give you some idea of her actual personality--a private personality--I didn't know her all that well, but everything I knew about her made her outstanding to me. I always had wished there were more librarians like her.

Coit Coolidge and the Richmond Public Library; Men Librarians Group

McCreery: Thank you. When we were talking about this article a few minutes ago you also mentioned Coit Coolidge getting you into this. How about some recollections of him?

Mosher: I remember him pretty well because he was, after all, Richmond public librarian. Did I say Richmond? I know it was Richmond, certainly. He was librarian at Richmond Public Library just after the war, and he built the Richmond Public Library into a very good public library system--a new building and a good collection. And he was working hard for state aid. That's why he asked me to write this article.

I don't know why I was asked. I must have expressed to him or somebody, somewhere, that I thought it was foolish not to have state aid, so I was asked to write the article.

I guess his works speak for him, because he did develop this very good library and it has continued to be a good public library, although it has certainly fallen on bad financial times. But after the war, in Richmond, there was a lot of

money sort of suddenly, and he made good use of it for libraries.

There again, my knowledge of him is not personal, at all, really, although I did see him socially, I think, a few times, although I can't remember it specifically--at meetings of a group of male librarians. I've forgotten what it was called [known informally as He-Libs]. It didn't have an official name. It didn't have an official organization, but all the male librarians in the area were members of it or could be. They met, oh, I don't know how frequently--a number of times a year, at some restaurant. Women were not allowed [laughs]--just males. The idea was to get away from all the women in the library profession and have a meeting by themselves. [laughs]

McCreery: How did the group get started?

Mosher: I haven't any idea. It was started long before I came. Somebody evidently decided that they'd like to--isn't it funny? Sort of as strange as not allowing women in The Faculty Club. Why do they do it?

I've been thinking--well, not just recently--how impossible it is really to believe that women didn't have the vote in this country until 1920 or around there. If that could happen, almost anything could happen as far as male-female political or professional relations are concerned.

Anyway, I'm sure that Coolidge would attend some of these meetings. And I was invited to come when I first came--you know, go to a different part of the area [for each meeting]. Usually LeRoy Merritt or some other librarian or some other faculty member would go, and we'd eat at a nice restaurant that somebody had picked out.

McCreery: This group was not just Berkeley faculty?

Mosher: No, it was the whole Bay Area.

McCreery: Who else was in the group? Do you remember?

Mosher: Oh, most of them, of course, were not people I knew. Coit Coolidge--well, no, I can't pick out names now. But there were a lot of male librarians, particularly in administrative positions. No business was ever conducted. They didn't have any officers or anything, they'd just have a meeting.

McCreery: What did you talk about over dinner?

Mosher: Oh, just anything--not about libraries particularly--just to get to know each other, I guess. I don't know. I did not continue going to their meetings for very long. Maybe the organization died, I don't know, although I think I knew about meetings going on. They weren't easy to get to. I think we were encouraged by--I don't remember Danton going to them. We were encouraged to go to any kind of library meeting.

McCreery: By him?

Mosher: By him. He thought--we all thought it was good to go to as many library meetings as we could. And we were very strongly encouraged to go to any meeting of California Library Association--the regional, county, whatever. Danton tried to get the library school represented by somebody at every meeting, so we'd go to a lot of different places and meet a lot of different librarians, which was I think a very good thing. Danton was good at public relations, I think.

Faculty Club Lunches; Donald Coney and the Main Library Staff, 1950s

McCreery: You also mentioned that many of the men in the library school and on the library staff would lunch together every day at The Faculty Club. Can you tell me a little bit more about those occasions--who was there?

Mosher: Well, it would be mostly--Donald Coney was the head librarian and Marion Milczewski was his assistant, and both of those usually were there. Barr Tompkins would sometimes be there--not very frequently, though, as I recall. Other members of the staff, probably. I think they were probably intimidated by Coney's presence. But I think Danton usually was there, and depending on library school faculty, LeRoy Merritt would be there, of course, frequently. It wasn't the cheapest kind of lunch, so not many people regularly went there. I'd go and eat very little--they had a cafeteria-style thing--because I couldn't afford to eat the regular lunch, either.

McCreery: Since we're talking about the staff of the main library a little bit, can you characterize for me, again, in the early fifties or mid-fifties, what were relations like between the library school and the staff of the main library?

Mosher: I think they were very--good is an okay word. Well, I think they were excellent. Of course we shared the same buildings

and there weren't all that many librarians, so the library school and the library staff would get to know each other well. And very often we would--well, I had to be involved with the reference staff because my students would be using their collection all the time, and I would be there, too, frequently.

McCreery: Who was head of reference at that time?

Mosher: Oh, let's see. I think it was Lila Chandra. I think she was head of general reference. She was an Indian, youngish woman. All of the members of the reference staff, of course, were very much interested in library school students using the reference collection. They were often, of course, pestered by the students, who--they weren't supposed to help the students [laughs] find the answers to the questions. As I said, I would be there many hours of every week making out questions for the next assignment.

Let's see, I don't really recall that the catalogers were much involved with anything with the library school faculty. I just don't recall that, because I think that Ethelyn Markley had her own ideas about cataloging and how to teach it, and nobody else really could help her much. And of course catalogers don't meet the public at all, and therefore they tend not to be convivial people in a library atmosphere. They're working at an occupation that doesn't allow for intercourse with other people.

The order department at that time was headed by Helen--no, Dorothy Keller. Helen Keller, of course, was quite a different person! [laughter] Dorothy Keller, I had quite a bit to do with in a way, because one of the things that Danton was especially good at was building up the library school collection, and he went through lots of catalogs, and I did, too, in the history of the book. But he went through all kinds of catalogs and got lots of literature, and he would refer much of it to me to see whether I wanted to order it or not, and he urged me to order. Just about anything that I requested would get ordered, so that the collection was being built up in good style. Very often for some reason or other, the order department would question some of the requests or would notify me that they had already been ordered or that somebody else--Bancroft was ordering them or something of the sort. For various reasons I would have business with the head of the order department, so I got to know her.

She worked very closely with Don Coney, of course, with the head librarian. And her word was law as far as ordering was

concerned--not necessarily book selection, but she knew a lot about how to get books, as she should have.

I always felt that I could do what I needed to do or wanted to do in the university library, and the staff was always very cordial. They seemed to me welcoming and I thought that the library itself, as far as the public and as far as the library school was concerned, was a comfortable place to be.

I think very often many of the library staff were unhappy with the library. I think a lot of them felt that they weren't getting as far as they wanted to in the profession, but they didn't want to leave the library because they liked Berkeley so well. And so there was a feeling that the staff wasn't happy with their work. I got that feeling and knew it from some of the librarians with whom I talked. But this is over a long period of time.

But Coney was not a kind of librarian who made it his aim to make his staff happy, particularly. And of course he couldn't fire people, either, I think, easily. And he never did, as far as I remember--any person who had been there for very long, at any rate. And so although they didn't fear him particularly, they didn't feel that they were making progress as librarians at the university library.

Enough of them felt that way so that they didn't feel secure under Coney. They didn't feel good about their jobs. Now this is true of some of them. I never heard anyone in the cataloging department express this, but then I didn't know the people in the cataloging department.

I think the staff could have been improved by more careful consideration of each individual and promoting good people and employing new, better people. But Coney wasn't interested in doing this, somehow.

I think that Mrs. Keller, Dorothy Keller, was a good example. I think she outlived her usefulness at the university library and should have been replaced. I think also that toward the end of his librarianship, Coney had gone beyond his usefulness, too.

He was worried about the advent of the computer and the emphasis on information instead of on librarianship, and I think he felt that he should stay on--hold it off as long as possible. His basic point was that libraries and library faculty should not go whole hog for this--what I want to say is, should go very slowly in adopting the computer and what it

was bringing to the libraries. The worst mistake we could make would be to go too fast and sort of ruin the whole business because of libraries not being ready for it. He felt it would be absolutely too difficult to reorganize everything, to make computers and librarians compatible, I guess. You couldn't do that so quickly. So he wasn't in favor of bringing computer specialists into library school, and he wasn't in favor of introducing the computer into the university library. He wanted to go slow and see how it would come to work out. At least, that's what I understood about him.

I think he was a very good librarian in many respects and a very intelligent and smart and a first-class head librarian.

I should say he and Stanley Pargellis were friends. And Pargellis said, "Well, you go out to Berkeley. Don Coney is a good friend of mine, and he'll see to it that you get a job in a library if you want it."

McCreery: Your fall-back position?

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: Do you have much knowledge of whether Coney's staff shared his view of computerization?

Mosher: I think most of them did, yes. Certainly our library school faculty did, until Swank came along and decided that we better enter the new computer age, I think too--well, I don't know whether it was too soon or too late--exactly what happened. I think it was--this is getting ahead of the subject again.

McCreery: Yes, we will come back to that. It's very much of interest. But just to finish up about Mr. Coney as university librarian--aside from the computerization issue, what do you think were the main challenges he faced during his tenure--just you know, as you see it?

Mosher: I don't think he did enough to improve his staff. I mentioned that before. I don't think he paid enough attention to the workings of the library. I said something like this to his wife Dorothy once, and she said, "Oh, you just don't know how much time he spends thinking and working and being concerned about the staff of this library." And of course I didn't know. I didn't see that there was much evidence that he had. He had not brought any good new librarians in for a long time.

Milczewski left to become librarian at University of Washington, Seattle, and the other assistant librarian,

[Douglas W. Bryant], just as I was coming, went on to become librarian at Harvard. They weren't replaced by anybody of the same caliber at all. He didn't seem to want good new people for some reason. The appointments he did make were pretty sad ones, I thought. He just didn't have any excellent librarians under him. He had to do it all by himself. I think that was a problem.

I have to say too, that I tried to become part of the staff and approached him about it, and he said that there were lots of good librarians but very few good library school teachers and that I ought to stay where I was. I guess maybe I always held that against him, because I really wanted to become part of the library staff, although I don't know now, whether I would--well, I would like to have taken--I'm still two or three minds about this, so I guess I don't want to say anything more.

IV FOCUS ON TEACHING AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

[Interview 4: April 5, 1999] ##

Fighting Censorship During the McCarthy Era

McCreery: We were talking before we turned the tape on this morning about this publication titled *Freedom of Book Selection*,[1] a publication you edited based on the conference proceedings of the year before. I wonder if you can tell me a little bit about how these issues came together and how you came to edit the resulting publication.

Mosher: The conference, of course, was an American Library Association conference held down in Whittier. The American Library Association was meeting in Los Angeles, and this particular "Second Conference on Intellectual Freedom" was held in Whittier. A new member of our faculty, Edward Wight, who was employed to teach public libraries and be our public library specialist in the school, suggested that I should go to the conference and eventually edit the proceedings.

I was interested in intellectual freedom. I think I was on the intellectual freedom committee of the California Library Association, but this meeting at Whittier was an American Library Association meeting and I had nothing to do with its planning. I was simply there and listened to all of it, and then I was given the audio tapes of the proceedings and was asked to edit them for publication.

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[1] Freedom of Book Selection: Proceedings of the Second Conference on Intellectual Freedom, Whittier, California, June 20-21, 1953, Edited by Fredric J. Mosher. Chicago: American Library Association, 1954. (Sponsored by the Committee on Intellectual Freedom, the Book Acquisitions Committee, and the Board on Acquisition of Library Materials of the American Library Association.)

I was given some assistant help to transcribe the tapes into typewritten documents, which I then put together and added various prefaces, introductions, and so on, and consolidated the reports of the general meetings that were part of the conference. It took about a year. We were pretty slow in getting it out, but it eventually, I think, became a reasonably good account of the conference. It contained a lot of information and help for librarians who were struggling at that time with the problems of intellectual freedom for libraries. It was the beginning of the McCarthy era, really.

McCreery: Just to back up for a moment, do you recall how you first became interested in issues of intellectual freedom?

Mosher: I guess I always have been interested in them. As far as libraries go, there wasn't any problem at the Newberry, where I worked. Right away, of course, at the library school, it became a problem in book selection. Now, LeRoy Merritt was our chief book selection professor, and he was especially interested in the problems of intellectual freedom. But somehow or other I think I became, since I was a member of the California Library Association committee--I sort of took over this area of intellectual freedom.

I just automatically, normally, I think, became interested in intellectual freedom. I thought it was simply horrible that libraries were being challenged in this way and that the prevailing atmosphere of the McCarthy Era was interfering with people's rights to read and discuss. So I just had to personally throw any support I could into the problem of securing intellectual freedom for librarians.

There was a lot of censorship going on, not really overtly so much as the librarians themselves were afraid to select certain things or to make certain statements because of the prevailing atmosphere. They were afraid that they would be hauled before a court or something, I guess, and they did not want to select materials that might obviously be considered Communistic or anti-government in any way. The idea of all materials being made available in public libraries was not very firmly held by most public librarians in the state, I would say. They all gave lip service to the idea, but in practice they were much more careful about what happened--although, I think most of the time most materials were made available on most library shelves.

It was the problem of school libraries, of course, that made life especially difficult for the library profession. Opponents of intellectual freedom could always point out,

"Well, you must protect children against all this. You shouldn't allow children to read anything that's being published." So all efforts were being made in the library profession to combat the narrowing of the availability of controversial materials in libraries. I felt I had to be a part of that.

Oh, I remember now, that before this conference the intellectual freedom committee of the California Library Association--I was really responsible for it--we put out this [tape interruption]

McCreery: You called it the CLA Freedom Kit. "Don't join the book burners," it says.

Mosher: That's right. It's a collection of book selection statements from the public libraries in the state. And I suppose that's one of the reasons why I went to the Whittier conference, because I had edited that, in a way, and made it available through the intellectual freedom committee. It really was available through me, through my faculty office. This was sent to anyone who requested it. It didn't have anything to do with the school, though, it was just the California Library Association. I think probably librarians had to pay something for it. I'm not sure.

But anyway, so I was very familiar with all the intellectual freedom problems, especially in California, when I went to the Whittier conference. And all this background helped a great deal in editing this transcription of the meeting.

McCreery: Perhaps you could set the stage for me a little bit more, as well. We know Senator McCarthy had been raising this Communist issue since 1950, so by the time this conference took place, would you say that across the library profession this was a foremost issue?

Mosher: All I can speak for, personally, is California, where it really was hot because, of course, the censorship in Los Angeles of the movie industry and so on was, I suppose, one of the most obvious ways that the McCarthy committee punished anyone who objected to what he was doing, or who would not conform to what he wanted done, or who would not testify. But the mere fact that this conference was held by the American Library Association nationally--the national conference in 1952--indicates that it was a widespread problem, all across the country. Librarians were concerned and worried and afraid

and up in arms about the problem of what public libraries could make available.

I don't think there's anything more I can really say about it, just that most public librarians especially were concerned. That surprised me a little--why I got involved in it, because I wasn't involved in public libraries. But I was involved in all libraries after I got to the library school and started teaching. I realized that I had to teach for all kinds of libraries, not just for academic libraries, which I was most familiar with. And LeRoy Merritt and Ed Wight both encouraged me very much to go ahead with this.

McCreery: Tell me a little more about the experience of the conference, itself.

Mosher: It was a pretty regular conference. It was well attended, and I thought that the speakers were very good speakers. They were nationally known authorities on the problem of controversial literature anywhere, but especially in libraries. They spoke to that, especially. And I thought the speeches were all excellent for encouraging librarians to stand up for intellectual freedom in their libraries. That's, of course, why I was willing to edit the proceedings. If they hadn't been what they were, I would not have agreed to do it.

McCreery: Do you wish to record any recollections of these individuals who spoke at the conference? Or their contributions to this work?

Mosher: Let's see, I was particularly impressed by [Harold D.] Lasswell, I remember, and by Larrabee. I thought that Paul Bixler's introduction was very good. I must confess that I don't remember much about Rogers--Virgil [M.] Rogers--or Douglas [M.] Black. Paul Jordan-Smith I thought was good, too, because he's a California newspaper man. And Les [Lester E.] Asheim's final talk was a good summary of the whole situation, not censorship, but selection.

The opponents of intellectual freedom say, "Well, you always censor anyway. You can't buy all the books, and so what you do in selecting books is censorship."

McCreery: Did they have a voice at that conference, the opponents?

Mosher: Only in the discussion group meetings. And I don't believe there was any advocate of censorship or opposition to intellectual freedom speaking. Librarians weren't getting up and speaking in opposition to intellectual freedom. For many

of these people it was the only time I had any personal contact with them at all, so I was impressed by those speeches. I thought that was just what librarians needed to hear.

McCreery: Thank you. We noted before we started taping that you still have the files that you kept during the process of compiling and editing the proceedings that became this book.

Study on Censorship in California Public Libraries

Mosher: Yes, I still have all that material. While we're on this subject, I might mention a sort of continuation of it and of my interest in intellectual freedom was the book selection study that the school sponsored and initiated and brought to completion, which sort of grew out, I think, of this publication.

The intellectual freedom committee decided that we really needed a study of what librarians actually felt in California about intellectual freedom, and so we found someone to undertake a study of what they actually did feel. And that occupied a great deal of my time for the next, oh, couple years, I guess. Marjorie Fiske was the person whom we found to conduct the study, and Dean Danton agreed to seek funding for it through the university. We did get funding and did employ Marjorie Fiske, who was the wife of--I haven't thought of these names for a long time--a Professor Lowenthal at Berkeley. I shouldn't really go on and talk about that now, because I don't have the materials available yet.

McCreery: Oh, okay. Well, we can come back to it as well, if you prefer, but I have seen other references to the so-called Fiske report.

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: Can you summarize for me her findings about the views of California librarians at that time?

Mosher: Mainly the report indicated that most public librarians thought, intellectually, that intellectual freedom was a great idea, but that in practice most of them selected books with the idea in mind of not selecting controversial materials. Most California librarians were actually being censors, real censors, of their library collections. Most California librarians were so intimidated that they ruled out any materials that would lead them into trouble with the

authorities or with--there was a woman named, I think, Mrs. [Anne] Smart was her name.

She was over in Marin County, and she appointed herself a committee of one to examine and condemn school libraries. She went through a number of school library collections and pointed out that this book was a bad book for kids to read, and then this book supported Communism and this book--well, even the Bible had bad passages in it--which it does, of course, from the point of view of intellectual freedom advocates.

McCreery: I've seen references to so-called decency groups of that era. Is that the kind of thing you're talking about with Mrs. Smart?

Mosher: Yes. It's also that, but it was especially an anti-Communism focus with Mrs. Smart and her group, who wielded considerable power in the state, actually. I think they had bills before the legislature to make sure that there were no controversial or obscene materials in school libraries. They never were passed, but they were very active and certainly quite effective in intimidating librarians. And she was a very vocal, articulate person, and convinced that her opinion was the right opinion and that school libraries ought to be very heavily censored--but not only school libraries; all other libraries, too.

We had a TV program on intellectual freedom that I was invited to participate in, but I refused to, and instead a professor at Berkeley in political science, I guess, represented the point of view I would have represented. I thought I'd rather have someone outside the library field. And she, Mrs. Smart, was on, and somebody else, and they discussed the problem of school libraries and intellectual freedom.

McCreery: Was that your sole reason for refusing, you thought it should be someone outside librarianship?

Mosher: I also thought I wouldn't be as good an opponent as this person I knew was very vocal and very accustomed to speaking before groups. I wasn't.

McCreery: Who was that?

Mosher: I can't remember his name right now. It was all right. I didn't think the actual program made much difference one way or another. I was a little sorry that I hadn't participated, because I thought I could have made stronger points in favor of libraries than this professor, whose name I can't remember, did. But it was all right.

Mrs. Smart, however, was a name to contend with, particularly in the San Francisco area. But her influence was felt all over the state because she was actively pursuing legislation to censor school libraries.

Publish or Perish

Mosher: I haven't thought about these things for a long time, because when--after the book selection study particularly, right in there--I began to feel the pressure, the need to publish research of my own and not to be concerned with general library issues as much as I had been. I had spent an awful lot of time with the intellectual freedom committee and these projects. Anyway, I can't remember whether I ever edited the newsletter on intellectual freedom that the American Library Association was publishing--had published--or not. I don't think I actually was the editor, but I encouraged LeRoy Merritt to become the editor, and he was the editor for the rest of his life and a very successful one. He sort of took over--I agreed with him that he should take over--intellectual freedom and I would go on and turn my attention to the history of the book and try to get something published in my field. He, by this time, I think, had been made full professor, so he wasn't concerned with publishing as much, but I was really fighting the battle of publish or perish about this time.

McCreery: Talk to me a little bit about publish or perish.

Mosher: Well, it's a fact of life, particularly at Berkeley. Berkeley, at that time at any rate--and I think it's still pretty much true--felt that, well, we can get the best anything--teaching, whatever you want to mention--so there's no reason why we shouldn't require publication. And if you don't publish, you don't get promoted. That's exactly what happened to me.

I did not publish. I spent my time on teaching and intellectual freedom. My research projects were long-term ones, so that I didn't publish and I never was promoted. I did not get promoted for years and years--well, until the very end of my career. You either spend your time getting something published, or you don't get promoted, particularly at Berkeley, and particularly true at our library school.

One of the things that was held against me, however, was that I had pushed for associate professor and been made associate professor without the usual procedures. So I had to

publish something in order to show that I was productive, I guess. And I can't disagree with that. I was at the point twice of having something published, and someone else published it and pulled the rug out from under me in a way. I don't know whether I should go on talking about this subject or not.

McCreery: This is fine.

Mosher: As a result of my dissertation on *The Dial*, I learned about Way and Williams. Washington Irving Way and Chauncey [L.] Williams were co-publishers of a literary publishing company in Chicago, and both were contributors to *The Dial*. So I had learned about them and began to think, and the papers of Williams were at the Newberry Library, and what papers you could find of Way were there, too. I thought there'd be a good subject for a book on an important publisher.

I tried to buy or find every book they ever published and was preparing a descriptive bibliography of each of these books and locating them in libraries in the country. I corresponded with all the proper people concerned with the books--authors and even with reviewers--and it was a long, slow, tedious process. I hadn't written anything, really. I hadn't started the actual history, but I had all the materials ready, and somebody else who had been studying the firm a long time also published a book on Way and Williams. Well, that ended that project pretty much.

And then another research project I'd been working on since the first, here in Berkeley, was the preparing a dictionary of printers in the sixteenth century for all the countries of Europe. Mrs. Woodward at the Newberry Library suggested to me that this would be a good project for me. There was such a dictionary for German language publications, and she thought it would be wonderful to have one for the other countries of Europe, or have such dictionaries for the other countries of Europe. I thought it would be a good idea, too, and decided I would try to do this project.

I began to collect materials in the library on the history of sixteenth century printers and printing. Well, this quickly became an enormous task. I decided that I would concentrate first on Spain and Portugal, and I had a research assistant who knew Spanish and Portuguese very well and who was interested and who began to work on the materials that I was collecting.

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Mosher: The Spanish-Portuguese dictionary was worked on by this research assistant for two or three years, and I worked on it very hard along with her. Then she left and I could find nobody else who was especially interested in Spanish and Portuguese printers and there wasn't anyone who was able to help me very much with it, although by this time I had learned enough Spanish and Portuguese so that I could work with it pretty well.

But I also was especially interested in Danish printing of the sixteenth century. When I went to Denmark for a year, I spent a great deal of time collecting materials on Danish printers to 1601 from the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

I know what the other question was. This is not really the same as the dictionaries of printers in the sixteenth century, but it was another research subject that I undertook. One of the best general histories of printing, and there were very few, and no satisfactory text in English on the general history of printing--I used a book by [Douglas C.] McMurtrie called *The Book [The Book: The Story of Printing and Bookmaking]*, which is a general history, but very much flawed in detail.

I used that as a text, and I used various other similar works as texts, but there wasn't a good text. Then I discovered, in French, a book called *L'apparition du Livre*. I decided that, well, really, what I should do is to translate this book into English and bring the footnotes up to date--it had a lot of footnotes--and bring it, in general, up to date since its publication.

So I began to translate it and to check on the notes and to check on the text, and discovered, more or less the way I discovered with Archer Taylor, that there were all kinds of errors--just all kinds of them in the text. And I really needed to revise the book, rather than simply translate it, so I spent years translating and adding materials and checking all the footnotes and adding footnotes.

I have whole drawers full of materials. It covered the whole world, so I had to get interested in Oriental printing and in Slavic printing and Russian printing--which I had known nothing about. And I just slowly got to the point of mostly, I think--I forgot how many chapters, it was something like seven --I think I had five chapters all ready, really, to be printed. And somebody printed a translation in English as a book.

So those were the two projects that I nearly completed and was prevented from publishing because of somebody else publishing them.

McCreery: I take it you had no inkling that someone else was working on it.

Mosher: No, I had corresponded with the publisher of the French *L'apparition du Livre*, and the publisher knew I was working on a translation. But it was taking me a long time and they just got somebody to translate it, you know, as it was and published it, because there was a demand for an English translation. Even though it was full of all these errors and not so much up to date, the general idea of it was very, very good. Sort of like Archer Taylor, again, the authors of this book of *L'apparition* decided they'd get it published and not worry about details. And I corresponded with the publisher. I don't know whether I ever corresponded with the author or not, although I think I did and never got a reply. I pointed out a number of mistakes that I was finding and I think, personally, that the author didn't want me to revise the edition and so hurriedly got the English translation.

Also, the author of the Way and Williams history knew that I was working on it, too, and just decided to get in ahead of me. It was a good study, I think, but not nearly as thorough and comprehensive as mine would have been. Well, at least I've got those matters straight in my mind. They took up a lot of research time, and I had a lot of research assistants helping me.

I was working particularly hard toward the end on the Danish printers, because I had all that material from the Royal Library. And I thought it would be a possible one to do in a hurry, but my research assistant who knew Scandinavian languages graduated and left me, and nobody else was there to do the spade work.

By this time, I began to be just too busy with what I was doing at the library school. I did not do much outside the library school by way of intellectual freedom and so on, but I still found little time for research. For one thing, the library school had grown so much that we were employing more reference teachers and there were three or four or five of us maybe--I've forgotten the number--at any one time who were teaching reference, and I was sort of the head reference teacher. And we needed to correlate what we were doing and agree upon lists of books and what kind of examinations to give, and this took a lot of my non-teaching time.

Back to research, is there something more that I should be talking about?

McCreery: I just wanted to make sure that we covered your own research interests.

Mosher: I think pretty much now we have.

Working with Rare Books

McCreery: You mentioned that your first full summer in Berkeley you began in the rare book room a sort of consulting type job in the summer. How did you spend your subsequent summers? Were you still involved with that?

Mosher: Let's see--I'm not sure about the second summer. I think, though, that I did work in the rare book room the second summer too. I don't know for sure. One of those two years, very early, the library school began to offer summer school.

McCreery: That was my next question, yes.

Mosher: And the first summer school I began to teach, and I taught every summer thereafter when I was here, and so that ended my experience as part of the Berkeley library staff.

But I think I also told you that there was a flood in the room above the rare books room, and the rare books then were moved into the library stacks, at first. Oh, I did continue to work as the person in charge of rare books, because I remember we inventoried--a research assistant, Portia Hawley, and I worked down in those stacks. We had a shelf list, of course, and we inventoried the collection. Then I think it was after that that I made my report as to what I thought ought to be done. Very shortly thereafter, I think the next year, Ken Carpenter was appointed--I'm not sure. Anyway, the rare books department was set up, whether there was a head of it or not. He was the first head, and I think very shortly Eliza Pietsch (Chugg),[2] who was on the staff of the university library, was put in charge of this collection.

McCreery: The rare books.

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[2]Eliza Pietsch (Chugg) was in charge from ca. 1958-1965. Leslie Clarke became assistant head, rare books, in 1965. --ed.

Mosher: The rare books. I think she was in charge. She wasn't called the head of the collection, as I recall, but she was in charge of it. You see, I had to work very closely with anyone in charge of those books, because I used them all the time when I was teaching. Also, for a long time at any rate, nothing was added to the collection without my approval, so any books to be added to the rare books collection I had to see and approve. Eventually they were taken out of the stacks, of course, and given a room, a faculty office or study room or something on the west side of the library on the second floor. Eliza Pietsch and her helpers began to get them all cataloged and arranged everything and systematized and got a catalog formed. Eventually, then, Ken Carpenter became the head of that collection.

[Quite some time] after he left, there was a question of what to do about that department, and it was decided to just put it in The Bancroft Library. That was what my recommendation was. There didn't seem to me any reason for having two collections of rare books in the library; just put everything together that needed special attention because of its rarity or value. The Bancroft was there and all set up, and so the rare books collection was moved as a group into The Bancroft Library [in 1970].

History of the Book Course; Roger Levenson and the History of Printing

McCreery: Tell me some more about your course on history of the book.

Mosher: Oh, yes. Well, I conceived of it as a course in the history of communication--recorded communication, at any rate--but I'd go back as far as the beginnings of language, the history of language, and then the history of manuscripts. But most of the time I spent on the history of printing. A sizeable part of the course at the beginning of the term would be on manuscripts, and we'd learn all about how manuscripts were made and what they were written on and how they differed from printed books and how the manuscript era differed from the printed book era.

Then very quickly we began to concentrate on the invention of printing. We spent quite a bit of time on the invention of printing and early printing--fifteenth and sixteenth centuries --because there'd been a great deal of research and interest and scholarship involved there. And then we'd go on to the

history of printing, especially in England, but everywhere else too, especially in Germany. But the important printers in all the countries would be included, century by century, on up to the twentieth century.

A great deal of time was spent on the actual mechanics of printing: how printing was done up until the nineteenth century. Everything was printed by hand. All the letters were individually selected and the results of this would be printed on a hand press until the middle of the nineteenth century, so that was a long time. Then, of course, the mechanization of printing, which began in the second half of the nineteenth century--we'd go through that and on up to the advent of the computer and discussed this. So we went all the way through.

Besides having an exhibit every week of the materials that we considered for that particular week, mostly where we had the exhibits in the rare book room in The Bancroft Library, eventually--we also had printing field trips. Always we would take a tour of the University Printing Department--the University Press, it was when it first started. We spent a morning going through all the operations that you could see in the University Printing Department. I would accompany them. After a couple of times, I learned where everything was, so I would simply tell them--but at first, at any rate, the printing department provided somebody to discuss what was going on.

I thought that was a good idea. They learned a lot from seeing something actually printed by big machines operating. When we first started doing it, they had a big bindery section and they'd have a larger room with a long table and women standing along, actually binding the books, putting them together and sewing them.

McCreery: By hand?

Mosher: They didn't do it by hand. That was when they were rebinding books, I think. But it's too long ago.

Anyway, then I was dissatisfied with what we had available as to printing operations, and so I think it was around 1970 or somewhat earlier, a man by the name of Roger Levenson, who had taught printing--he was a high school teacher who taught printing. He was very much interested in the history of printing, and he was a printer himself. He had his own small press called the Tamalpais Press in Berkeley on Bancroft Way. He gave a hand press to the library school, which we didn't have any place for and The Bancroft Library was willing to take

it, and it was put in a special room set up for the laboratory for our exhibits.

We needed a press that students could use. This was a large press in the Bancroft, and so we found space when we moved into South Hall, which was around 1970. We got rooms for a press that Roger was able to buy, and we got the old-style California types that were originally designed for the University of California Press. They had all matrixes. They could make us the types, so we got a full set of those types, and a number of other types that Roger donated or found. We set up a printing office with a small press and all the printing types in cabinets and all the necessary printing equipment, the rollers and the inking [sites].

One hour of a four-hour course, I guess, was considered a laboratory. They spent one hour a week in this laboratory under Roger's direction, and each student printed something that he set up, got the special paper for it, learned all about how to print a typical sheet of paper for a typical printed book. That was very--well, nothing is more informative about history of printing than simply doing that, just learning how it was done for 500 years. It's all completely different now, but that's how most of the older books--all books printed before 1850 were printed that way.

We also were able to find money--Ray Swank was dean then, and he was very much interested in this project and was willing to find the money for it. We wanted to have each student make a sheet of paper. So Roger found a papermaking machine and the stuff that you can make paper out of. Swank found a room for us in the library school, and we set up the papermaking machine and every student made a sheet of paper. They had a lot of hands-on, firsthand experience with what was needed to make a book.

The students liked all this very much, and I encouraged them. I usually would introduce the course by saying that, "No matter what you might learn from this course, there's one thing that's sure, that you'll never look at a book in the same way again. The way you look at a book will change forever, from having taken this course." And I think it was very true.

Roger taught the course when I wasn't able to. I was gone a couple of years. Well, sometimes I had too many other courses to teach and he taught. And then two different times I was gone, and we had to have someone come in and teach the course, and one time it was--oh, now I can't think of his name. It's funny.

McCreery: Someone from the outside?

Mosher: Yes, from San Francisco--one of the best printers in the country.

McCreery: We can fill in the name later [Adrian Wilson].

Mosher: He had a heart attack while he was teaching the course, but he was able to recover quickly enough to finish. And let's see, there was somebody from--oh, I know what it was, it wasn't so much my being gone as it was someone to actually teach the technical part of the course, the laboratory part of the course, because Roger wasn't always available. We found somebody from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. Those names have escaped my memory.

Mentoring Doctoral Students

McCreery: You mentioned last time that the very first student to finish the doctoral degree in the library school's program ended up working on history of the book. And I'm wondering, overall, among either master's or doctoral students, did you find very many became particularly interested in this subject area?

Mosher: I think this was true of the doctoral program. I don't have the figures, but I think at one point there were many more Ph.D.s from the history of the book program than from any other part of the program.

McCreery: Really. Did that surprise you?

Mosher: No, it didn't because--remember, as I said, this was the part of the program that the original committee said, "Well, this is worth doing, but the rest of it not." One of the problems was that if you were doing administrative studies and so on, you had to sort of work it out that it was not Ph.D., where there wasn't any question about history of the book. That was Ph.D. The doctor of library administration was something different. They all wanted a Ph.D., not a D.L.S.

McCreery: But you had no shortage of students to mentor and to work with.

Mosher: No, we didn't. A number of very good people got interested in the history of the book from taking this course. We had other courses, also; not only the basic history of the book course, but courses in--well, let's see--there were three courses on

the doctoral level, and it was sort of divided up chronologically. I can't remember now--I think it was 203A, B, and C, or something like that, but I can't remember. I do have somewhere here an actual collection, unless I've just thrown it away recently, of the materials for one of these seminars. They were called seminars, not courses.

It was the invention-of-printing period and the in-between period, I think, and then the more or less modern period. And anyone could take them besides doctoral students. They usually had a fair-sized number, and all this contributed to making those students who were interested think about the doctorate. I don't know that I ever really encouraged--well, I encouraged some of them I thought were awfully good.

Planning and Teaching Courses; Preparing Students for Reference Work

McCreery: From your own point of view, teaching point of view, how did the history of the book and related courses compare to the whole reference and bibliography area?

Mosher: Well, of course I really don't know that I can say. They both were a lot of work and took a lot of time to prepare each course meeting. The reference courses changed constantly. Every year you never could use your old materials; you had to get new lectures. I think probably I was more interested in and got more satisfaction from the courses in the history of the book because that was what I was mainly interested in from a scholarly point of view.

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Mosher: I was thinking about a program that took a great deal of my time and effort after it got started, and that was particularly with Roger Levenson's help. Roger Levenson actually photographed slides from the books in The Bancroft Library, and anywhere else we could find, illustrating the history of the book. I began to use this collection of slides in my lectures. My lectures usually consisted of a series of so many slides for the books that we were studying that particular week.

Every time I'd show the slides, which were very good slides, and we had to have a special classroom, of course, every term. I taught in practically every classroom in the university because of the slide projector and the screen. I'd

have to carry the projector and slides from South Hall to wherever I was teaching. I would show the slides and talk about them, after general introductions and so on, so that was the way the course proceeded--I think just about ever since we moved to South Hall.

I thought that worked out very well, although I never did like the feeling of not being able to see my audience. I didn't know who I was talking to. It was a darkened room, so I could show the slides. All the direction was to the screen, and you couldn't tell what kind of response the students were making. But they seemed to enjoy the slides, and I thought they were very helpful in illustrating the points I was making in the lecture, although--my notes and so on I had at the projector. I never used a projection assistant. I projected the slides myself while I was talking. Well, that's why I thought I ought to say something about the teaching.

We could go on and talk about teaching reference. I think your question was which did I like best or which did I appreciate more. I answered that I thought history of printing was the subject I was perhaps most interested in, but yet I was very much interested in reference and we did a great many things in reference.

I started out, as I told you, just by making an assignment each week of questions that they would look up in the reference books that we were studying. I would lecture about the books. As a matter of fact, almost from the very beginning--well, after two or three or four years--I had transparencies made of pages of each reference book that we were talking about. I had an overhead projector and I would put this transparency on and point out the various parts of the entry. That also took a lot of time in preparing the transparencies and getting them made. They were rather expensive compared to any other kind of projection material, so I was very careful about getting ones that I could use over and over again.

It began to bother me more and more as time went on that there wasn't any good way to test the reference courses--how to ask them questions about, oh, what's the best reference book to look up such-and-such; ask them questions like those that they were getting in their weekly assignments. Someone with a good memory could do them, and some others who didn't remember so well would not do so well on such an examination, so I conceded the idea of--well, I need to hop back a bit further.

The university library began to feel that it was interfering with the activities of the library to have the

library school students in the reference collections. We decided the way to defeat this, to take care of this problem, was to build a reference laboratory library of all the books that we taught in the reference courses.

We were able to get the money to do this--this was the library school library. We got a large room, now used as a computer laboratory. By this time I had a research assistant who was in charge of it and who made the questions out for the individual assignments.

I decided that the best kinds of examination, then, would be to set aside periods with so many students--I don't know how many there were each time--something like ten, I think--who would be given a set of questions. Each would be given a different set of questions to answer in the reference books that they'd been using all semester or year. In an hour, you find out whether they can find answers in reference books or not, so that's what we did. Until the very end, under my teaching, the examinations in the reference courses were always in the reference laboratory library. The proof of whether they'd learned what they were supposed to learn was right there.

Now, some of them complained that they got too nervous, it was more a test of their nerves than of their ability to do the work, and so they'd have practice--the mid-term examinations would be just like that. And there would be various other practice tests, as I recall. All students were told that if they didn't pass the first time, we'd have a makeup examination for them, in case they just weren't well or were too nervous. This worked out pretty well. Nobody really could complain about it, and nearly everyone would pass the examination. I think they all did eventually. I thought that was a pretty fair kind of examination.

But it meant, of course, having another huge collection of reference books and a lot of work. You had to have different sets of questions for each student and it would have to be different for every year. It meant a lot of question-making, which would not be--they had to be good exam questions, too. They had to be questions that you would answer only in one place, or nearly. We always accepted answers in any place they could find them, but they were all made for sending you specifically to a particular reference work.

That was interesting to set all this up and to see how it worked out and to feel that it was as fair an examination as you could give them. But I was more interested, perhaps, in

teaching reference--I was very much interested in their getting to know the books. I thought they ought to know the reference books very well, because they were supposed to be able to stand behind a reference desk and answer questions as of day one of their library work.

But I also was very much concerned about their attitudes toward reference work and toward the people that came in to ask questions. I talked a lot--much of it from my own experience--about how you had to deal with the people who came up to the desk and wanted an answer to a question. Different clients have their different approaches to the reference desk, and the different kinds of questions. Some patrons didn't know how they should ask the question that they really wanted to know the answer to.

McCreery: When you say attitude, what did you hope your students would get from your course about that public service aspect of the job?

Mosher: I hoped that they would get the feeling that anyone who came to the reference desk came because they really wanted to get some information. For most people it's a real act of courage to enter the library, find the reference desk, go up to it, and ask a perfect stranger a question that they might not want to ask, so that the reference librarian had to realize all this and try to help the question-asker find what he wanted. An awful lot of librarians behind the reference desk don't seem to know how to handle this, to really help.

I think I used to say to them it isn't answering the question so much that you need to learn how to do. The big problem is to find out what the question is, because most people hesitate to ask what they really want to know. And then, of course, a lot of the people who come in to a reference desk at a university library are authorities, and they know what they want and they know where it can be found, often, in their own subject field. But what they need at the reference desk is help in other subject fields, where they're just as ignorant as anyone else would be. That has to be determined, too, but it's quite a different kind of task to work behind a university library reference desk and to work behind a public library reference desk.

This is the sort of thing that I would talk about rather than books. We would go through books with these transparencies and point out problems with their entries that they would need to--I always was surprised at how even in a library school there will be so many people who didn't know how

to use a reference book--hardly knew how to use a dictionary. The individual parts of a dictionary entry very few people can understand. And some of these complicated bibliographies are almost impossible without experience, so I took great pains to point out the special problems of the different kinds of reference books. That's why I had the transparencies.

McCreery: As you say, you tried to communicate that the public would need help with these very same things?

Mosher: Yes, that is the point of librarians. Reference librarians are there to help, and they can't help if they don't find out what is needed, so the reference interview is a very important part of reference work.

McCreery: I'm interested in this term "reference interview." How are you using that?

Mosher: When a patron comes to the reference desk an interview takes place. A question is asked or it isn't asked. You try to interview the patron to find out what it is that is really wanted. That's hard sometimes--well, especially with people unfamiliar with libraries. There aren't too many--I always tried to point out that there aren't very many people familiar with libraries, anyway. You can sort of count on people coming to the reference desk--most of them don't know much about libraries, or may never have been in a library before. If you know much about libraries, you can do most of the reference work yourself, but it's the people that have a need for information--libraries are encouraged to advertise that they will answer questions. People come in and they have a ghost of an idea of how to proceed, and the reference librarian is there to help them. That's why I hate to see librarians disappear from the scene--if there are going to be any such things as libraries any more, at any rate.

McCreery: On the whole, how do you think your students took to this public service aspect of reference work?

Mosher: Oh, I think they understood that very well. Most of them had never thought of it, of course, because most of them had never been in a position to find out what the question is. I would try to help them in asking the questions, often to make the reference librarian student realize that, well, here's something that anyone would need help with. At first I tried to do this by giving examples of reference-question-asking, to indicate who the questioner was and what he wanted to find and what for and the kind of information you'd need in order to answer the question. I had a whole paragraph, or at least

several lines on the whole problem as well as just asking the question. But that proved to take more time than I could use. I still have those questions--some of those questions, at any rate.

After I quit teaching, I kept all my files for some time because I thought I might be asked back to teach, but I never was. So eventually I decided I had to sort out my files, and there was a doctoral student who was interested in something in connection with--oh, I think it was intellectual freedom files. I was throwing out my files and she thought she was going to be a doctoral student the next year, and she asked me please to preserve all my reference materials so that she could do a dissertation on teaching reference. So I kept a lot of stuff that I would have thrown away, and I had to throw it away only recently. [laughs] But it's all useless now except as an example of what was done.

McCreery: What about the bibliography portion of the course. Did you treat that separately?

Mosher: No, I don't think so. There certainly would be different assignments on different subjects. And as far as what we called national and trade bibliographies--the bibliographies that recorded the books published in each country--very often, I think, one of the very first assignments on such bibliographies we would take up the standard Americana and English bibliographies, and then French and German and Italian and so on--all of them, so that they would know where you had to go to find a book published at the present time everywhere in the world. I think probably not Russian. I couldn't worry about that because most of them could not use Russian at all, but French and German, Italian, and Spanish--there were questions in all these bibliographies that we thought they ought to know.

Foreign Language Requirements for Students; Teaching Government Publications

Mosher: At that time, all library school students were required to know French and German and then one other language well enough to read. They all didn't pass that test, but most of them had taken courses in French and German and were able to use them.

McCreery: What were your views when the language requirements were dropped?

Mosher: I didn't like it at all. I thought they still ought to be there. Well, I couldn't think of anything more necessary for a reference librarian than a knowledge of foreign languages. And I thought that every librarian, to stand behind a good reference desk, would have to be able to use French and German reference works, so I was definitely opposed to it. But arguments would be made, "Well, here's someone who's not going to be a reference librarian. Why deny them this possibility of becoming a librarian because they don't know French and German?" But it never made any sense to me. I had observed that what the students say they are never going to do is precisely what they often ended up doing.

Anyway, knowledge of foreign languages makes such a difference, it seems to me, in just your mindset, especially when you're trying to find information and working with books. So I thought they needed at least French and German, but I was out-voted. And I don't know what needs to be required--what the present school seems to think needs to be required, only, is a knowledge of how to program and use a computer.

McCreery: Yes, quite different. And I will ask you about that a little bit later on. May I just return to your teaching and see if you'd like to document anything about your government publications course?

Mosher: Oh, yes. I thought from the very beginning, partly as a result of my work at the Newberry, that government publications were extremely important and that most librarians ignored them. I thought that one thing that they ought to learn in library school is some familiarity with government publications and knowledge of how to find out about them. Therefore, I always included in the reference courses something about government publications and eventually decided that we really ought to establish a special course in government publications.

I think I was the first one to teach any such course. And that meant, of course, using the government document room at the university library extensively. A lot of people were interested in it, and it was another long and hard task for me to get well enough acquainted with them to teach them, to make assignments, make questions, and examine them. I couldn't use the kind of examination procedure for the government documents that I had developed for general reference, but just getting acquainted with the layout in the library and the different--government publications are treated differently from any other publications in most libraries, and students have to learn the ways that they are treated. There are special bibliographies.

I didn't handle it any differently than I handled most reference courses. I had transparencies, and I pointed out various problems of entry and then discussed how the publications and the bibliographies were correlated, I guess, is the right word. It was really very good to have a government documents collection there, the government documents reading room. They could go there and find exactly all the bibliographies they needed. They were all shelved for the public to use. The collection was stored right there in the same room or a series of rooms, same stacks.

McCreery: Which specific publications did you consider most essential?

Mosher: Of government publications, you mean? The federal government publications were clearly the most important for American libraries, but state publications and international and foreign publications, especially British--oh, we covered them all.

McCreery: I'm recalling you said Miss Coulter made a suggestion that State of California publications would be important. Did that come into play very much?

Mosher: Oh, yes, it was true. Well, there was a lot of information in California government publications that is available only in California state publications. I can't remember right now what the title and who the compiler was, but it was an excellent source of information. That's why she insisted on telling me about it, because Edith Coulter was an authority on California state history and she had found this particular bibliography so important that she wanted to make sure that everybody knew about it, every librarian. So I always included it for the older publications. It was not current at all.

There is no question, in my opinion, that government publications contain quantities of important information that librarians just don't know how to find. Most librarians, unless they've worked specifically with government publications, are pretty ignorant of them and shy away from them because they find them difficult to use. That's one of the big purposes of the course, was to get rid of this fear and make them understand that it is possible to use them and that they contain so much information that one can't find anywhere else.

More on Intellectual Freedom and the Fiske Report of 1956

[Interview 5: April 9, 1999] ##

McCreery: We spent much of the session last time talking about your classroom teaching, reference and bibliography, history of the book, government publications, and so on, and so I thought today we would talk a little bit more about that. I don't know if there's much to say, but you had so much interest in intellectual freedom in your so-called spare time, I'm wondering how much those issues entered into your coursework.

Mosher: Very little, because I was not teaching courses that involved intellectual freedom. I did teach courses other than the ones you've mentioned, not regularly, but for--it seemed to me--some years I taught the introduction to librarianship course that was Dean Danton's course when he was dean. And I taught that several times. And of course in an introduction to librarianship course, you'd have to bring up intellectual freedom.

I would always, of course, refer to the intellectual freedom conferences and publications and so on that the school was involved in. When the issue was really hot in the fifties, I think, I usually couldn't really help just talking about it, especially in the reference course because there it does concern what happens at the reference desk.

McCreery: Did you find your students were quite interested in these issues?

Mosher: Oh, yes, they were. They were, and I think they understood--and I think that they had been taught in the introduction to librarianship course what the proper response of the librarian is to attempts to censor books.

McCreery: What is the proper response?

Mosher: The librarian is always opposed to censorship of any sort, but he can't, of course, be opposed to book selection. But he doesn't consider book selection the same thing as censorship. It's simply a matter of acquiring the books that users of the library need, paying no attention to the subject matter as far as politics goes. I have a couple of publications or articles --well, I think they're in this Fiske study, which was, of course, sponsored by the school--well, not only sponsored but was actually done by the school because Marjorie Fiske, when she was doing that study, was a faculty member at the school.

I was on the California Library Association intellectual freedom committee at this point and I was responsible, I guess, for getting the library school to sponsor this. That was the only way we could get the university to accept our doing the study. We had relatively little trouble getting the money for the study from the Fund for the Republic, but the university was reluctant to let such a study take place at the university without control of the study and without having the faculty itself doing it.

I have a lot of correspondence here concerning how, finally, the school gained the right--even though the money was there--to do the study, and to appoint Miss Fiske, whose husband was Leo Lowenthal, and who was also on the university faculty to--it's here in the Fund for the Republic three-year report, an account of what the study was.

We had a symposium on the study when it was completed--a public symposium sponsored by the school--at which I gave a talk that provided the history of the study and how it all got started and funded, and who was responsible for it. There was a lot of correspondence concerning it while it was being conducted, because Marjorie Fiske would be constantly reporting to the faculty, and I kept all her reports about the study. The faculty, of course, had to approve her report and so on before it was released.

I thought that that symposium was published, but I don't find any record of it--a symposium conducted on the study.

McCreery: After the fact?

Mosher: After the fact.

McCreery: You do seem to have good records of most of this process.

Mosher: Yes, and there are drafts of the study here that Marjorie Fiske submitted to us. I think the book selection study symposium--here is my account of it, which goes over the whole procedure and makes very clear what the problems were and how they were overcome. Finally it boiled down to when the California Library Association's officials were all in favor of it and the Fund for the Republic was in favor of it, the Regents of the University were worried about it because it was such a hot subject right then. Finally it took Dean Danton to allow it to become a school study and to be done by members of the faculty. When he agreed to this, then it was approved by the Regents, Marjorie Fiske was appointed, and she began the study.

McCreery: Specifically do you know what their concerns were? Did it have to do with whether or not the school would sponsor the study?

Mosher: They worried about its political--they didn't want it to be connected with the university unless it was done by the university faculty. This was a way to--Marjorie Fiske was a professor in the school, and so she was responsible and accountable. It wasn't just somebody dragged out of the general community; it was someone that had conducted studies and was a scholar. And she was responsible to the school and, of course, to the university, eventually. So they thought those safeguards were necessary in order to not get something published that would be--oh, I don't know what exactly might have come from it, but there were a lot of possibilities of rather radical people getting hold of such a subject and making out a case not based on fact. Now mind you, Fiske did not discover anything exceptional or unusual; she just found what was happening in California libraries and reported it.

McCreery: Did other faculty members share the concern of the Regents, that the school--

Mosher: Well, I don't know about other faculty members outside the school, but I think Danton was just worried about getting--he thought that the study ought to be done. The funds were there and the researcher was there. You couldn't ask for anything better than the whole situation, but the Regents were balking. They didn't want it done without the school having complete control over it. I think all of us on the school's faculty agreed that this was a good idea, so we unanimously asked the Regents to approve the fund.

McCreery: Now it says here in this three-year report of the Fund for the Republic--it's dated May 31, 1956--that $36,000 was granted for this project.

Mosher: That must be right.

McCreery: Was that considered sufficient funds to do the complete and full study that was envisioned?

Mosher: Yes, it was a liberal fund then. I think it must be, what, certainly it would be more than $100,000 now.

McCreery: We talked last time a little bit about the results of the Fiske report, namely that California librarians were involved on some level in self-censorship in response to the political climate of the time. Did that surprise you?

Mosher: No, I don't think it surprised anyone connected to libraries because, well, every librarian who was selecting books for a library has a lot of things to keep in mind. Also, most libraries have a political board of some sort, a political group that they're responsible to, and they're responsible to their communities. So they have to consider, if they're a public library, what the public library board will approve. Of course all California libraries were at that time--all libraries, everywhere, I guess, in the United States--were encouraged strongly to get the book selection policy approved by the board, so that whenever any incident of possible censorship came up, any publicized incident, the librarian would be able to say, "Well, here's our policy, and this is what we did."

But you know, librarians are human beings, too, and they didn't want to antagonize their boards. In some districts of California the board might be very conservative in its politics. The first thing I did as chairman--I think I must have been chairman of the intellectual freedom committee for the California Library Association--I pushed for this collection of book selection policies from all over the state. We got that together and had it available to anyone that wanted it, I think. Speaking of students, when that was being compiled and mailed to people who wanted it, volunteer students helped a great deal with getting it together and mailing it.

That sort of led on to a feeling that the California intellectual freedom committee ought to do something more to find out what was causing censorship problems in California. We began to explore possibilities of funding and who could do it, and so on. I can't remember all the details of how we arrived at the Fund for the Republic, or if that was the obvious agency at the time to provide the money.

Marjorie Fiske just sort of appeared, I think. She was here in Berkeley, and both she and her husband had been involved in questions of intellectual freedom and publications on intellectual freedom. And she was very good, just a wonderful scholar and researcher. She knew how to conduct a research study and how to train her assistants to interview. I couldn't find any fault with what she did at all, and neither did the faculty of the school. They supported her all the way, not that there was any big question or objection at all to the study, or to the way it was conducted, or to the results. It was all just what you would expect, everyone said.

McCreery: When the study was released to CLA and the public and so on, what kind of response did it get?

Mosher: I guess I really can't answer that very well. I don't think it got too much response. People would say, "Well, that's what we would expect." It was undoubtedly true. I think that the idea was that library schools particularly, and library school students, ought to be made thoroughly aware of the problems of intellectual freedom and approved methods of combating censorship of books, and also they should push to get policies so they would have backing from their board whenever a censorship incident occurred.

Interactions with California's Legislature; Censorship Bills

Mosher: I mentioned Mrs. Smart from over in Marin County and her group --and I don't know what group it was, except she was a representative--managed almost to pass a couple of bills in the California legislature which would censor school library collections.

The legislature was not at all in favor of this. I remember I even went to Sacramento with a couple other librarians for hearings on a bill. And it turned out they did have a hearing. But the chairman of the committee that held the hearing and that was responsible for approving the legislation--I don't remember the legislative history well enough--assured us that there was no possibility that this was going to be sent out of committee, because most of the legislature was not in favor of censoring books for school libraries or any other library and the legislature was very sensitive to this issue. So Mrs. Smart didn't get anywhere, but she still continued to campaign all over the state--but especially in the Bay Area because she lived in Marin--and succeeded, I think, in censoring a number of school library collections, temporarily, at any rate. But she was the powerful force behind censorship of libraries.

McCreery: Do you remember the names of those you met with in Sacramento?

Mosher: I don't remember them, no, but I may have it in one of these folders.

McCreery: We can check later. I just wondered if there was anything in those interactions that stood out to you.

Mosher: I was pleased at the fact that so many of the members--I didn't talk with any members of the legislature that were flat-out for censorship. Most of them were enthusiastically against Mrs.

Smart's ideas and against the bill. There was one bill that did get passed by one of the houses--I think by the Assembly on a later changed version of the original bill--and this one we were quite worried about. But the Senate--I think it was a Senate hearing we went to--and the members of that committee we talked with just pooh-poohed the whole idea of censorship.

What I started out to say was I was proud of the members of the legislature and of the procedures of the legislature, and I felt that the problem was in safe hands. Nobody there was pushing for censorship of any kind of library.

McCreery: But is it accurate to say you didn't know that until you went there and met with them?

Mosher: Yes, that's true.

McCreery: Who else went with you representing CLA?

Mosher: Oh, right now I can't remember. I was representing CLA because I was chairman, I think, still chairman of the committee--but it could be that if I gave a name, it might not be right. I think it might have been Bertha [D. Hellum], who was the county librarian of Contra Costa County library, and a very effective public librarian. She was the best public librarian in the area at the time and very forceful in state organizations--a graduate of our school--and had lots of experience. She knew how libraries worked in the public domain because she built up Contra Costa County library from almost nothing to a really great library.

More on Teaching Reference; Anecdotes from the Newberry Library

McCreery: Let's talk a little bit more then about classroom teaching of these issues. Now, I know you weren't teaching book selection. That was mostly the purview of Mr. Merritt. But as you say, these kinds of issues could come up in almost any of the courses.

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: Were there other ethical-type issues aside from censorship that entered into your teaching?

Mosher: I'm not sure what you mean by ethical, I guess. In teaching reference, I would try to inform students who had never stood

behind a reference desk what it was like, and what people coming to the desk would be like, and the various kinds of--well, I guess any kind of person could come and might have very definite opinions about something. The reference librarian had to treat everyone the same, regardless of political or religious or any other kind of view.

But this was never a formal part of the course. It was something I would just talk about as part of reference work. But as far as I was concerned, I can't remember ever having a special place for this kind of information. I guess we'd talk about it in talking about different books and different reference situations.

McCreery: Did you have particular examples from your own experience that you always gave to your students?

Mosher: I think so. Well, what occurs to me right now is a really quite funny story, I think, which happened at the Newberry Library. The telephone was right at the reference desk, and if the telephone rang and a patron was at the desk, you had to answer the telephone, of course. The telephone question was, "President Truman is being talked about in the press as calling somebody an S.O.B. What does that stand for?" [laughter] "Well," I said rather low, because I didn't want to say it out loud, "son of a bitch." And the obviously little old lady at the other end said, "Would you please repeat that? I'm a bit hard of hearing." [laughter] I thought that was really funny.

Then another experience at the desk was with a lady who came into the reading room with a basket. She was not supposed to bring any baggage of any sort up to reading room, which was on the second floor. Everything was to be checked at the cloakroom downstairs on the first floor, but somehow she managed to get by the doorman, the elevator man, and bring this basket up to the reading room.

She said what she wanted was to know where a particular place in Michigan was because she was going to go there for a vacation starting the next day. She wanted to know where she was going because she wasn't sure. So there were maps right between the desk and the shelf. So I took the maps out and opened to a map and showed her where the place in Michigan was. She put her basket up on the shelf and from the basket she took out a cat and she said, "Do you mind if I show Pussy where we're going to?" [laughter]

All sorts of things like that did happen, you know, and I would often report them to the class. I was trying to make

clear to them that just anything can happen and any kind of question can be asked and you had to be prepared for it. That's the sort of thing that I drew from my library experience for teaching.

McCreery: Those are good examples, indeed. [laughs]

Mosher: The life of a reference librarian is not without humor.

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McCreery: Well, as we were laughing a little more about the cat story while turning the tape over, you were remembering another story from your time as reference librarian at the Newberry. What was that?

Mosher: The Newberry Library, as I mentioned, was a research library and nobody was admitted to the stacks from the public. And we assumed that every user of the library was there for scholarly purposes, generally speaking. A user of the library would submit requests for books, and the book would be brought from the stacks to the reading room where the scholar, the user, would be seated.

Some scholars would like to go through a whole area of books. Since he wasn't permitted in the stacks, well, it meant bringing a lot of books--carts of books--to the user in the reading room, and this took a lot of time and effort. One youngish man came to the library and started wanting books on, oh, some subject--Canada. After about three days of bringing cartloads of books to him--and he didn't supply call slips, he just said, "Bring all the books in this particular category to me." As the reference librarian I went over to check to see whether or not he was qualified, had the proper credentials, for going in the stacks. He might as well be permitted to go into the stacks and go over books instead of having them all brought to him.

So I approached him and introduced myself and started talking with him about what he was doing. I did suggest that he might be able to go into the stacks, I think, and then began to question him, so he knew what I was doing. Well, he looked up at me furtively, sort of, and he said, "If you ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies."

I immediately stopped the interview and reported him to Mr. Pargellis, and it turned out that he was some relative of one of the trustees and was not--at that time, at any rate--in good shape mentally, so that he was just spending time at the

Newberry doing such things as making a dictionary of words used by Captain Cook. At any rate, it was a dictionary that couldn't possibly be made, and there was no reason for making it.

We soon finished bringing books to him, although I think he did get permission to go down to the rare book room, even, to proceed with his project, which was ridiculous. But that's the only time I've been greeted in a library with a response of, "If you ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies." [laughter]

Now most of the questions at the Newberry Library reference desk were very sensible questions. I was very glad to be able to answer a lot of them because of my knowledge. And I learned a great deal about the local Chicago history, too, because so many questions that came to the desk from the general public were about the history of the area in which the Newberry was located.

Summer Program of the School of Librarianship

Mosher: Now, where should we go from here?

McCreery: I thought we might--since we've been talking about your teaching duties, I thought we might talk a little bit about summer school. Now you mentioned that you worked in the rare book room your first two summers after arriving at Berkeley. Then the summer program I think got going around 1955, so perhaps you could just tell me a little bit about the program and your involvement in it.

Mosher: Until the summer school started, I was responsible for the so-called rare books collection. As I said, any book that came into the rare books collection I had to approve. That meant often going to the catalog section or the order and acquisition section and checking books to see whether I thought they ought to be in the rare book room or not. We did have some guidelines.

At that time I think anything that cost over fifty dollars a volume we would put in the rare books collection, but that soon got to be much too small [an amount]. But in general what constituted a rare book was--the order department wanted somebody to oversee and supervise that part of the process. I didn't have anything to do with acquisition other than

approving the acquisitions for the rare book room--or with the cataloging or anything else. I can't single out dates now--I didn't realize that summer school didn't begin until 1955, but I was concerned with the rare books until then. I don't know when this flood moved the rare books out of the place where they were.

McCreery: What did you think of summer school?

Mosher: Oh, summer school, of course, I was all in favor of because it provided me opportunity to make more money.

In general, I didn't really like the whole business very much because, as I recall, you couldn't start during the summer. The summer school was only for those finishing up courses that they hadn't been able to take during the regular year, or people taking courses in library school for more than one year.

It meant, for the teacher, teaching every day of the week, except we never taught, I think, on Saturday. I think all the classes were two hours in length, so that a two-hour class each time--I don't remember how many courses I taught, or how many sections--I don't think I taught more than one, so that would be two hours of teaching a day. But this would be after the regular nine-month session of teaching, and it was physically hard to take. I would be very tired, and I didn't think that the students would learn as much, either, in such a short high-pressure time.

I'm trying to remember now about the summer school in later years. In later years we gave up summer school and didn't have it anymore, probably for most of the reasons that I've been suggesting. Because I don't remember using the reference laboratory library for summer school, but I do remember having eight o'clock classes and finding that a pain in the neck every day.

As far as I remember I thought that students were learning what they had to learn and that it was all being presented to them, but I always wondered about and worried about how much they really retained, because everything went so fast and so intensely. I can't remember now if I even asked or knew about what the students thought. I think I was too busy giving the lectures to spend much time with the students.

The Sisler Book Prize

McCreery: I want to ask you now about another activity that you were involved with starting in the fifties, and that was being committee chair for awarding the Sisler Book Prize. Tell me a little about that.

Mosher: Well, let's see. Della Sisler was one of the first and a long-time member of the library school faculty, and she was the history of the book instructor. That was her field especially. And when she died it was decided to set up some kind of memorial fund for people who wanted to make a contribution in her honor, and it was thought that it ought to have something to do with books and book collecting and rare books, in some way.

I guess right off the bat, it was decided to have a book collecting contest for library school students. Every year, any library school student who wanted to submit a collection would do so and these collections would be judged, I guess by me. I don't remember any committee doing it, but I could be just forgetful. I think I was the only one that looked over all the collections and then decided that this one was the best.

Not too many library school students had book collections at the university and it didn't seem to me a very good idea, but some of the students, particularly those living in the area, would have collections and they'd bring them and exhibit them in the library school classroom. I'd look them over and make a decision about what I thought was the best. It didn't take much of my time and it was just one particular day. I never thought that it amounted to anything. I don't know what it rewarded, really, and there wasn't much to choose from. You'd like a collection for its subject or condition.

Most of them were rather sorry collections, and so after a few years of that I suggested that we give the money from the fund to buy rare books or books on the history of the book--that would be good for the rare book room, would be good for illustrating the history of the book. That's what happened to the fund.

Then, of course, you'd have to be involved with deciding what book would be included. But the rare books librarian--by that time, Ken Carpenter, I think--and I usually agreed on something that would cost about the amount of money that was available. A number of books were added to the collection,

illustrating the history of the book as a consequence. But the book exhibit part of this was not--I never thought of it as being very useful anything that would properly honor the memory of Miss Sisler. In other words, it seemed to me to be a kind of waste of money.

McCreery: Well, once you switched over to the other use of the funds, did that work out better?

Mosher: Oh, yes. Yes. As I said, a number of books were acquired that were good for the university library to have and good for teaching the course.

McCreery: Okay. I gather that fund still exists in some form today.

Mosher: I don't know. I don't know what's happened to it, now.

McCreery: I think it does still continue along with the other ones established at that time--the Coulter lectureship and the Mitchell scholarship, I guess it's called.

Mosher: That's right. Well, I don't know what has happened to it. I haven't been asked about it for a long time. I don't recall having anything to do the last ten years or so. Something must have happened. Maybe The Bancroft Library may have just got the money and used it any way they wanted to. I don't know.

Clark Kerr's Presidency; School of Librarianship's Lack of Visibility

McCreery: We also mentioned last time that in the late fifties, Dr. [Clark] Kerr became president of the university, succeeding Robert Gordon Sproul, and began decentralizing the University of California, so that fewer tasks were held by the president's office and more tasks were handled at the campus level. Now I don't know if you had any particular interest or involvement in that, but can you just tell me a little of what you remember of when Dr. Kerr took over the presidency?

Mosher: When he took over the presidency, I thought he was very suitable to become president. I don't think I noticed any great change in the way that the university operated. And personally I, in fact, had nothing to do with him or with the presidency. I think I have had some correspondence with him about the book selection study--that he had to approve it, too

--but I just don't know anything that I can remember about that period.

McCreery: Okay, that's fine. I'm interested in a comment you made in a previous session though, discussing in general that the library school was still small and perhaps not terribly visible to the rest of the campus. You said, "Most of the campus didn't know it existed."

Mosher: That's right. That is, I think, the truth. I mean, you would meet someone from some other department and exchange introductions and say you're from the library school, and nine times out of ten the professor, whatever he was, or she--there were very few she's in those days--would say, "Oh, I didn't know that there was a library school," or have any idea of what a library school is.

"You work in the library?" they'd say. Well, in the majority of cases when I said to anyone that I taught in the library school, they would think that I worked in the library. I think very few people outside the library school faculty knew that it existed.

There were ten, twelve faculty members. The school grew to have a great many more students--I think we had over 200 at one time--and while we were physically still in the library, we were just overlooked. Nobody knew that the library school existed.

McCreery: How did you feel about that?

Mosher: It didn't make any difference to me, actually, because I knew what we were. I knew what we were doing, and I knew I was performing an important service, I thought. And it didn't seem to make any difference at the time. It was all right to be identified with the library because we were located in the library, and we were working in the library, and we felt a part of it in a way, because so many of the library staff members were teaching in the school, and a number of them we worked with every day.

So it wasn't until questions of--well, the library wanted more room, wanted us to get out because they needed more room. I guess the dean's office--Dean Swank, by this time--thought it would be easier to get a better budget and to get the budgets through and so on if we had our own building, our own physical identity on campus. We also thought that in the matter of recruitment from the campus, it would be good to let any possible future librarian know that we existed.

Of course anyone working in the library, any possible candidate who had already worked in the university library, knew that we were there, but it was felt by the library school administration that it would be best to have a physical identity of our own.

The School Moves to South Hall

Mosher: When South Hall--well, let's see now, there's a long history to that. At one point in the school's efforts to get its own physical quarters, we were, by a committee of the university, granted permission to move into California Hall, which is now the campus administration office building. Or it was. Anyway, permission was given for the school of librarianship to move there. We were planning for that, and that was to happen in two years, I think it was.

Just about this time the 1960s came along and the undergraduate library building [Moffitt Library] was built. The upper floor, with a magnificent view of the bay, was intended for the universitywide administration, I think, or at least the administration of the campus. This was going through the legislature at the time, as everything had to go through the state as far as building was concerned. A lot of people in the legislature and at the university, too, decided that this was not a good thing to do, to build a building for undergraduates and have the administration occupy the best part of the building. So it was decided that the administration offices should go.

I don't think California Hall had any administration offices, yet. It was mostly standing more or less empty, just used for classrooms. It was to become the administration building. The library school was kicked out of the plans, and the undergraduate library remained unpolluted by the administration. So then the question was, where would the library school go, because the library really wanted more space?

South Hall was being remodeled. It had stood more or less empty and unused, for the most part, for a number of years. It was remodeled and another university committee agreed that the School of Librarianship should take that over, or should move to South Hall. And that is what happened.

I personally did not approve. I remember making a statement that I would have to be dragged out physically and forcibly from my office in the library. I had an office on the fourth floor of the library annex, The Bancroft Library, right opposite the Campanile, the northeast corner. It was a large office with views on both sides, both north and east, and I was very happy there, because it was so convenient to the reference collections and to The Bancroft Library. But we moved to South Hall. Everybody moved to South Hall, and it proved to be okay.

I think it did make changes in the relations between the library staff and the library school, because we were no longer seeing each other all the time--most of us weren't. But as far as I was concerned, it really didn't make too much difference.

I had a nice office in South Hall. I had no view except of another building--its walls--and it was uncomfortably warm in the afternoons, but it was a large office, too. I needed a large office because I had all these books, for example, and lots of reference materials and files and files and files.

Well, I don't know how we started getting on buildings, but--

McCreery: Although you opposed the move on a personal level, what did you think of it as a change for the school itself? You mentioned library relations, but what was the overall picture, do you think?

Mosher: It still didn't seem to me to help much in making the library school visible. We still, for as long as I can--always, whenever I mentioned that I taught in the library school--"Oh, is there a library school? Where is it?" After we moved to South Hall--we moved there about 1970, I think--there was still the same reaction. People didn't know there was a library school.

McCreery: Even after you had the so-called physical identity, that other aspect didn't change?

Mosher: Not much. Not very much. That's just a specific personal thing. I suppose that it did become much more visible. That's the word I was trying to search for. More people probably knew that there was a School of Librarianship, because the oldest building on the campus said "School of Librarianship." They'd come and visit the building because it's the oldest building, but I don't think library work or anything like that really connected. I don't think so.

Later on I think it became a hazard rather than a benefit because when things really began to get financially hard, the university planners would look at the school--the small school in the oldest building on campus, right in the center of campus. There were lots of other departments and agencies that would welcome that building. And the budget of the library school, although not very large in most terms, still was a sizeable amount.

Recalling Other Faculty Colleagues of the 1950s and 1960s

McCreery: We're continuing our discussions of the library school's history, and we realized while changing tapes that we wanted to go back and talk about some other faculty members who joined you in the late fifties. Perhaps you can tell me a little bit about Louis Sass.

Mosher: When we began to admit more students and I was the only reference teacher, it became necessary to get someone to teach reference besides me. I don't remember anything about searching for an additional member of the faculty, but Danton found Louis Sass as a possibility.

He had, I think, just recently obtained his doctor's degree in philosophy from Columbia, and he'd had library work and he had teaching experience. He was therefore employed as an associate professor to teach in our library school, mainly reference with me.

I admired and liked Louis Sass very much and worked with him very happily and pleasantly for the rather brief period of time he was with us. He was a good teacher. He had a wife who was an Icelander he had met during World War II and two children, a boy and a girl. He was a pleasant personal addition to the library school faculty. His teaching was, as far as I could tell, very good. The students seemed to like him.

The problem is that he was offered a position as dean at the Pratt [Institute], a library school in Brooklyn [New York], and accepted it. He was here only two years, I think. I'm not sure. Two or three years. But we always corresponded, and I think he was a successful dean of the Pratt library school and retired from that. He died within the past year or so.

When he was no longer available, I think [Ray E.] Held came in the late fifties--I think to succeed him.

McCreery: Yes, Ray Held. 1957 it says here.

Mosher: He was married to a librarian who was employed by the university library here as a cataloger, and he began to teach reference in the library school. His specialty was library history. He studied the history of California libraries and published two books on the history of California libraries. He was a scholar, a good researcher, and a good teacher, and well liked, I think, by the students in general. And we worked very closely together for a number of years.

I don't remember when he left, but he retired early, and they moved back to--I think it was Missouri, where his wife had some property or family. They lived back in Missouri until he died. I'm not sure what has happened to her.

I have to sort of separate his career here into two parts, because at one point he became associate dean toward the end of his stay here--under Swank. Swank chose an associate dean and it was Ray Held, and therefore he no longer taught so much reference. He continued to teach reference, but he also taught a course in the history of libraries and then with the school's administration--besides that we didn't see each other so often.

Furthermore, I think about this time my office was--I'm trying to think of where his office was. I told you where my office was in the library annex, so I was separate from the rest of the library school for a number of years before we moved to South Hall. I was over in the annex and therefore I didn't see as much of him.

But I had a high regard for his capabilities and for his teaching and particularly his scholarship. What I didn't like about him was that he was rather a conservative in his--well, I don't know about politics, but in his public views, he was opposed pretty much to the Free Speech Movement and was inclined to be rather thumbs down on radicals of any sort. He believed that they should be put down and that the university should eliminate the troublemakers--and the library school should, too.

He was on the side of keeping the status quo and not permitting the students so much freedom, and this made him unpopular with some members of the faculty. I think he was about the only one that expressed this point of view of putting

down the Free Speech Movement, particularly as it concerned the library school.

He was made associate dean by Dean Swank, and as associate dean I think he led or was chairman of the faculty meetings--often, at any rate. At the last one he chaired--one of the last of the school year--he ended the meeting by announcing that he was retiring.

No one knew that he was going to retire. At least, I had never heard that he was going to retire. But he just announced that this would be his last meeting, and away he went. He expressed the fact to me later that he had been glad to have worked with me in the reference course. It wasn't that relationship that he was sort of fed up with, but he was glad to get out of the library school.

McCreery: Did he say why?

Mosher: No, he didn't say why. But I assumed it was because of what was going on in the Free Speech Movement then. And it was the beginning of the computer era, really. Swank had employed the first computer expert, and you could sort of see the way things were going to go.

V MID-CAREER ISSUES AND EXPERIENCES, 1960S AND 1970S

The Deanship of Raynard C. Swank, 1963-1970

McCreery: Let's talk a little bit more about Ray Swank. Tell me how you first learned that he was to become dean, starting in 1963.

Mosher: He of course was Stanford's librarian, and from the very beginning I had got to know him. I knew him partly because--and this is another name that you really ought to check on--Carolyn Curtis Mohr--you must have heard that name from Grete [Cubie]. She taught cataloging. She was a catalog laboratory teacher, but she also taught reference--she taught government documents.

I got to know her at the Newberry Library. Carolyn was a graduate of the University of Illinois library school, came to the Newberry as a cataloger, and worked on the cataloging of the papers of the railroads that the Newberry had acquired. They acquired the Illinois Central Railroad papers and so on, and there was one member of the Newberry Library staff that nobody could work with--she was an old maid, quite old--and she was as unpleasant as an old maid is traditionally supposed to be, and it turned out that Carolyn was the only person in the library that could work with her.

They moved Carolyn and this person whose name I don't remember up to the fifth floor, the top floor, where these railroad papers were housed, uncataloged, and Carolyn and this lady worked together up there for some years.

She took a trip to Europe on a boat and met a former German air pilot--a Luftwaffe pilot, Gerhard Mohr--and they, through that experience, became married, and so she then moved out here to California because he had a position out here.

She became in charge of the transportation library at Stanford, which has quite a collection of materials about transportation, and therefore knew Swank and had told me about Swank.

She didn't like working under Swank, but I had of course met Swank before, as I told you, and he offered me a position and I always liked him as a person. The faculty had asked him to teach courses in university library administration--a number of times he taught and the students just thought he was great. Well, we could tell he was a good--well, he couldn't help being a good teacher because he knew the subject and he was very articulate and good at teaching, so the whole faculty thought that he would be a good successor to Danton.

He had a knowledge of university librarianship. He was very, very active in all kinds of library associations. The problem was that Swank didn't want to come. He had a good position at Stanford. Personally I don't think he was a good librarian at Stanford, but he had a good position, and he was allowed to take off any time he wanted to, and he didn't have any responsibilities. He had delegated most of the responsibilities at Stanford to his assistant, the associate librarian, and I don't know, but I think he also made as much money as he could get at teaching.

But the faculty had decided that they really wanted Swank and as I understood it--this is from [Donald] Coney, with whom I talked about it specifically--Coney was opposed to LeRoy Merritt remaining dean, because he didn't like LeRoy Merritt's table manners or his background--his table manners, particularly, which I didn't think were so bad. At any rate, he thought Swank would be good--well, here's where the president comes in, although I had nothing to do with it.

President Kerr and the president of Stanford got together and made a deal. I don't know what Stanford got out of it--maybe getting rid of Swank--but anyway, they made a deal so that Swank would get an offer from the [Berkeley] library school that he really could not turn down--the salary and all the perquisites and everything were better than anything Stanford could do. I guess the president of Stanford and Kerr just made it possible for him to become our dean.

McCreery: How do you know those two got together and discussed this?

Mosher: I don't know. That's what Coney told me, and he was the head university librarian. I think he knew what was going on. I

think Coney could have made almost anyone the dean of the school because nobody knew what to do, really.

McCreery: Why do you have the view that Swank was not a good university librarian at Stanford?

Mosher: Well, partly through Carolyn Mohr, whom I just talked about. She thought he did not do well. And from my observations of the operations of the library, and the fact that he was so seldom there. His associate librarian was not really a good librarian, and he left everything to this not-so-good librarian--lots of things.

I talked to many members of the staff who were unhappy with him. And in general, it was felt that he was not a particularly good librarian for Stanford at that particular time. He had become librarian at Stanford because he had done a review, a survey of the library, and as a result of this survey--well, they asked him to become the librarian.

So he came on the scene here. Most of us were very happy that he was going to be the dean, because he was known all over the country and he had been so important in so many different parts of national library work. He just knew everybody. And we knew he was a good teacher, so we thought this would be fine.

McCreery: So you had all met him from his earlier visiting appointments at Berkeley?

Mosher: Oh, yes, everybody knew him. Well, of course, the Stanford librarians and our faculty were well acquainted with him and we liked him. I would have been opposed to bringing him in as a librarian, but I thought he could be a good dean because I saw only the teaching part of it, not the administration part.

I don't think he did become a good dean. He still did the same thing that he did before, by spending a great deal of time away from his job. He wasn't here, particularly the first couple years or so. He just wasn't here much of the time, and he needed to be. He didn't want to do much teaching. I think it was about that time that maybe I taught the introduction course--the introduction to librarianship. I'm not sure about that, but at any rate, he refused to teach it, I think, did not teach that course.

So he was not a good unifying dean. And there were lots of problems at the school that needed--well, the school needed a

dean who was there to settle problems of all kinds that were coming up constantly.

McCreery: If he wasn't especially interested in teaching, what was he doing with his time, do you know?

Mosher: He was on any number of committees for American Library Association. He and Danton together took a trip all over Asia, I think, visiting libraries. I've forgotten what the point of this trip was, but both of them were officially gone for quite a while. And of course during this time he negotiated the move to South Hall.

He did do many things, you know, when he was here and paying attention, but most of them were sort of physical, rather than personal. He wasn't--oh, I have a hard time trying to be both fair and accurate.

He was awfully good to the history of the book courses. When we moved to South Hall, we got a press, we got a papermaking--we got space and we got types, we just had unlimited--he was willing to let us get anything we needed. I'm saying us--I'm thinking of Roger Levenson, particularly.

McCreery: Perhaps you can think of examples that might illustrate your thoughts about him and his style?

Mosher: No, I guess I can't right now, at any rate, can't think of any examples. He had a quite laissez-faire policy.

The Institute of Library Research

McCreery: I know one of the things he did his first year as dean was to establish the Institute of Library Research. Can you tell me something about that project?

Mosher: Yes. I think that's the beginning of the incursion of the computer specialist into the faculty. I think the origin of this is that there's a group of all the University of California librarians that meet I think more or less regularly. They as a group decided that the school ought to do something about the advent of the computer and its use in libraries. And I think that they managed to appropriate money or get a grant--I can't remember the details--but the burden of establishing such a research agency was placed on Swank's shoulders: What

needs to be done is the library school needs to start doing some real research as a unit.

McCreery: Placed on his shoulders by whom?

Mosher: By this--what do they call the university librarians? They had a name for it [Library Council].

They, I think, managed to get--I don't know, the University of California or some research monies from the federal government--I know that it was connected with the federal government research grants, somehow. I don't remember how. The first job to establish this institute was of course to find someone who knew something about computers. Nobody on the faculty did, so a search brought out Professor [M. E. "Bill"] Maron, who was appointed professor and mainly head of this research agency, head of the Institute of Library Research.

But he was also given professorship in the school, otherwise he would have never made it as a professor. We thought he would be employed as the director of this research institute, not as a teacher.

Swank spent a lot of time finding someone. We all felt--or I did at the time--that it wasn't a very good choice, but of course [Maron] didn't know anything about libraries, to speak of.

McCreery: Do you recall where he came from?

Mosher: He came from southern California--UCLA? I can't remember.

McCreery: That's okay, I just wondered.

Mosher: I used to know, of course, like the back of my hand. But he had his doctorate. I remember being told--warned, I think, even--by Swank, that Maron did not perform well unless he felt appreciated and supported, and that he gave up kind of easily.

I did not like that for establishing a new--most of us on the faculty, I think, were rather leery and wary of this Institute of Library Research. It was something that was being forced upon us. We hadn't asked for it. The council of university librarians had suggested it and gotten the money for it, really, and the universitywide administration was all in favor of it, too.

Computers were just coming in and computers, after all, were information, and so that was something the library school needed to do something about. The university librarians got involved because they felt the need to know more about computers and libraries. They needed some actual research on the subject, so that they could determine how to introduce the computer to their libraries, because everybody saw what was coming. The computer was going to do a great many library tasks.

McCreery: You mentioned last time that Mr. Coney, in general, was opposed to these kinds of changes in the library itself.

Mosher: He was opposed to doing it too fast.

McCreery: Too fast. Okay. Thank you for clarifying.

Mosher: He knew that it was coming and it had to be done, but he thought it should be introduced much more slowly than a computer person would want.

See, Maron--I think his problem was that he knew nothing about libraries to speak of, and he didn't really take the time to learn anything about libraries. He just knew about computers and the problem of information. What he was interested in was how to organize information so that it could be retrieved by the computer. And that didn't have anything to do with libraries, that just had to do with mathematics and machinery and so on. That's all he was interested in.

He was employed, we thought, primarily as a computer expert to come into libraries and see what was going on and what could be done, but his research projects were simply how do you arrange information so that it can be retrieved. Also, since the University of California librarians thought that cataloging was one of the most important things involved, he spent a lot of time trying to do cataloging by computer, or redoing the university catalogs by computer, so we could revise them more frequently. Nothing came out of it that was really helpful. Maybe historically it was helpful, I don't know, but he never did grasp the problems of libraries and how the computer could fit in to solve them, I think.

Fulbright Lectureship to Denmark

[Interview 6: April 16, 1999] ##

McCreery: We said we would start off this morning talking about when you received a Fulbright that allowed you to travel to Denmark [1963-64]. Tell me a little bit about that.

Mosher: It was a Fulbright that called for someone to come to the Royal Library School in Copenhagen and be a lecturer. The problem of language seemed not to bother the Royal Library School because the students had to know English before they were admitted to the library school. I later learned from Preben Kirkegaard, who was the rector of the library school, that I was one of several candidates and that he chose me because he thought I didn't lie about my language abilities. I indicated that I could read French and German, but that I couldn't speak any foreign language and I didn't know any Danish or Scandinavian language.

He was, I thought, an excellent dean of the library school. I thought the library school was an excellent library school.

My teaching duties were slight. I think I gave a lecture once a week to the whole school, and I held some classes in the history of the book. At that time, a new library school--an additional library school in Denmark--was being established at Arhus on the mainland--Jutland--I think that's right--and I was asked to go there, oh, I think seven or eight different weeks to teach a course on the history of the book. That required me taking the overnight ferry each time, and the last time I was to go--I think I went eight times--the last time was my birthday, so Evelyn came with me. I always stayed overnight at the hotel.

I gave a lecture and someone had discovered that it was my birthday--it was my fiftieth birthday, which is a big birthday in Scandinavia--so I was presented with a bottle of wine and had a festive dinner with the head librarian of the university library at Arhus. It was a very pleasant affair.

The library school in Copenhagen had its own building across the city from where I was able to find a place to live. It was a separate building just for the library school, and the faculty had lunch together at noon and a sort of coffee hour or tea time in the afternoon right there. In other words they had eating and meeting facilities.

I had an office of my own that was right next to the rector's office. One of the chief things they wanted me to do at the school was to help one of the faculty members prepare a bibliography of material about Scandinavia that he was working on. I have a copy of that right here somewhere. I have many copies of it, as a matter of fact.

McCreery: Okay. Perhaps I'll borrow one.

Mosher: The name of this [library] school professor was Erland Munch-Petersen. He was, oh, maybe fifteen years younger than I, but we struck up a good friendship. He knew English pretty well and could speak and so on, but he needed to learn something about English bibliographic vocabulary. I also knew the subject field pretty well--national bibliography and subject bibliography--so that I could help him think of things that he hadn't thought of before to include in this bibliography. We worked on that all year together.

We went for walks in the woods in the springtime. He and his wife, Evelyn and I, and Allan, my son, who accompanied us to Copenhagen, as did Evelyn's mother--my mother-in-law, Josephine Varland. We went to Munch-Petersen's house for dinner, and we went to Kirkegaard's house for a big dinner.

We had rented a place to live before we went to Copenhagen, because someone from Berkeley, and later Davis, had spent two sabbatical years in the University of Copenhagen, so we talked with him and learned a lot about life in Copenhagen from the point of view of a Fulbright fellow, and we rented this place that he had lived in. Well, when we got there, we were rather disappointed in the space. Generally speaking, it wasn't as comfortable as we thought it ought to be, and we wanted it to be closer to the library school. Rector Kirkegaard devoted one Saturday to showing us places where we might live, and we decided that where we were living was better than any of those.

We were warmly welcomed and very hospitably received all during the time we were there, and the lectures every week went well. My students all seemed to know what I was talking about, and I would speak slowly and deliberately until finally one student raised his hand while I was lecturing and said, "Professor Mosher, you don't have to go so slowly or articulate so carefully, because we're all understanding what you're saying," which helped. From then on it was much easier to talk with them.

Every year the library school made a tour of some place. The whole class went somewhere. The year I was there Sweden

was the country, and so Evelyn and I both went with Munch-Petersen, who was the faculty guide, to visit libraries in Sweden all the way up north. We were feted, of course, at every place and toured the libraries and were fascinated by the excellent library system that all the Scandinavian countries have.

Sweden and Denmark had wonderful public libraries, I thought. I was not as impressed by their higher education libraries. University libraries were not governed by university librarians; they were run pretty much by the faculty, and the faculty had done a lot, of course, in the way of improving their selection of books, but they had concentrated pretty much on their own needs, and the library as a whole was less satisfactory as it might have been if it had had a librarian who was trained.

The library school focused mainly on public librarians and had just a sort of, oh, I don't know what you'd call it, a kind of half-hearted program for university librarians, because the school felt that university librarians were going to be mostly faculty and that they had to concentrate on preparing public and school librarians.

The faculty of the library school had regular meetings, too, at which I was nearly always invited to talk or invited to answer questions that they had, which meant that very often I'd be speaking for a good deal of the time during the faculty meeting. But they said this is what they wanted. That year they were trying to revamp the library school program.

An interesting fact about the library school was that the curriculum was a part of the Danish law, and to change the curriculum you had to change the law. Therefore it had to be very carefully thought out and approved by the legislature. Therefore they were taking a lot of time to make the changes they thought were necessary about university librarianship, for one thing.

Then, too, the computer was just beginning to make its appearance on the library scene. As a matter of fact, I look back at it now and I think most of what I told them, which was the description of the Berkeley library school, often, and my own opinions--and the computer had hardly entered into our thinking or our practice, whereas in just a couple years it would be very important--therefore what I told them became quickly obsolete. I felt rather bad about that. But it all seemed to have turned out all right.

I had one problem with the faculty lunches. Many of them didn't speak English well enough to talk about familiar subjects in English and so they talked in Danish. Someone was appointed to sit next to me to explain in English what they were talking about, if necessary, or just to talk with me. I remember about her that she was going to the university and working for her doctorate. She said afterwards that she had been reluctant to talk with me and accept this responsibility at lunchtime because she was to be graded on her knowledge of English and her ability to speak English, and the English that she was supposed to speak was English English, not American English, and she didn't want to be contaminated by American English. [laughter]

McCreery: It's a very real fear.

Mosher: Yes. And also, I'll report just because it's kind of funny, I think, that the women in Denmark smoke cigars. One of my favorite reminiscences of Copenhagen is seeing an elderly lady, riding a bicycle--they all rode bicycles--smoking a cigar, riding a bicycle down the main streets of Copenhagen.

This librarian who sat next to me at lunchtime was gone for a week or two because she had fallen off her bicycle and injured herself. And when she came back she reported that the worst thing about it was that it was so embarrassing to have any kind of an accident on a bicycle, because as a baby you were put on the back of a bicycle in a basket and you used a bicycle all the rest of your life. You couldn't ever have an accident with a bicycle.

Automobiles were few and far between because there was 100 percent import duty on them. Denmark did not manufacture automobiles then. They all had to be imported and there was a 100 percent duty on every new automobile.

The Royal Library School; "What Americans Can Learn From the Danes"

Mosher: Now, I could go on talking about details like that forever, I suppose. I don't think of anything right now that was especially important. I learned a great deal about European librarianship and European education, and a great deal about Denmark and Danish education while I was there. And I wrote an article that was published about Danish libraries, published in

the Wilson Library Bulletin. I have plenty of copies of that around, too, which may be worth looking at.

McCreery: You mentioned that the Danes were considering some changes to their curriculum. Do you feel you can comment on the differences between their curriculum at the Royal Library School and yours here at Berkeley at the time you were there?

Mosher: It's kind of hard to compare the two, in a sense, because to enter the library school in Copenhagen, they had to have a credential that would admit them to higher education. They graduated from a middle school, passed out of high school, and so that they didn't go to a four-year college to have a bachelor's degree. Therefore, they had two years less higher education than did anyone who entered an American library school. Each of them, of course, has a bachelor's degree. So the [Danish] library school at that time required something like four years, I think, during which time they took a lot of subject courses as well as the library school courses. Their courses were organized differently, but I suppose the essential thing is that most of the courses were geared to public librarianship.

They also all had examinations that were prescribed by the state, and they had to pass these examinations in each field. They didn't have a course system so much as just so many lectures on a certain--on cataloging, say, and on reference, and then they'd take an examination in the area. So it's rather hard to--I gather they were trying to make the Copenhagen library school, at any rate, more similar to American library schools.

McCreery: It sounds as if the library schools themselves there were not affiliated with universities or within universities, is that right?

Mosher: That's true. The Royal Library School in Denmark was a separate organization. That's why it had that separate building. It had its own separate Danish laws governing it. It was completely separate from the university except that a lot of people that taught at the university would help teach at the library school.

McCreery: And the one being established at Arhus that you mentioned?

Mosher: That was just being established. It went on and became a full-fledged library school, but at that time it was just a sort of branch of the Copenhagen library school.

McCreery: Was there any content to your lectures or other teaching that seemed brand new to your students?

Mosher: What I presented to them?

McCreery: Yes, in other words outside the areas they normally studied in the library school? Again, I'm just trying to seek contrast between the two systems.

Mosher: I guess I can't answer that question right now. I haven't thought about it. This article that I was talking about, "What Americans can learn from the Danes," goes into detail, sort of, on what the differences were.

McCreery: So I guess what I was asking was more what the Danes could learn from us, I suppose.

Mosher: Yes, I don't know what that was because the history of the book, of course, they knew. That's what I was giving lectures on. Well, that isn't true. Just part of the lectures I gave were on the history of the book, but then each week the lecture was on some subject--most of them, I think, knew what I was talking about. Our system, of course, is quite different from their system, so they were interested in that.

McCreery: Did you feel strongly then, after this experience, that Americans did have a lot to learn from the Danish system?

Mosher: Yes, I did.

McCreery: In what way?

Mosher: There are several different things involved here. One of them is that after I came back from Denmark, I was constantly asked by Danish librarians to indicate to the American Library Association that the Danish library school was equivalent to an American library school, and so I would have almost a form letter that said, "Yes, they're the equivalent," and pointed out the differences in what courses they took and how much time they'd spent at the university or at the library school.

I thought that the public librarians in Denmark were much better prepared for working in a public library than the students from our library school, at any rate. We rather slighted public libraries. We nearly always had someone teaching public libraries and being involved with public libraries in the state, but most of our students were preparing for university library work, whereas most of the students in the Danish library school were preparing for public libraries

or special libraries. The Danish library school prepared students for any kind of library but they emphasized public libraries, whereas the American library school emphasized university libraries, mainly. So it's kind of hard to compare.

McCreery: Yes, I see.

Mosher: But I thought that the American library schools could learn from Denmark the importance of public libraries and of preparing students to become public librarians.

I don't know anything else I can think of right now to talk about. I could say a lot of things about the experience, but--oh, I went to a library conference, an annual conference of the Danish Library Association. I've forgotten what it was called. I was at that the year I was there. I went to the conference. I didn't participate in it, but I observed what was going on. And they have an excellent association--they did have. They were talking about the same sorts of things that the American librarians were talking about.

McCreery: Was censorship a similar issue for them?

Mosher: No. They weren't interested in censorship because there wasn't any--nothing overt, at any rate.

I remember the year I was there was the year that President Kennedy was assassinated. And at a faculty lunch the same day or the day after we heard about it, I wondered whether this wasn't going to be a problem in Denmark. Was assassination ever a problem in Denmark? I hadn't heard anything about it. Of course you know about the king and the queen and so on, but the real government operators, I hadn't heard about anything like an assassination. One of the faculty members spoke up and said, "No, there are no assassinations. Nobody cares enough about the government." [laughs]

Everything is so prescribed. Everything would be indicated by the law or the curriculum of the library school. I can't imagine that in the United States, but there it was in Denmark. Everything is regulated and prescribed by the government. So many of them at the library school, at any rate, thought there wasn't any point in being too much concerned about the government. They just expected it to do what it was supposed to do--provide everyone in this country with what they got.

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McCreery: To finish up then about your time as a Fulbright lecturer in Denmark, we were talking a moment ago about the article you wrote upon returning to the U.S., "What Americans can learn from the Danes." What response did that article get from Denmark?

Mosher: Well, Palle Birkelund, who was the national librarian of the Royal Library of Denmark in Copenhagen, and who had been very kind to me while I was in Copenhagen and gave me the opportunity to use his library more or less at pleasure and do a lot of xeroxing and anyway helped me a great deal, decided that my article, "What Americans can learn from the Danes," was unduly critical of the scholarly or university libraries in Denmark. He responded with a letter that covered about three pages in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* in 1970, and this was printed.

I did not respond to his letter in print because I corresponded with the rector, Preben Kirkegaard, instead and he said, "Most of us agree with your article, and Herr Birkelund is unduly sensitive about scholarly libraries in Denmark. Although he's the royal librarian, he realizes their limitations and he tries to do something about them. He's just been frustrated for years and it's hard for him to take any criticism, partly because he knows that the criticism is justified." That's what Kirkegaard said. I decided I'd better drop it and not get involved in any kind of discussion of the problems of scholarly libraries, and that's what I did.

I don't profess that everything in my article was accurate, and I realize that I was there for only one year and it's not easy to learn about anything in a country as different as Denmark and their library system. But the criticism of the scholarly libraries in Denmark seemed to me to be a rather universal one--and it certainly was at the library school. Everyone I talked with at the library school felt that the university scholarly libraries in Denmark were not well run and not as useful and not as easy to use as they ought to be, that there were lots of gaps in collections because they weren't directed by properly prepared librarians.

However, there are things to say about the opposite of that. Certainly it is true that the libraries obtain the materials and that there probably isn't anything ever printed in Denmark that isn't in one of the libraries, and probably in the Royal Library.

Research in Denmark; Thoughts From Abroad on the Kennedy Assassination

Mosher: That brings me to my research in the history of the book while I was in Denmark. You will remember that I talked about the project that I've been involved in ever since coming to Berkeley: the printers of the sixteenth century. There seemed to me to be an ideal opportunity to learn about the printers of Denmark, and so I rather quickly got acquainted with the Royal Library and with what had been done on the history of printing in the sixteenth century--sixteenth and seventeenth century. Because there was so little printing in Denmark from the sixteenth century, I extended it to the seventeenth century.

There were rather few printers, but scholars had prepared bibliographies of every book printed in Denmark from the beginning of printing on to the present. There were scholars who had been very much involved in, and written and prepared books on, the history of printing in Denmark in the earlier periods so that, actually, I discovered eventually that a dictionary of Danish printers would involve mainly just referring to books that already had been printed in Danish.

Mr. Birkelund, the royal librarian, when I presented what I was going to do to him was skeptical about it because, he said, everything's been done. But, he said, maybe it would be worthwhile for someone to go all over it and prepare a dictionary in English. Everything was in Danish, which made it unavailable to most people, so he gave me permission to use his library and helped me every way he could to learn about Danish printers of the sixteenth century. And I spent many days at the Royal Library collecting material, because there was material that had not been available when the bibliographies I speak of that the Danes had prepared were published.

There's a big pile of xeroxes that I haven't been able to go through. The first year I was back, a library school student who knew Swedish very well became my research assistant, and she went through a lot of this material and organized it, but I never got back to it. So that pretty well covers what I did in Denmark as far as library school.

McCreery: Let's talk about your return to Berkeley, then, in 1964. I wonder, though, before we do that, do you have any further thoughts on the assassination of President Kennedy? It's interesting that you were abroad at the time, and I'm just curious what effect that had on you personally and what kind of discussions you saw around you at the time in fall of '63.

Mosher: There was relatively little discussion with actual Danes, but Evelyn and her mother, particularly, wanted to be involved with a church while we were in Copenhagen. There was a church that met at a local YMCA in downtown Copenhagen, and we went there. There was also an English language service at the embassy, but I don't think we ever got to that because it was over by the first Sunday we tried to go to church, and we heard about the YMCA one and we went there.

The pastor was a man by the name of William Hansen, and he was from the United States, of course, a Lutheran minister, and he'd been there for almost a year at the time, I think. He had a church service that we thought was excellent every Sunday and church activities on other days, too, that both Evelyn and her mother were interested in, and Allan, too. Allan, I think, even sang in a choir that was organized. I learned about the assassination at a meeting of the congregation, an annual meeting for considering the budget and so on. The church was composed of people from all over, not just from America, and many of them were government officials or people from the United States embassy. One or two of them were rather important embassy officials. We were at this dinner when the news came to the dinner that the president had been assassinated, and several of these people left immediately for the embassy.

Well, I don't know. I was, of course, very unhappy about it and very much disturbed by the loss of Kennedy because I had come to think of him as a really great president. I was impressed by him as a speaker and an explainer of what was going on. And of course I had voted for him and was, well, really delighted with a young president who was a Democrat and who pushed all the things I believed in. I wasn't too happy with some of the things he did, but I admired--at that time I didn't know anything about his sex life and was just concerned with what he did publicly.

I remember that we had, you know, the Danish radio. We didn't have any TV. The Danish radio had very little about the assassination and there was no report in the newspapers--of course the reports would be in Danish, anyway--but we got the *Herald Tribune*--the European edition. I waited in line down at the railway station. There was a long line of people waiting to get the paper that reported his death and gave all the details. And as I said the church had a service later.

It was hard to find out just what the reaction in the United States was and how things were going. Well, anything

could have been happening, we thought, but we soon learned that Johnson had managed to take over more or less permanently.

I don't remember talking with Danes about the problem. Most of them didn't have any idea of what it was all about.

Returning to Berkeley and the Free Speech Movement, 1964

McCreery: When you returned to Berkeley--was it the summer of 1964?

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: What happened?

Mosher: We flew back. We had taken the Gripsholm, a steamship, from New York to Copenhagen in the previous fall, in September, but we flew back because I had engaged to teach in the summer school, the summer of 1964. So the first thing to do was to fly to London and spend a few days in London. Then we flew to New York and spent some time with Evelyn's relatives in the New York area, and then we flew back to San Francisco. I think in about two days I was teaching summer school.

This is the summer then of 1964--spring and summer--just before the Free Speech Movement. Also I think it was just the time when the University of California librarians had persuaded our dean, Ray Swank, to organize a library research institute.

He was involved in that, organization and preparation of research on library problems that could be helped by the use of computers. As I recall, it involved how best to introduce the computer into library work.

I don't remember much about the teaching that summer. As I've reported, it was always a hectic time.

I think during the summer or early fall--I can't remember dates--the beginning episodes of the Free Speech Movement occurred. I remember being at the Sproul Hall Plaza when Jack Weinberg was inside the car surrounded by students and everything was--lots of talking going on, police around--but there Mario Savio was talking about the freedom of speech and how you ought to be able to say anything on campus that you wanted to say.

On the whole I agreed with what he was saying. It didn't seem to me right not to be able to say anything you wanted to say anywhere, especially on the university campus. But I remember being cautioned by emeriti professors, some of whom had offices up on the fourth floor of the library where mine was, that this would only lead to problems for the university, because if the university got involved in politics it would be wide open to influence from California politicians.

I marched with the students as a great many of the faculty did and supported the students' cause and thought that the administration really used the wrong methods to work with the students. They should not have had such a hard line against the students. The governor, of course, was at that time [Edmund G.] Pat Brown. It was the beginning of the attempt to sort of quell the Free Speech Movement by force, and I didn't approve of that at all.

I didn't approve of the way things were going on campus. We could hardly operate an orderly and organized classroom situation and teaching situation with all the interruptions from police and helicopters. Shall I go on talking about that?

McCreery: Yes, please.

Mosher: Well, I don't know whether I did talk about any of it. I think I've said I've taught in nearly every building on campus that was there when I was teaching. One classroom I taught in frequently was overlooking Dwinelle Plaza, and in the warm weather you had to have the windows open. The buildings are not air conditioned, so there'd be rioting crowd of students and I don't know what all out in that plaza while I was trying to teach. It made it extremely difficult to do so.

But then things just got worse. Two times I particularly remember. One was a time I was--I can't remember teaching evening classes, but I must have taught in the evening, because I had a class in the evening and it was in the history of the book, some special subject of the course in the history of the book. We were over in the library building and the librarians and library officials--there were several of us in the group--asked us to go to the rare book room and stand guard because throngs of students were ransacking the campus, and the library officials were afraid that they might come to the rare book room which was on the first floor of the main library building at that time, and they would be able to come in and damage its contents. So of course we agreed and guarded the rare books until, oh, for some reason or other, it seemed to be all right.

The library seemed to be free of possible damage and so we were dismissed.

But we didn't want to go out into the crowd. We didn't want to go from the campus anywhere, because it was just surrounded by rampaging students. One of the students had an apartment near the campus, and we adjourned our class meeting to that apartment building and stayed there until we felt that it was safe to go home. It was that serious. And I don't think any of us were easily frightened, but we didn't want to be out in that rioting group of students.

The other incident I referred to was after they decided to disperse any group of students that seemed to be out of hand by tear-gassing from helicopters. On one particular day we had a regular faculty meeting at The Faculty Club. We had lunch there and we came out to go back to South Hall from The Faculty Club, and helicopters were going over and we got gassed by the helicopter--not a particularly dangerous, but a very unpleasant experience to be tear-gassed.

McCreery: Can you just tell me a little more about what that was like before you go on--the experience of being tear-gassed?

Mosher: Well, your eyes watered and stung and you didn't want to get any more involved in it than you had to. It was a fairly localized thing.

McCreery: How many of you were--

Mosher: The whole faculty of the library school were involved. We'd just came out of The Faculty Club and met the tear gas, and I think went on back to South Hall without incident. And there wasn't anyone on the ground doing anything.

I had something else I was going to mention and it's escaped my memory now. That's all a long time ago.

McCreery: Was it another anecdote about the time of the Free Speech Movement?

Mosher: Yes, it was. I can't pull it out of my memory right now.

McCreery: Well, perhaps it will come back to you. Do you recall how your colleagues on the library school faculty received all of this turmoil?

Mosher: We all were very unhappy about its effect on our teaching and the conduct of the school. Everything was disrupted.

I remember now what I was going to talk about is that I did from time to time have visitors to the class. Sometimes I had regular visitors who would come for the whole course; they just wanted the course. This was I think the reference course. One day things were so bad that classes were being canceled. It seemed to be a reasonable thing to do to just not bring any more students on campus, and there wasn't any place to teach properly either. I think calls were being made by students for canceling all classes and really disrupting the university.

This particular day was especially a day for not holding class meetings, because many people thought it was too dangerous and also many people felt that maybe we shouldn't be trying to proceed normally when we could not. At any rate, I didn't think there'd be anybody at the class, but I met the class anyway, and then I said that considering the conditions and all the problems that were going on, it seemed to me better to dismiss the class right away, which I did. But one of the people who came regularly, and she happened to come from Walnut Creek--quite a distance--wrote a very dissatisfied and unhappy letter, a copy of which she sent to the president or chancellor or somebody, complaining about my not holding that class. I never heard anything more about it.

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McCreery: We've been talking on the last tape about when the Free Speech Movement began in the fall of 1964 after you returned from Denmark. Can you tell me more about meetings that the university community had about this issue? You mentioned something in the Greek Theatre?

Mosher: While I've been waiting to talk again, I realized that it probably wasn't a Free Speech Movement meeting, it probably was another meeting that Mario Savio invaded in a way [on December 8, 1964]. He got to the microphone and started talking and police took him away from the microphone and hustled him off the platform. I remember that vividly because I was seated with the rest of the faculty. We'd marched in--processed in--together. I was seated not very far away, right on the platform and he was--oh, not roughly, but simply forcibly and definitely taken away from the microphone and off the platform. That's all I can remember about that. I don't remember any meeting at the Greek Theatre about the Free Speech Movement. It doesn't come to my mind now.

McCreery: What about other faculty meetings?

Mosher: I don't remember them. There must have been a senate meeting, but I don't remember it.

McCreery: That's all right. You mentioned that you marched on a number of occasions with the students in support of this issue. Can you tell me more about those events?

Mosher: There were any number of different parades through the campus, marches.

McCreery: Where would they start?

Mosher: I can't remember that, I just remember being a definite participant in marching with the students. My sympathies were always with students, and I thought that the administration was altogether wrong in the way things were being handled.

McCreery: You mentioned a moment ago that you thought that the administration should have handled the students differently. What do you think might have been more effective?

Mosher: It was autocratically handled: "This is the law. You've got to obey it. Get off the campus. Don't have any meetings. Don't do any marches. This is all wrong and we won't allow it. We'll call for the troops instead."

McCreery: Which university officials were saying that, do you recall?

Mosher: The chancellor at the time was I think [Edward W.] Strong, Chancellor Strong, whom I admired very much. He was a member of the philosophy department as I recall. Well, I liked him and I had heard him talk, but he hadn't been chancellor very long, I think, or he was brought back as chancellor as an interim sort of thing.

At this time I was a member of the board of a church-related group, the Wesley Foundation of the Trinity United Methodist Church. They had their own building right next to Trinity, and I had been a member of that board for a long time. I got to know the pastor in charge and he and a group of the students were very much involved and indeed wrote--well, I can't remember all that they were doing, but they were very much involved with the Free Speech Movement. I think that they insisted on having a table on Sproul Hall Plaza and doing everything that they weren't supposed to do to object to the way the administration was handling the situation--that is simply arbitrarily, making everybody stop the Free Speech Movement. I remember walking with the Wesley Foundation pastor

in a march with other students, all over that area—the south campus area--in support of the Free Speech Movement.

There were other marches through the campus that were not connected with the Wesley Foundation that I participated in, too. It was as a result of being in one of these marches that the older professors cautioned me that it was going to be bad for the university if politics entered the campus.

McCreery: Did you feel that you had missed a lot by being gone the previous year?

Mosher: No, I hadn't thought about that. I didn't realize that much was going on. Well, nothing had been going on the year before I left, and it was, I suppose, partly one of the results of the political situation involving the assassination of Kennedy. We were really out of the picture [while in Denmark]. We didn't know what was going on on the campus at all, but nothing had been reported to me about the university being involved.

McCreery: Just to return to the idea of what the administration might have done differently--

Mosher: I think that the administration should have immediately realized that the university campus is not a place where you can't speak freely about anything. It should have immediately said, "Well, you can do what you want to on campus," and that would have sure taken the steam out of things.

But when they started arguing about whether the sidewalk was free speech territory, and one step farther on campus was not free speech territory, and objecting to students having tables on the university campus distributing stuff--politics or no politics, it seemed to me that that was--if the university had simply given right away, as it seemed to me then any reasonable person should agree--the university campus should be one place where you can speak freely.

The only reason for the rules against it were to keep the university out of politics. Well, the Free Speech Movement made that absurd. Then to go ahead and stubbornly insist that the campus was no place for political meetings or political propaganda of any sort would seem to me to be absurd. And it could have been stopped if someone at the top had simply said, "Well, that's the situation and you can do anything you want to on campus except disturb the conduct of the university routines."

McCreery: How was Mario Savio as a spokesman for this cause?

Mosher: I don't believe that I ever attended a meeting at which he was the featured speaker. He wasn't allowed to talk at the Greek Theatre, so I didn't really ever get a chance to be influenced by him. It wasn't Savio I was interested in. I didn't really care what he was saying. It was simply that he was being forbidden to say something that I was concerned about.

I thought he and the nuclear physics Free Speech Movement students were also at fault for having used an illegitimate and forceful means of making their cases when they could have met with the administration and worked out some method that would enable the Free Speech Movement to gain its objectives and also the university.

McCreery: Which of their tactics did you find excessive?

Mosher: The students? Oh, well, their disruption of the university was certainly unacceptable and unnecessary. It wouldn't have been necessary for the National Guard to come into the campus and all that rigmarole. That, I think, the students pushed too far, and unnecessarily so. It just gave the state administration the opportunity to come in and sort of take over the campus, unnecessarily.

We didn't need National Guard, we didn't need tear gas, we didn't need any of this stuff if the two parties had simply talked with each other and if the administration had given in to what seemed to me to be a very reasonable request. Seemed to me, most people thought that: "Why shouldn't the university campus be open for political discussion or religious discussion or any kind of discussion?" But both sides were adamant about it--students were going to invade the campus for their political purposes and the administration, backed by the state government, was going to keep them off the campus. And it was completely unnecessary, I think.

McCreery: Once the National Guard was brought it, specifically what effect did that have?

Mosher: You know, I don't know. I think that probably it stopped the violent parts of the students' objection. From the point of view of quelling disorder and disruption of the campus, it worked, particularly since they didn't, as at other universities, fire at the students.

Well, anyway, it was all very, very much disruptive, and we really couldn't teach effectively or well. You could hardly

make grades for students. You didn't know whether they couldn't come to campus to take exams or whether they couldn't do this or that in the library. And you, yourself--I, at any rate, was disturbed and unhappy about the whole thing and found it very hard to concentrate on what I was supposed to be doing.

McCreery: Let's talk about the resolution of this issue, as you saw it.

Mosher: I don't know what the resolution was. I just saw how it all just evaporated. I don't know why or how. I can't remember now.

McCreery: But then the precedent for free speech was set.

Mosher: Yes. Finally the students just refused to give up. Part of it was I think that they did establish that the sidewalk there on Bancroft [Way] was open for public use and the university could not prevent students from having tables there, so they began to have tables there. Gradually we discovered that this wasn't such a horrible thing.

And then--let's see, I've forgotten what chancellor it was who came in with a more reasonable approach. I don't think there was any abrupt change, it was just a gradual change. [Albert C.] Bowker, I think, was the chancellor who decided that, "Well, we better get along with the students rather than fight them."

The Firing of President Kerr

McCreery: Was Dr. Kerr, as university president, visible on this issue to your knowledge?

Mosher: Of course he was--he didn't seem to be as much involved as the chancellors, but he I think supported what the chancellors were doing. I never could quite understand that. I thought Kerr ought to have seen the possibilities and worked more with the students, but I don't know, I didn't ever talk with him about it. I didn't know what his position was except as it was reported in the papers. And it seemed to me, as a member of the administration that I'm complaining about, he was certainly the top man.

Of course he had a real problem because the business of state politics coming into the campus was made very clear by

the fact that he was fired by the board of regents on the behest more or less, I think, of Governor Reagan.

McCreery: Yes. That happened a little later--1967--but why don't you talk a little bit about of how you learned of his firing and what you thought.

Mosher: I thought it was a very bad thing for the university for the board of regents to fire a president for nothing except political purposes, really. It was a very bad step in the wrong direction. Everybody I knew thought that Kerr was a good president and that he was being fired simply because he had interfered with the state administration wanting to control the university.

Of course, we knew at that time that Reagan was gaining a lot of good publicity with a lot of citizens of the state who thought that the campus was being disrupted by Communists and violence. This was good publicity for him and resulted in his winning elections. He gained the favor of the state by the way he quelled the Communist violence on the campus. It was all Communist, of course, from the point of view of a lot of people: Most university faculty were Communists, or Communist sympathizers anyway, and it took strong measures like Reagan's to stop it.

McCreery: Do you feel the public really held that view at the time?

Mosher: A lot of them did, yes. I don't see any other reason for the popularity of Reagan in the state. I have never seen any reason for his popularity at all, not even on the screen. [laughter] But his stand against Communists was important in his popularity with the average citizen voter who was afraid of Communism taking over all our institutions. It always seemed to me such an unhappy and difficult thing. What the anti-Communists were doing was exactly what--[phone rings--tape interruption]

McCreery: Go ahead.

Mosher: They were making the United States more Communistic, in my point of view, by denying people freedom to do almost anything for fear of being called Communistic. They were using Communist methods to "fight Communism," but really to disrupt the democratic way of life.

McCreery: There's an irony there, isn't there?

Mosher: Yes, there sure is. In fact, it's a good thing things worked out the way they did.

McCreery: Did Dr. Kerr's firing come as a surprise?

Mosher: Oh, yes, I was surprised. I think most people were surprised that he had been dismissed. And I personally didn't think that the board of regents would dare to dismiss the president--if he had been an ardent supporter of the Free Speech Movement, that would have been one thing, but he wasn't very much involved either way, publicly. It was simply that he was the president of a university, particlarly Berkeley, that was being made an impossible place for students to learn, and therefore he was "incompetent," and somebody should replace him who knew how to handle the situation better. Well, we probably should have put in a general of the army instead of a university person.

However, the Berkeley campus settled down. The Free Speech Movement had won out. Nobody paid any attention to that, and Governor Brown had failed to quiet the university, except for quelling the violence that he mainly was responsible for. And I think there was only one year--one or two years there--that was really bad. I guess that was '64, or '65. After that, everything seemed to return pretty much to normal.

Civil Rights and Other Concerns of the 1960s

McCreery: That was the same year, 1964, that President Johnson was reelected. Can you comment on how you think the turmoil on campus might have related to larger events in the country?

Mosher: No, I can't because I don't have any thoughts about it. I do know, of course, that it wasn't just a local situation. Campuses all over the country were involved in what they called the Free Speech Movement, which led to--at Kent State particularly--what I would call a murder of students. In my opinion, it's all involved with the anti-Communist movement.

I don't think it was involved with the Vietnam War and with President Johnson's--it was too early for the Vietnam War and Johnson was acting as president in a way that seemed to me to be good. He managed to put through Congress a great deal of legislation that needed to be acted upon.

McCreery: Yes, "The Great Society" and so on.

Mosher: Yes, well, and all the civil rights.

McCreery: Yes, the Voting Rights Act, 1965, for example.

Mosher: Yes. But that seemed to have little effect. They paid no more attention to that here in Berkeley than any other presidential --although it was beginning, of course, to affect what soon became a very important and active concern about civil rights in this country.

The fact that black men had been denied full citizenship for a century was beginning to make itself felt all over, especially on university campuses, I think. Lots of students became involved in the civil rights. I'm not sure the year that the civil rights demonstrations in the South were going on and the lady refused to sit in the back of the streetcar.

McCreery: Rosa Parks?

Mosher: Yes. Well, when that happened, I'm not sure what year it was, but there were a lot of students and people associated with the university who went down there and marched. But that didn't have a campus problem--it didn't seem to, at any rate. It didn't interfere with any of my teaching or research activities. I knew people who went, and I was all for giving everybody in the United States all the civil rights anyone else had, but it didn't affect my teaching.

More on Dean Swank and the Institute of Library Research

[Interview 7: April 23, 1999] ##

McCreery: When we were talking, I think two times ago, about when Mr. Swank became the new dean of the library school, I know that you had some pretty clear thoughts on the effects of his deanship and changes he was interested in making at the school. We were talking, in particular, about the Institute of Library Research, which he inaugurated during the first year he was dean, and I wonder if you could tell me a little bit about what you know on how that institute came into being.

Mosher: The [head] librarians of the University of California [campuses] had an association [Library Council] and met at least annually, probably. They decided that they were all facing the same problem as far as the advent of the computer was concerned and that they needed some facts on how they might

include the computer and its use into their libraries. They felt that the library school ought to do some research on using computers in libraries to teach them how best to incorporate it. They suggested that an Institute of Library Research be established by the library school or in the library school to conduct this research that would enable them to make the right decisions about using the computer in library work.

Therefore they contacted Dean Swank and asked him to set up this institute. The faculty and Swank agreed that this was a good idea, that very little was known about the use of the computer in libraries, and it seemed to all of us that it was going to be very important to libraries. So we agreed to set up this institute and gained permission to do so, and looked for a director of the institute who would be able to help the library school conduct the right research and to understand more about the computer and its use.

Dean Swank conducted the search and came up with the name of Professor Maron, who was then somewhere in southern California and who had been on a research project concerning the use of the computer to store and provide information. Dean Swank decided finally that he was the right man, and the faculty approved his selection. He was made not only the director of this new institute but also a full professor in the school of librarianship.

He proceeded to prepare proposals for grants for the institute, to help the institute conduct the research that the university librarians would like to have. He did make several, I think, proposals and was granted money which was available through the federal government at that time and proceeded to set up research studies that I never fully understood and also employed a small staff to help him with doing what he needed to do.

Now the faculty of the school and I, in particular, thought that what we wanted from Mr. Maron was information on how to incorporate the computer--a study of the computer and its use in libraries--from a computer expert. I think we did not realize how little Professor Maron knew about libraries and were rather appalled at how little he wanted to learn about libraries. He simply wanted, it seemed to me, to conduct research on how to store and retrieve information without paying attention to the use of computer in libraries.

But I wasn't in on the inner thoughts of this research institute at all. Its operation and its research subjects and

so on were never approved or discussed by the faculty as a whole. What we wanted was someone who knew about computers to tell us how computers could be used in libraries--what the best way was to teach about computer use in libraries. We got very little of that because Mr. Maron was uninterested, it seemed to me, in that problem. He couldn't very well tell us about the use of the computer in libraries because he didn't know enough about libraries.

Well, the institute went on. It had millions of dollars in grants, it seems to me. It helped the University of California at Berkeley library do something to the catalog--put it on computer or something--which didn't seem to help matters anywhere, except that the library catalog was on computer. The details of all this are very vague to me. I'm not sure exactly what was happening except that no one seemed very much pleased or no one seemed to think that millions of dollars had been spent for any worthy purpose, as far as I could gather.

Gradually everyone lost interest in and hope for the Institute of Library Research, and eventually it was disbanded. Professor Maron became not the director of the Institute of Library Research but a full professor on the School of Librarianship faculty, where he was not of much use, it seemed to me, because he didn't know enough about libraries to teach about them. But he did teach courses in computers for librarians.

The most important course, I gather, that he taught--the one that had the most enrollment--was a course for undergraduates outside the library school on how to use a computer or something of that sort. And of course he was conducting research, again on storage and retrieval of information. I never did understand what it was all about and I don't know whether he ever solved any problems or whether he had advanced knowledge in that field or not.

It seemed to me that he became just an extra position on the faculty that didn't really contribute much to the purpose of the school, but he stayed on until he retired, not really contributing much of anything and certainly not giving the School of Librarianship much information about how to educate or prepare librarians for the computer's use in libraries.

Oh, I can't think of their names, even, now--of two or three people who were full-time assistants to him. I never understood exactly what their purpose was either. I think most of the regular faculty felt the same way I did, that this was

just something that was not going to be useful to anybody and the sooner we got rid of it, the better.

McCreery: Were any of the other regular faculty directly involved in the institute's work?

Mosher: No, not that I know of. But then Maron was the only member of the faculty who knew anything about computers, really.

McCreery: Do you know if the UC librarians whose idea this was continued to be involved at all after the institute was established?

Mosher: Yes. I don't know the details of the arrangement, but I know that the Institute of Library Research was responsible to the whole university administration, not just to the library school. It was organized in the library school.

Of course, at this time there was also a UCLA library school, which was represented on a committee which oversaw the Institute of Library Research. But as far as I can tell, it never made any contribution of importance, and everyone seemed eventually to agree that this wasn't going to go anywhere, was not going to do what the university librarians wanted--which was probably something that couldn't be done by so-called research; it was just something that had to gradually be worked out.

But I don't know. I don't think that the School of Librarianship made any important contribution to making the computer more available and more useful to libraries. Nor did we find a good way--at least not immediately--a good way of teaching about computers in libraries. But this also gradually changed, and although the Institute of Library Research was discontinued, new faculty members were brought in who knew about computers, and courses were established about storage and retrieval of information using the computer.

Faculty and Student Interest in Computers for Librarianship

Mosher: William Cooper came for about a year, I think, from somewhere else and taught--he also was supposed to help us decide how to merge computers and libraries. After that initial period, he was brought permanently to the faculty as a professor in storage and retrieval of information, and he taught courses and was doing research, again on storage and retrieval of information, rather than the use of the computer in libraries.

Again, I never did understand what he was doing, although I listened to his explanations. I just didn't know enough, evidently, to understand what his research was. But something must have been important, because he got grant after grant to continue what he was doing and special grants so that he could spend a whole year just on his research, which as far as I know, never got--well, it was published, but it had precious little, if anything, to do with the use of the computers in libraries.

But some students came into the school to study computer use in libraries. One of them was Michael Cooper, who was awarded a doctorate by the school under Maron and William Cooper. He started organizing courses for the first-year library school students on the use of computers and became very effective, it seemed like, in getting a program going of courses that students could take that would teach them more about how computers could best be used in libraries.

Gradually, too, we began to incorporate the use of computers in our teaching. The cataloging courses, for example. Grete Frugé [Cubie] learned how to use the computer for cataloging and had special sections of the cataloging courses on how to catalog by means of the computer. By this time, of course, the computer, internationally and certainly nationally, was beginning to be used for cataloging books, and so the cataloging departments had to have computers. Reference courses didn't pay much attention to the computer because so very few libraries would have any computer that you could use for reference purposes. We, of course, paid attention to the fact that the computer was being used to update and publish reference materials, but it didn't seem to be particularly important, so we in the reference courses stuck to books pretty much and paid little attention to computers.

McCreery: Going back to the institute for just a moment, was Dean Swank aware of the concerns of you and other faculty members about the institute's work?

Mosher: Oh, I think he was, although he was never as negative about it as most of the rest of us were. He once said to me--or to a group of us--that his success as dean would depend largely on the success of the Institute of Library Research, because he had set it up, and he had got Professor Maron, and he had thought he had arranged for it to be what it was intended to be.

So I think this was one of the reasons why he didn't want to be dean any longer. Eventually he resigned as dean, which

is just unheard of, partly because the Institute of Library Research failed. It really did fail. It just dropped out. There seemed to be no reason for continuing it. It had to have a lot of money, and it had to have the right people. I don't think the right people ever came along, and the money began to disappear. The federal government is never a very good source of steady income. And at one point it had lots of money for storage and retrieval of information and the next year it didn't have any, so I think most of us were glad it disappeared.

However, in name--and perhaps part of Maron's appointment and somebody else, too--it hung on for quite a while. Some people, particularly Dean [Michael K.] Buckland when he came in--he always has wanted to keep that institute alive so that it could be reformed and begin to carry out its original purpose. But I think he felt that the reason for its failure was that there weren't any people on the regular faculty, or enough people on the regular faculty, interested in the Institute of Library Research. So it just was sort of a sideline and left these people who didn't know anything about libraries and were not really considered a very permanent part of the faculty.

A Split Faculty at the School; Changes to the Curriculum, 1960s

Mosher: This is when a real split in the faculty of the library school began, I think: Those who were in favor of emphasizing computers and those who felt that not enough was known yet about the use of computers in libraries to emphasize them more than we were. We were very gradually incorporating the computer into our courses, but we weren't in favor of just throwing everything out and teaching about the computer and its potential for eliminating many library materials and much of library work, perhaps.

I know that Professor Maron, right from the beginning--I said he didn't know much about libraries. As soon as he became a faculty member--he retired from the institute and became a full-time professor--he would keep predicting that in ten years--this was twenty or more years ago--libraries would disappear and the computer would take over. He wasn't at all interested in preparing libraries for the computer; he just thought the computer was going to make such a difference that libraries wouldn't exist any longer, which most of us didn't believe--thought it was a pretty poor belief for a library

school, anyway, because we were trying to prepare people to work in libraries as they existed. And libraries as they existed were not very dependent on computers, yet.

McCreery: Was this issue much discussed at your faculty meetings in the sixties when Mr. Swank was dean?

Mosher: No, it's strange, this particular problem never became a matter of debate, because it was clearly obvious that there were several who felt this way--Maron, particularly. He was the one who had been brought in to tell us what was to be done. The rest of the faculty all objected to it--or many of them did--and nobody ever brought it up in faculty meetings. We never discussed it. It was just--there it was.

So many people thought that library education should continue as it was, and others who thought it ought to be completely changed never completely discussed it and debated it, or brought it out in the open. It was in the matter of appointing new faculty and adding new courses that this division came out in the open. Some people, you could count on their voting one way and other people would definitely vote the other way on these things. It usually was enough so that the faculty really was split and unable to get together--really formally enough--to accomplish much of anything.

I might as well go back and mention Dean Swank again. I worried about his being an effective dean because he had not, I thought, been a good administrator of the Stanford Library. I think my fears were justified, because he acted as dean just the way he acted as the librarian at Stanford. He was gone most of the time. He just wasn't there when you needed him. During the Free Speech Movement, for example, he was more often gone than present. He was traveling all over the world and going to Washington frequently and spending large portions of his time in perfectly justifiable--he had a lot of responsibilities to the profession as a whole, but he shirked his responsibility, it seems to me, as dean of the library school. He wasn't there to direct and organize and handle such problems as we've just been talking about.

We needed a dean right there making--well, I'm not sure whether he had a definite idea as to just what ought to be done in the school, anyway. He came to the deanship of the school from a library, not a library school. He had not had any experience at a library school as a regular library school faculty member. I don't think he realized how necessary it was to have a guide and a leader and someone who was personally involved in the everyday events of the library school, not only

events but plans and discussions and problems of the library school.

As a teacher I still thought he was very, very good, but as a dean I thought he neglected the school. That's what I'm trying to say. He was not there on the spot when he was needed a great deal of the time.

Now, I think he could have also had a firmer grip on the Institute of Library Research problems. I think that he did not make Maron understand just what the school needed from him. But this is sheer speculation on my part; I don't really know what happened between Maron and Swank. I do know that he told me, or somebody did, but I think it was he who told me that he had been told before Maron was appointed that Maron liked to feel appreciated and liked to be respected by his colleagues, and if he weren't appreciated and admired and respected, he'd be likely not to do well. He needed a group in support of him.

This he did not have in the library school. He just did not have that kind of support, and I think it was his own fault. But if that's the problem--one of his problems--it certainly made a difference in the success of the institute. I would have thought that since the faculty wasn't consulted about most of the institute's problems and proposals and so on, that at least Swank would be. I don't know how much consultation there was. I don't think that Swank kept Maron on the right track of doing what the university librarians wanted the institute to do. This is all just my opinion from having served on the faculty at that time.

I wasn't unhappy to see the institute go, because it seemed to me to be taking a lot of time and effort and money that the school might have been used more wisely.

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McCreery: We were just talking about the time when all this discussion of computerization and so on was becoming widespread and having quite an effect on the faculty at Berkeley. I wonder, what do you think was the effect of this split you've described on students?

Mosher: I'm not sure. I don't think it had too much effect on students. Of course, that's talking as though every student were the same as every other student. Some students came to the library school anxious and eager and wanting to learn as much as they could about computers and wanted to learn about

using them for library work, and others were completely uninterested in the advent of the computer.

But one of the first evidences of the computer's influence on our library school was that before, say, 1964 or whenever it was Maron was appointed, we had a fixed regular curriculum--required curriculum--everybody had to take. We knew exactly what everyone was to take before he finished library school. And the faculty was agreed that these were the required courses. They had to know this before they should be graduated from the library school.

But shortly thereafter, very soon, we began to eliminate one required course after another: "Oh, these aren't necessary or this isn't necessary. The computer's going to change all this or maybe it will."

We just all began to realize that we weren't at all sure about the future of libraries, what kind of person the next generation librarian ought to be--what kind of training he should have had, or education. And so we continued to offer the courses, but we always decided, well, this person is coming in for a purpose that may have nothing to do with reference or with cataloging or with the history of the book or selection of books, all the required courses. We couldn't see any reason for requiring them all to everyone because there were so many different institutions they might be going into. Or the basic library might change so much that these courses would not be relevant.

I never agreed with that myself, but I could see the point was brought up by other members of the faculty that this is true. There could be people who wouldn't need this required course. For example, they wouldn't have to have a knowledge of the history of the book or the history of libraries.

But I felt that one of the most important contributions of a library school was to inculcate in the students a knowledge of the history of libraries and librarianship and an understanding of the importance of the profession--to make them proud of being librarians rather than sort of abashed about it. So many librarians felt hesitant to admit they were librarians and I thought, particularly, that if the students knew the history of libraries and librarianship, they would feel much better about their profession--feel much better about themselves and also feel much better about their position in the community.

Stereotypes About Librarians and Library Work; Gender and Librarianship

Mosher: This came about partly because of the knowledge that very often in community struggles about freedom of the library, intellectual freedom, librarians would hesitate because they felt that to express their views and be forceful about demanding the rights because they thought well, the rest of the community thought librarians were just unimportant clerks.

As a matter of fact, one of the most difficult problems that a library school student had to face, in a sense, was that whenever they were asked what they were doing and saying going to library school, "Well, why do you have to go to school in order to check books in and out?" That was standard.

We felt that a knowledge of the history of libraries and of librarians--and the fact that it was a profession of importance and libraries couldn't get along without professional librarians--needed to be brought to the attention of library school students, at any rate. So I was particularly reluctant to let courses like the introduction to librarianship, as well as the history of libraries courses, just be eliminated.

I started out talking about that because these courses that emphasized the importance of libraries and librarainship gradually were eliminated from the required curriculum, or the recommended curriculum, even. No one needed to feel ashamed of being a librarian but rather they should be proud of it. That was one of the reasons that kept me in library school.

Another reason that made me think library schools were an essential part of this whole thing was the importance of belonging to associations of librarians and encouraging librarians to make themselves professionally important in the scholarly world. That doesn't really jive with the fact that I did not--in my later career at any rate--pay much attention to library associations, but I always in teaching, every year, would recommend and urge students to join library associations. Don't do what I do, but do what I say, I guess. [laughter]

McCreery: Just to explore this theme a little further, what do you think is the source of this idea that librarianship is not a very deep profession and that the people in it are not forceful, opinionated, active people?

Mosher: Well, I think there's a lot of truth in it, of course. What the source is, I don't know. I think that the public in

general sees librarians only when they get a book. Very few of them ever go into a library and ask a question, as a matter of fact. They don't see what goes on in cataloging, they don't see what goes on in ordering and book selection. They don't see all the inner operations of the library that are required in order for that collection of books to be there. All they see is someone stamping books in and out. And of course those people are not librarians, generally.

Then librarians probably tend--well, there's no probably about it--anyone attracted to librarianship, in former years, at any rate, was probably attracted to libraries by books. They were interested in books, they liked books, they weren't interested in football or music or medicine or anything else. They were interested in books. That's why they wanted to be librarians. And I think that in our American tradition, at any rate, this is not something the general public looks up to--"Oh, he's a bookish person."

Very often, too, I think that librarians have been mostly of the female sex. And the female sex--it's very unfortunate that women have been looked down upon, in general, by Americans. There were very few professions dominated by women, and librarianship was one of them. Both teachers and librarians are sort of looked down upon by the general public because they're mostly female, and therefore--we know what the general public thinks about women, because women weren't even given the vote until 1920.

So that's part of it. You're identifying with a profession--I'm thinking, of course, particularly of the men--identifying with a profession that is largely inhabited by and governed by women and what they do. Therefore, it's a profession that is not one to be looked up to particularly and not one that we want to get into.

McCreery: Do you know, was the profession of librarianship making any active attempts to educate the public more about what it does?

Mosher: I don't know of any. Probably there ought to be. Of course, the founders of the profession and the professional organizations and so on were all men, mostly, which brings up another problem that I can't solve and don't understand very well, but it is certainly gradually improving. Again, I'm not sure about it, because it's still, I think, thought in lots of places that a [head] librarian ought to be a man, not a woman just because the profession is considered to be female. Also because it's still part of the tradition, I think, that only a man can administer an institution properly.

McCreery: I know we have a lot of discussions today about gender issues, and our ways of thinking about these things are quite different now. As you think upon your teaching at the library school in the fifties and the sixties, let's say, were gender issues discussed much at that time?

Mosher: No, I don't think so. It didn't come up in my courses, at any rate. I don't know what someone teaching public library administration, for example, might have said about this, but it didn't seem to be a particularly important problem.

Back at the time of the fifties and sixties, the library school and library profession was interested in getting as many people into the profession as possible--get them to the point where they could work in libraries. People weren't really clamoring to become librarians, and yet we always had a great many applications for students in the school. We had maybe 500 applications and we could take only 100. We always had hundreds more than we could accept.

I don't know, I don't think there were any guidelines about how many of them ought to be women or how many men, however I think that, likely enough, being male was an advantage in getting admitted to the school, because there were so few men in the profession and any man who wanted to become a librarian we would probably admit, although admission requirements and standards and so on were widely different from year to year.

I don't think that we made a conscious effort to restrict student body to any sex or any background of any sort. For example, a young man who had a Ph.D. in chemistry decided he'd like to become a librarian and applied late, after most people had been accepted. Because he was a Ph.D. in chemistry and wanted to become a librarian and was a personable young man, we admitted him. I think probably a personable young woman with the same qualifications also would have been admitted. I don't think there ever was any feeling, "Well, that's a woman and we won't admit her," but I think there was a feeling, here was a man, we probably need more men, so we will admit this person. Again, I didn't see most of the applications for admission to the school.

Dean Swank and His Programs; More on the Faculty Split Over Computers

McCreery: Let's talk some more about Mr. Swank's tenure as dean. You suggested that he was measuring his success by the success of the Institute for Library Research.

Mosher: That's what he said pretty much.

McCreery: Or that was mentioned in any event. Do you think of other major changes to the school and its operation that you associate with his time as dean?

Mosher: Yes, of course the move to South Hall was one of them. I think I may have discussed that before. We were going to California Hall, that had been assigned to us, and then South Hall became available while Dean Swank was--about 1970, I think it was, and it seemed he put a great deal of time and effort into making sure that we were granted South Hall as the library school building and achieved that. I think South Hall was clearly an achievement: Dean Swank gave us a visible separate identity on campus. I think we discussed the fact that most people on campus didn't even know there was a library school. If you were in the university library you were a librarian, not a faculty member. So it was important, I think, for the school.

I mentioned this before, that it was also bad for the school because it removed us from the scenes of the library activity. But I presume that on the whole it certainly did establish more of an identity for the library school on campus. And we had a great deal more room to work with. And of course the library got rid of us and had more room for library activities.

McCreery: Did that change the school's relations with the library staff?

Mosher: It didn't as far as I was concerned. I was working with the staff constantly, and everything was the same as before.

McCreery: Then aside from the move to South Hall, other things that you particularly associate with Mr. Swank and his leadership?

Mosher: He was very sympathetic toward the history of the book and our needs for space for our program. He was all in favor of our laboratory courses and making paper and printing and assembling books and so on, and provided us with the necessary funds to get the kind of laboratory equipment that we needed.

I think on the whole the last three or four years of his tenure he was at the library school much more steadily and regularly and began to, I think, understand.

He also changed the curriculum. He wanted to develop a new curriculum with definite divisions and definite courses. And he did propose it and I think we did adopt it, but it was something that just went by the way very quickly because everything was changing. But he did consider and work with the faculty in developing a really standard curriculum of courses in all areas of the school. He also divided the school's curriculum into areas, and it all was very logical and made a great deal of sense, and we approved it, as part of the elimination of required courses, however. I don't know whether eventually it made much difference at all, but he spent quite a bit of time on curriculum development.

McCreery: I'd like to return to this idea of a split among the faculty once computerization became such a presence in the school and its curriculum. I'm thinking about the morale and the sense of a common purpose. What were the effects among the faculty members, both the existing ones and the new ones?

Mosher: I thought it was pretty bad because, I mean, the division was there and it was felt and while hardly ever expressed, it was constantly in the thinking of and in the decision-making of the faculty. We almost never reached unanimous agreement on anything. There would always be two or three opposed to whatever we wanted to do or whatever was proposed to be done. At first, of course, it would be just two or three interested in information and the rest of the faculty would be opposed, but still, two or three could prevent a unanimous decision on anything.

It was just unhappy feeling on everyone's part that, well, this is not a united faculty. It's a faculty that doesn't know what it wants, doesn't know where it's going, can't decide what the curriculum ought to be, and they can't make up their minds about a new faculty member. Every time a problem of a new faculty member came up, it was a real--never expressed, but very firm determination on one side or the other: well, not this person.

McCreery: How long did this division last?

Mosher: Well, as long as I was there. I don't know. It became increasingly--at first it was very one-sided. The old faculty members, my group, were overwhelmingly more numerous, but by the time I retired in 1981, I guess it was, there were more and

more on the side of computerization, of disregarding libraries as the purpose of the school. Preparing people to work in libraries was the original purpose of the school, but it became less and less important the longer I was on the faculty. More and more of the faculty members thought that it didn't matter whether a faculty member had library experience or not. "What we want is someone who knows something about how to use computers and how to store and retrieve information. And what the school ought to be doing is pushing the research in this field, how to store and retrieve information. That's what we need, not librarians."

So again, it wouldn't be expressed in faculty meetings. I suppose that is a condemnation of the dean--various deans of the time. But none of the deans felt very secure. They had a certain group that supported them and they had a certain group that was definitely against them. I'm thinking of [Patrick G.] Wilson and [Michael K.] Buckland and [Robert D.] Harlan. None of them felt confident in their leadership role. None of them felt that the entire faculty was behind them, and so they didn't feel confident and they couldn't bring everything out into the open and discuss it, for some reason. They didn't want to make this difference of opinion so obvious or make it so definite that it would start--I think the faculty never really interfered with each other's courses or anything of that sort. It's simply that they wanted to make sure that what they believed in was going to be represented on the faculty and in the course structure more than it had been traditionally.

The whole thing was going on nationwide and internationally as far as that is concerned, because I know about Denmark. Nobody was sure as to just what library schools ought to be teaching. Libraries weren't sure just what they ought to be doing about introducing the computer into libraries and what books they should be buying and how they should be buying and cataloging. Nobody knew and so everybody was up in the air.

As far as I know, they still continue to be up in the air, and they don't really know what a library school education ought to present to future librarians, as far as I can tell. That makes for a pretty unhappy and difficult faculty relations, particularly in a small group like the library school. If three or four people are definitely on one side of an issue and three or four are on the other side, it's hard to come to an agreement.

McCreery: Do you know if similar problems at other library schools were just as divisive on their faculties?

Mosher: I don't know about that, except that about this time library schools began to close. One I think, if I can remember, was the University of Chicago Library School.

Leading a Team of Reference Teachers

McCreery: We've been talking today some more about different changes coming to the school in the sixties and the seventies. I wanted to back up just a little bit and ask you about when you returned from Denmark. Professor Robert Harlan had joined the staff and was working closely with you in the reference area, and I just wonder if you could talk a little bit about that.

Mosher: Yes. Harlan was not only a teacher of the reference courses, but also he was a scholar in the history of the book and he taught history of the book courses. And the two of us almost immediately, I think, felt very friendly toward each other. I think we recognized that we were kindred spirits or something of that sort. We enjoyed being together and enjoyed discussing the courses and we agreed on most of what we were doing. Any decisions that had to be made we pretty much had the same opinion on and we always were of the same mind, I think, when it came to voting in faculty meetings.

It was very fortunate, I thought--fortuitous and a happy thing for me--to have Harlan join the faculty. He had his doctorate in the history of the book and he was very knowledgeable, particularly about the history of the American book, so we proceeded together to develop the program for the doctorate in the history of the book--more than it had been--and to develop courses for the doctoral students to take. We agreed on the division of labor, we agreed on the laboratory courses and on employing Roger Levenson to set up the laboratories.

I think he had different ideas about teaching reference from mine--well, he did--and we just agreed to let that be. I taught the way I wanted to, and he taught the way he wanted to. I think we had to agree on what books to include in the weekly assignments and what books to lecture about, and so on. We didn't want the courses to be so different. But his method of teaching and his organization of the course would be his and mine would be mine, and this worked out all right.

We didn't ever disagree about developing a reference laboratory library, for example. In South Hall we got space in

a large room for a reference collection and we agreed on what was to go into it, and I don't remember how he used it, but I already mentioned how I used it, even having examinations in the room. I don't know what more, really, to say about it. As far as I was concerned, we never had any disagreements of any importance, and we enjoyed being with each other.

At first I think we both had offices up in the annex to the library up on the fourth floor, contiguous offices, and so we were sort of thrown together very closely at first. We had other people coming in to teach reference--mostly former students. Their names escape me now, while I'm talking about it, but Mary Whouley was one of them. She has died.

She graduated from the school and then went to work at Davis as a reference librarian. She thought she might want to take courses in the Ph.D. program, and so she came to Berkeley and was offered a position teaching reference because we needed reference teachers. She had an office not far away from the two of us.

Pat Wilson had an office in the same area. I don't think he ever taught a reference course, but he was involved in a way, and he attended some of our--we had reference teachers group meetings every so often. We'd go over the list of books and discuss our problems and the assignments and tests and so on. It was all very convenient when we were all together before we moved to South Hall.

At any rate, Harlan knew how to teach and he was well liked by the students. He knew reference works and he certainlly knew the history of the book. One problem he had was his lack of ability to use German. Foreign languages, in general, he wasn't very good at, so he liked to steer clear of the history of European printing and concentrate on American printing.

McCreery: Well, you were head of this group of reference professors for quite a long time.

Mosher: Well, as long as I was teaching at the library school, I felt at any rate that I was the top reference faculty member. [laughter]

McCreery: Yes. I'm interested about these group meetings that you just mentioned, where you would discuss the courses and so on.

Mosher: We had to decide on what books to include in the course list, and so we'd get together and make suggestions. We were all, I think, apt to approve an addition of a book for the collection

of some sort for reference, or we would agree to eliminate it as not being necessary. But it also had something to do with the reference library school collection, what would we include. We tried to get everything in our library that we had on our lists of books for the reference courses. Then we also paid some attention to the assignments as a group.

Portia Hawley [Griswold], who had been a member of the class of 1953 and had been at Reno, Nevada, as head of the [county] library there, came to the library school to work for a doctorate and she began to teach a reference course, I guess. I'm not sure whether she taught reference or not, or maybe it was simply public library administration. She was going to work for a Ph.D. but she never did. She finally married Dean Swank, of course. That was when he retired. I'm not sure that she was included in the reference group.

McCreery: It sounds as if you ran the group very democratically.

Mosher: Oh, yes. There was nothing autocratic about it. Of course there weren't any very strong feelings--it was generally known what the important works were. Some might have a favorite that wasn't there, and a new one might have come up that others didn't know about and was suggested.

McCreery: Did you change very often, or add new titles?

Mosher: Oh, yes, every year this would be changed. Most of the time most of them stayed the same. There was general agreement that these bibliographies and these general reference books had to be included. I don't know how many meetings we had, actually. We would have them at least once a year before we made out the assignments.

But what I was talking about a little while ago, was we did have assistants who prepared questions for the assignments. I can't remember now whether the assistant would prepare questions for all the sections of the reference course or not, I don't recall that. Nearly always they prepared the questions for my courses. It reminds me that I found some of the assignments that I made when I first came to the library school in a folder.

McCreery: Oh, I'll have to look at those. Thank you.

Mosher: I'll pull them out for you. I think it worked out pretty well. Mary Whouley was a good teacher. She was a very personable and intelligent woman. She had had a lot of reference experience at Davis, and she liked to teach, and was a good teacher, so

she made a good addition to the reference faculty. And of course Harlan did, too, make a good addition.

I think that the person I mentioned once before, Carolyn Mohr--she did teach the government documents course, but I don't remember that she taught a general reference course or not. She was brought in to teach reference in documents, and also she taught in the cataloging courses, cataloging lab. We sort of used some of these positions to enable students to enter the doctoral program. The doctoral program had very few scholarships, and teaching a course would enable some of the doctoral students to come to the school and enter the doctoral program.

Then we had others I can't remember right now who taught reference, but basically it was Bob Harlan and I who taught the reference courses, and we got along together very well. We always could manage some kind of humor about what was going on. We had many a laugh together.

McCreery: Are you thinking of something in particular?

Mosher: No, it just was any time there'd be some little problem about the library school faculty or about the library--Harlan's ears were wide open all the time. He heard everything that was going on, and he made it his business to learn what was happening and often reported it to me. Or I may have known it, too, and we'd discuss it and laugh about it. But most of it was kind of funny, I thought. I can't remember anything specific, but it was always a pleasure to associate with him.

McCreery: You mentioned Professor Wilson a few minutes ago when we were talking about the reference group getting together, that he had an office nearby back in the main library building.

Mosher: He was right in the library annex. One time, he was very much disturbed because there was a restroom not too far away from his office. He'd gone to the restroom and left his coat on his office chair and when he came back it had disappeared. Somebody had stolen it. Well, from then on we were very careful to lock our doors. It was on the fourth floor of the annex, there was very little traffic up there, just nobody would go there except to see a particular person. But this particular time his coat disappeared.

I've forgotten what his involvement was. He was basically, of course, teaching cataloging. This was all part of that revamping of the curriculum that I mentioned that Dean Swank inaugurated, rearranging everything into groups. There were

general courses--instead of introduction to librarianship, say, there'd be a course in general on bibliography and how to find out about books, say. I think that Wilson had to teach such a course when it was first inaugurated, and he wanted to know what we were teaching in the reference course. I don't think he ever taught a reference course, but I think that's why he came to see how we were deciding what books to include.

I liked Pat Wilson. He had been my student, and I had been very much interested in his--really, I think I was the one responsible for getting him on the faculty. When I would be discouraged about the reference course I would suggest, well, teaching reference doesn't really make any difference anyway. Nobody really learns anything from it that helps them in libraries.

He would tell me that he knew a lot of librarians because he had worked in the university library, and also he had known a lot of them because he had been a student in the library school. He said, "You know, Fred, a lot of the reference librarians working in the library now say your providing lists of books and talking about them in the reference course is the only thing that they remember when they're standing behind the reference desk and being faced with a question. They think of the reference course and it gives them a start, so I think you ought to continue teaching reference books."

Although in general, he was not in favor of being that specific. In general, he would like to have a more general approach to library school courses, but he thought that teaching about reference books was important, or at least a lot of former library school students had told him that.

McCreery: How did that make you feel?

Mosher: Well, it made me feel maybe it was worth going on with. It was hard to--I'd never had a course like that in library school that meant anything. Of course, I was working in the library and not much interested in reference courses, so I never had the experience of having had a reference course that went into detail on specific reference books. That experience I'd never had, and I didn't know just what effect it had on a student or their future careers, so it was hard to imagine.

But I also had another student who was influential in this respect. Joseph Rubenstein was an older student who had been around in the history department for a long time at Berkeley and after he left library school, he went to Lawrence, Kansas--the University of Kansas--and started working in the library

there. He wrote to me, and I had quite a bit of correspondence with him because of one reason or another. He said that I should keep the course book-oriented, emphasis on the source of reference materials and on the books, because that's really what stayed with the student and what they needed to know. Well, that inspired me to continue having a book-oriented course.

I had great respect and admiration for him. He did well at Kansas, but he decided to quit librarianship and open an antiquarian bookstore and book service, and he became very successful at it.

McCreery: In general, do you think your methods of teaching reference changed much over the years?

Mosher: Well, not basically. I've told you about the reference laboratory library, the kind of examination, the overhead projector and the transparencies that I used for teaching. Those weren't really basic changes, they were just tools of teaching what I wanted to teach. I didn't know about audiovisual materials when I first started teaching reference courses, and of course we had no idea--

The reference laboratory library was another thing that Swank supported. He provided the funds for it. He would provide just about everything that I wanted--history of the book materials and the reference course materials. He was very good at this.

Poetry for Reference Students; Miss Coulter's "Trick" Question

Mosher: I was so unhappy with my own library school experience that one of the reasons I decided to teach in the library school, accept the position, was that somebody ought to do something about library school. It ought to be an important, interesting, and educational institution that really prepares librarians for what they are going to have to do. Therefore, I felt that it ought to be a happier place, a more interesting place, and I would try to make the experience of learning about reference books and reference services as interesting as possible so that they would listen and learn.

I didn't want library school to be dull. I wanted it to be more interesting and that's why I would--I guess I didn't start out doing this by any means, but once a week I would have a

poetry time. I thought that most library school students seemed to know nothing about poetry and that they ought to know something about poets and poetry.

The way it all started, I recall now, was that I was a great admirer of A. E. Housman, and there was a tree between Wheeler Hall and the university library and I taught in the classroom right beside it. The first year I taught in this classroom, it bloomed--it was a big tree, it's still there--and it bloomed. I thought it was a cherry tree, and it reminded me of Housman's poem, "Loveliest of trees, the cherry now is hung with bloom along the bough." It's funny, I can remember the rest of it. "Hung with bloom along the bough. It stands about the woodland ride, wearing white for Eastertide. Now of my threescore years and ten, twenty will not come again. Since to look at things in bloom, fifty years is little room. About the woodland I will go, to see the cherry hung with snow." That was the first time I recited a poem, and it caught the attention of the students.

You can always tell when you're a teacher and students are listening and when they aren't, and so I set up every Friday or every Thursday or whenever it was to have a poem. I have a collection that I used, poems and anecdotes and jokes. Here is one from Ogden Nash, I think it was. "The codfish lays ten thousand eggs, the homely hen lays one. The codfish never cackles to tell you what she's done. And so we scorn the codfish while the humble hen we prize, which only goes to show you that it pays to advertise."[1] [laughter] I would read that talking about the necessity for publicizing library services. A good librarian really needs to inform the public that the library is there.

There are a bunch of others. There are various articles and stories. Here are some of the assignments that I first used.

McCreery: You've handed me something on encyclopedias, I see, a 202 course.

Mosher: Oh, 202 is the reference number. It changed, of course. Oh, I know that one, too. Another Housman poem: "Yonder see the morning blink, the sun is up and up must I to wash and dress and eat and drink and look at things and talk and think and work and God knows why. Oh, often have I washed and dressed and less to show for all my pain, let me lie abed and rest, ten thousand times I've done my best, and all's to do again." You know how Housman wrote.

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[1]This poem, "The Codfish and the Hen," is an anonymous American rhyme, not penned by Ogden Nash. Nash did compose a different poem called "The Codfish." --ed.

I tried to get a different poet every week and read a poem that would make them listen and introduce them to the fact that there are poems that they might--they didn't seem to think that poetry was of any consequence at all, and having had my doctorate in English literature, I thought I'll do something about that.

I think most students sort of looked forward to it. Most of the jokes, of course, I would throw in, showing some insight into the various problems of library work. The *Antiquarian Bookman* was a good source of a lot of this, of the anecdotes or the jokes.

McCreery: Let's have a joke, shall we?

Mosher: I'm trying to find one here. Well, this poem by E. B. White on the breeding of the bee, which has always been handicapped by the fact that bees breed in mid-air. This was a poem I read every year. I was a very great admirer of E. B. White.

Song of the Queen Bee [excerpt]

"The breeding of the bee," says a United
States Department of Agriculture bulletin
on artificial insemination, "has always
been handicapped by the fact that the queen
mates in the air with whatever drone she
encounters."

When the air is wine and the wind is free
And the morning sits on the lovely lea
And sunlight ripples on every tree,
Then love-in-air is the thing for me--
I'm a bee,
I'm a ravishing, rollicking, young queen bee,
That's me.

[Interview 8: April 30, 1999] ##

McCreery: We finished our last session a week ago talking a lot about your classroom teaching and some of the things you used to talk with students about, and you remembered after we stopped taping a little anecdote about Edith Coulter and a little question she used to pose to her classes about a certain painting. Would you mind repeating that for me?

Mosher: The library school, when Miss Coulter was teaching, had its quarters on the second floor of the main library. On the stairway as you go down to the main floor of the library a

painting was hung up above on the wall so that you couldn't help seeing it as you went down the stairs. Edith Coulter would--I don't know how regularly, but she occasionally to a class would ask the question, "The painting by such-and-such an artist and on such-and-such a subject--where is it now?" Nearly always nobody could answer that question, but it turned out to be the same painting that they saw every day several times as they went down from the second floor to the first floor. I thought it was a good question because it made students aware of the fact that what they need to know is often right in front of them, if they look for it.

The Rare Book Room Joins The Bancroft Library

McCreery: You were also telling me just a few minutes ago that you looked through some old correspondence and recalled a couple details about the rare book room becoming part of The Bancroft Library. I wonder if you could tell me what you remember on that event.

Mosher: I think that Leslie Clarke was in charge of the rare book department of the main library, and it was outgrowing its quarters. It had room in the stacks--in the locked stacks--for some of its books and it actually was a separate rare book room from The Bancroft Library. The Bancroft Library existed as a separate kind of library and was concerned only with history of the west coast, or mainly of the history of the west coast. It seemed to a number of us that instead of strengthening and changing and making better the rare books department, that it could better be combined with The Bancroft Library. All the rare books in the rare book department could simply be transferred to Bancroft and put under the care of the librarians there.

They had space for it, so eventually after one review and report and another--I think the basic problem was that the history department of the university, particularly, liked to have The Bancroft Library under its control--didn't want this to be changed by having anything other than historical material, but eventually we persevered and did manage to get the rare books department transferred to the Bancroft.

The Bancroft Library provided quarters for a printing press for demonstration purposes and a classroom where I could hold exhibits, and everything worked out just very well as far as history of the book courses were concerned.

I think that it certainly saved the main library a lot of expense in not having to duplicate another rare book collection or services to take care of the books that weren't in The Bancroft Library. Nobody was appointed the rare books librarian on the Bancroft staff in general, but they were the supervisors and controllers of the collection. Everything else about The Bancroft Library went on just the same as ever.

McCreery: Were people happy with the change after it was made?

Mosher: As far as I could--I was happy with it. I think it didn't matter to most people, but it was very convenient to have all the rare materials in one place. And the Bancroft had a cataloging staff that was accustomed to cataloging rare materials, or any kind of materials in the special ways, so that worked out very well, too. And it's still functioning.

McCreery: Do you know of other instances where separate collections were folded into the Bancroft?

Mosher: No, I don't know of any other. Bancroft has acquired collections all the time; I don't know that any particular group of books or materials in the main library were transferred to Bancroft except this collection of rare materials mostly on the history of printing.[1]

Swank's Resignation and the Deanship of Patrick Wilson, 1970-1975

McCreery: I'll turn now to some of the other things that I'd hoped to talk about a little bit today. We spoke a little bit about Patrick Wilson in another session, about when he was a young colleague and had an office near you and so on, but I'd like to turn now to the time when he was chosen to be the new acting dean in 1970, and I wonder, do you recall how all that came to pass?

Mosher: Yes, I do. Dean Swank resigned rather unexpectedly and there was nobody. I don't know who might have been considered the logical successor to him, but there didn't seem to be anybody. A search committee was appointed to find a replacement for him.

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[1]Both the University Archives and the Mark Twain Papers were also transferred to The Bancroft Library. --Ed.

I think that John [T.] Wheeler of the business school was chairman of this committee to find a new dean.

In the meantime, I remember a faculty meeting of all the associate and full professors trying to determine what we could do to get a new dean. We needed one right away and I think that Wilson volunteered to take over the duties of being the administrative head of the school and succeeded Swank, then, in conducting the business affairs of the school.

It seemed to most of us he was doing very well. The search for a dean was still not producing any names, and nobody was evidently volunteering for the job. I remember another meeting of associate and full professors in which we agreed that Wilson would make a good permanent dean. I knew John Wheeler fairly well personally, and I volunteered to call him and tell him that the faculty felt that he should be continued as permanent dean. I did this and Wheeler said that was fine, they didn't have any other suggestion, and that they would consider making him a permanent dean, which they did.

Wilson then acted very satisfactorily, most of us thought, as a dean for a number of years until he, too, got interested in resigning because of all kinds of problems.

There were lots of problems, not only between the so-called new computer people and the older, more library-oriented people, but also there were numbers of personality clashes and difficulties between members of the faculty who'd been there for a long time. Wilson offended some of them and had sort of little vendettas with people, and it all got to be so much that he grew tired of it. As far as I know, at any rate, he decided not to continue as dean. Well, that's how it happened, to the best of my recollection.

I think that he represented the school and did administrative work of the school very well. I think he chose as his vice chairman or assistant dean or whatever it was called then, Ray Held, who was then teaching reference on the faculty and was a professor in library history. He had published books on California library history. He was the associate dean, I think is what it was called, for Wilson, which worked out very well.

Oh, at some point, Bob Harlan was involved, too, in the administration. I don't know exactly how that worked out. Harlan and Wilson were close friends and agreed pretty much on everything, and they often handled administrative problems together, as I recall.

McCreery: Let me back up just a moment. Do you know why Dean Swank resigned so suddenly?

Mosher: No, I don't know. I think he resigned just at the time he was going to marry again. He and his wife of many years standing were divorced and Swank and Portia--Griswold was her name then --her maiden name was Portia Hawley and she was a graduate of our school and had worked in Nevada as head of the county library that Reno was in [Washoe County Library]. She decided to come to Berkeley. I guess her marriage was breaking up, and she decided to come to Berkeley and enter the doctoral program and wondered if there was any possibility of teaching while she was working for her doctorate.

She was encouraged to come and given a position teaching and proved to be very satisfactory. Ray Swank and she began getting interested in each other and decided to marry. And it was just as he retired as dean, they were married. I have no way of knowing whether this played any part in Swank's decision to retire or not, but he was, I think, weary of all the problems of the administration. I don't think he ever really liked being dean of the library school, so he was glad to just leave it, and he could.

McCreery: He resigned from the school as well as the deanship?

Mosher: Oh, no. No, he kept his full professorship, but he resigned from the deanship.

McCreery: Okay, thank you. Back to Professor Wilson as dean. How would you characterize his style as an administrator?

Mosher: That's hard to say. I think he tried hard to get and keep a good faculty. He was, I think, perhaps too personal in his relations. Let's see, that isn't the right way to put it. He tended to dislike somebody or like somebody and let his like or dislike affect that person's relationship with him as the administrator. So he had a number--I think I mentioned before --of vendettas with various members of the faculty.

One newer member of the faculty, whose name I can't even remember now--I can find it easily enough--but Wilson and he did not get along at all, and finally this new professor just left because it was such an unpleasant set of circumstances.

Wilson and the teacher of children's literature, Mae Durham Roger, didn't see eye to eye on anything and they were constantly battling each other over everything. There were a number of incidents in which the members of the faculty would

have an unpleasant time with Wilson. He wasn't the easiest person to get along with. He clearly let his personal--I guess I just finished saying that--his personal likes and dislikes interfere with his job, I think.

I don't know whether I should mention this or not, but I think that he is gay, and that this influenced some of the faculty against him and perhaps made him more sensitive or aware of the displeasure of members of the faculty. But I don't know any of this for sure; I'm just speculating. I think it's pretty clear, though, that he is gay.

McCreery: I know that Mr. Wilson was trained as a philosopher, and I wonder, how do you think that came to bear on his work as administrator of the school?

Mosher: I don't know. I have never thought that it had any effect on it at all because I don't even know what his dissertation was. He did think clearly, and he had a good knowledge of libraries and librarianship and all parts of it. His teaching assignment was mainly in the cataloging courses. As I understand it, he gave excellent lectures on cataloging which were often, perhaps, above the heads of the beginning cataloging students. They couldn't appreciate them or understand them very well.

He didn't think he should be talking about the details of how to catalog a book. He thought, as I understand it, that the general idea of cataloging--I suppose you might call it the philosophy of cataloging--was what was important. But again, I shouldn't say anything about this, because I don't know anything about it first hand. I never heard him lecture in the cataloging course.

McCreery: I'll just let you keep to your own experience. I know it gets speculative when you're going beyond your own firsthand knowledge. In your view, though, was he accessible to the faculty as a leader of the school?

Mosher: Yes, I think he was accessible, and I think he usually had very firm ideas on what he thought about any subject, about any person, and he wasn't hesitant to express them. I always thought that he was mostly successful as dean. I thought that it was very unfortunate that he allowed some of his relationships with members of the faculty to develop into very unpleasant problems. But on the whole I thought he represented the school well, and he kept in mind what was happening in librarianship and in library education and was doing the best he could.

Nobody was doing very well at that time. We were trying to decide what kind of education, training and so on, librarians needed for the future.

McCreery: When you say nobody was doing too well at that time, what do you mean?

Mosher: I mean, library schools and libraries in general. Nobody really understood, I think, what was happening, that the computer was going to change everything about libraries. Part of the problem there was that those who were enthusiastic about computers often would say, "Forget about libraries. The computer's going to just take over, and there won't be any libraries any more," instead of paying some attention to how you work with the existing institutions of the libraries and how can you introduce computers into them most successfully, which is what we really needed. Because the libraries were there and needed librarians, and we could not very well just exclude libraries, we thought, from consideration.

I don't think anybody really knew what the future was going to hold and how the library was going to continue or how to prepare libraries for the computer future--at least, I had never read or heard any very sound proposition about what to do, and I certainly don't know what should have happened.

McCreery: Mr. Wilson was dean from 1970 to 1975, the first time. I gather he was pressed into service again, later, but I'm thinking of his original time period in that role. Just drawing again from your general memory, was that a time of plenty for the school in terms of budget and enough resources in the way of faculty and so on to do what you wanted in your teaching and educating librarians?

Mosher: I can't pinpoint the periods. It seems to me that there were no particular problems under Wilson. We seemed to get the kind of budget we needed for most purposes. I certainly had help in many ways. The reference laboratory library and the printing laboratory and all the other special needs of my courses were funded all right. I think this was a time when, in general, the university was suffering from budget woes, but I think that the library school, in general, escaped and was funded pretty well, financially. But I didn't really have any specific knowledge about it.

McCreery: Okay, that's fine. We talked last time about--perhaps it was two times ago--about the Free Speech Movement and some of the time periods that changed the atmosphere on the campus in general. Now during this period we're talking about today,

starting in 1970, of course, the Vietnam War was going on and was quite a presence in the minds of everyone. Do you have specific thoughts on how that affected what you were doing in the school and the lives of students and faculty?

Mosher: First, the Free Speech Movement and the reaction against the Vietnam War are sort of linked together and contributed to the general unrest among students and the problem of teaching because so many students were upset and unhappy, and so were many of the faculty.

Dean Wilson was very much in favor of the Free Speech Movement and opposed to the Vietnam War and on the side of intellectual freedom and liberty and so on, all the way through. He felt certain that no leader of the library school should be in favor of the repressive methods of the administration or of the government, so from my point of view he was very good in allowing or helping the school to maintain its opposition to whatever seemed to be repressive or--unfree, I guess, is a way to put it.

Not that there were any incidents, or any particular things that the school was involved in, certainly not as a school. Although there were--we could make some decisions about students and their activities. I can't remember exactly what; however, whenever the question came up we would side with the students in opposition to the war and in favor of freedom of speech. Wilson was always in favor of that, so I might say politically he was just perfectly okay, as far as I was concerned.

I don't have any idea why he decided to retire as dean. He got entangled into too many problems with members of the faculty.

The Post-Master's Certificate; Doctoral Recruitment

McCreery: I noticed in my background research that in 1973 the school authorized the post-master's certificate for students. [phone rings; tape interruption] Do you have much recollection of what you thought when those were authorized as part of the total curriculum?

Mosher: I had mixed feelings about them, I know that, and was in general opposed to them because I didn't think we had enough faculty to take care of them. And it seemed to me that they

were rather unimportant professionally. I didn't think that they amounted to much in the way of indicating how much better prepared the student was who had such a certificate or not. I didn't think that the profession in general regarded them as being very important pieces of evidence.

I thought that the courses for this certification were generally not especially well prepared or well taught. It seemed to me a lot of unnecessary and additional emphasis on just taking courses. Of course I never was all that much in favor of the doctoral program as far as that goes, and the certificate problem was even less appealing to me, so I didn't like them.

McCreery: Why did the school start up that program?

Mosher: Because they were hoping, I think, that it would induce students to go into the doctoral program. I think it was sort of, oh, what do you call it, a recruitment device. I think it did lead a number of students eventually into the doctoral program. It seemed to me that we were very much concerned at that time, and maybe all the time from the beginning of the doctoral program on, with recruiting for the doctoral program, because there weren't enough students to establish really good doctoral programs in the fields that we wanted to offer them in.

I thought for the history of the book we had a good program--history of books and libraries. I couldn't feel that there were enough courses or enough faculty--but that's all beside the point--in other fields to offer good doctoral programs. But anyway, we needed more students to make such programs particularly useful. You needed students that would help each other in learning about library administration and the problems of libraries on a higher level than the first year of library school. But again, I didn't teach any of these courses, I didn't have any of the students involved in these courses and I don't know how successful or unsuccessful it was.

I do know though that we tried to encourage students to enter the doctoral program, because there was a feeling that the library school ought to be educating more doctoral students than first-year students, actually. For the University of California, our school ought to be a school for advanced degrees beyond just a first-year degree in librarianship. That's, I think, as I recall it, the main reason why the certificate program was introduced, was to encourage students to take advanced courses.

McCreery: Whose idea was it, do you recall?

Mosher: I can't say whose idea it was.

McCreery: Do you know if other graduate schools of librarianship were offering anything like that?

Mosher: No, I don't. They undoubtedly were, something like that.

McCreery: Do you know if they had similar recruitment problems at other schools at that time?

Mosher: No, I don't, but it definitely was a problem for us to recruit, for the doctoral program especially. The history of the book doctoral program didn't seem to have any difficulty in recruitment. Students who got interested in the history of the book got interested, and they were rather special type of student anyway. If they wanted to go ahead for the doctoral program, well, that was fine, but we never tried to encourage them because we didn't feel that we needed more students; we had as many as we could take care of. That would be Bob Harlan and I and Ray Held in the history of libraries.

Danton, of course, was interested, too, in more doctoral students, but his doctoral students were mainly administrative, not library history oriented. I have no other thoughts, I think, on that. I don't think it was a very successful idea, and I think it took up a lot of time and energy that we could have better spent on something else, probably. But that's all hindsight.

ALA Accreditation

McCreery: One of the other things I wanted to talk about a little bit today--perhaps more than once--is accreditation. I was reminded of it because I was reading that there was an ALA accreditation in process in 1974 and '75--so towards the end of the time that Mr. Wilson was dean. Now I know that these accreditations coming every five years are always either happening or about to happen or just happened, but I'm wondering, what recollections do you have of ALA accreditations, and what role did the general faculty play in preparing for them?

Mosher: Very little, I'd say, in answer to your last question. The dean and the administrative part of the school would naturally

be very much involved with accreditation. They had to provide documentation and so on. But most of us on the faculty were hardly aware that it was going on, and if we were aware, we thought we would think, well, if they wouldn't give the University of California Berkeley library school accreditation, well, they might as well go out of business, because we're considered to be one of the best library schools. There didn't seem to be any possibility for us not to be accredited. I don't think there ever was any, so it just seemed to be a matter of form, something you had to go through every little while and something that the dean should take care of. We shouldn't have to be bothered with it, because there wasn't anything that we could do differently, it seemed to us, from what we were doing to make us a better school for preparing librarians. We met all the formal demands--we had budget and faculty and a great university--and so it all seemed unnecessary to go through this rigmarole.

McCreery: You may have already answered this, but to your knowledge, were there ever any recommendations by ALA for significant changes that you thought were pertinent?

Mosher: I know that there were recommendations--recommendations that, as I recall, the faculty had already considered and discussed and decided one way or the other. We didn't need to have anyone else tell us what we needed to do. And the only recommendation really they could make would be to get more faculty, more money, and so on. We were doing as well as we could.

McCreery: Part of what I'm trying to get at is changes to curriculum. I know that the curriculum always was a big issue in all of these time periods, partly, as you say, because of the advent of computerization in librarianship.

Mosher: Yes, the curriculum was changing. I think I mentioned before that at one point, say 1964 or so, the curriculum was pretty much fixed and most of it was required for the master's degree. Then during the next ten years or so, that all changed until hardly anything was required anymore. Under Swank, I mentioned earlier, a very thorough revision of the curriculum took place. The curriculum was divided into certain main subject categories or categories of one sort or another. Courses listed had to be taught at certain time periods, so that students could get them during their year they were here.

Quarter System Versus Semester System

Mosher: Another problem, as far as curriculum was concerned that hasn't been mentioned, I think, is that sometime around this period the university went from a semester system to a quarter system. This required, of course, changing all of the courses, and revision of the curriculum was taking place as a result. It makes quite a bit of difference whether you have a quarter or a semester.

McCreery: Yes, that's a good point. My notes say that the university switched to the quarter system in 1966.

Mosher: Yes. Then we switched back again. And it was a tremendous amount of work to revise courses. It was particularly bad for the courses I taught in history of the book and any of the history courses that required a term paper. You had only a quarter, you could hardly do a term paper in that quarter. Most history courses felt that problem. And so it meant that you had to take two courses in order to--it was just horrendous, I thought.

I was very happy to get back to the semester system, but on the other hand, the quarter system worked rather well, for some courses. We could organize reference courses for the quarter system without any difficulty, really--not that I ever thought it was any better. What I didn't like about the semester system was going so far and then having Christmas vacation and then coming back and having exams and so on. That I thought was very poor, ineffective teaching. The way it is now, starting the semester earlier and ending before Christmas, seems to me to be an ideal setup, but I never taught under that system, so I don't know.

VI LATER TEACHING AND RESEARCH; RETIREMENT

The Deanship of Michael K. Buckland, From 1976

McCreery: Moving through the seventies, then, after Mr. Wilson resigned from the deanship, after a little lag, Michael Buckland came in January of 1976 to take over as dean of the library school. How was he chosen to head the school, do you know?

Mosher: There was a nationwide search for a dean. I don't know who was on the committee. He was one of the people brought in to--I think there was more than one candidate. He came and talked, and we met him and we liked him. Most of the faculty did at any rate, because we all voted for him.

McCreery: Did any of you know him prior to meeting him in this regard?

Mosher: I certainly had never heard of him before. I think that was true of most of us. He was really from England and had relatively little experience--there would be few opportunities to know anything about him because he had been in the United States only, I don't know, ten years, something like that. But we liked the way he talked, we liked what he said, and he seemed to us--seemed to me, at any rate--to be a very good possibility.

The problem was he wasn't sure he wanted to come, partly because his wife didn't want to leave their home in--I think it was Indiana. They had children and they were comfortably settled there and they had their own house. But she was persuaded. She toured the Bay Area and so on and was persuaded that maybe life around San Francisco might not be so bad. So he became a definite candidate and was willing to come. I think the whole faculty voted pretty unanimously in favor of his coming.

McCreery: You said you liked the way he talked upon meeting him at the time of his candidacy. What are you thinking of when you say that?

Mosher: When I said that I was thinking just generally of his appearance and his speech and how the subject matter made sense to me. He was talking about library schools and what they could do and what they--well, I don't know whether I really meant the way he talked or--what I liked was the impression I got: here was someone who knew what library education was about and who had definite ideas about what it should be like and who would be a good leader of our faculty.

He was acceptable to both sides of the faculty--the computer side and the library side, and especially to the library side, I think, because he was a librarian; he wasn't a computer specialist. He had a history degree, I think, in his background, so at any rate, I was very much predisposed in his favor.

McCreery: Thinking back again, to the time of first meeting him and so on, do you recall what he said he wanted to accomplish at the school?

Mosher: No, I don't. Maybe he didn't have anything he said he wanted to do. It was just that I thought that he would be a leader who would find out what the school needed and would proceed to do it. I thought he was very effective in gaining the trust of people. He would be a good person to deal with the administration and with the librarians in California. He had, I think, given evidence of this in Indiana. He'd been on some committees, and not only just local committees, but other committees and had worked with other librarians effectively in trying to solve some of the problems of computerization and so on. It all sounded good.

McCreery: Your support of him was shared by the other faculty members?

Mosher: Well, we all voted for him. As I said, the only problem was making sure he would come. His wife was the problem there.

McCreery: What happened next?

Mosher: He, of course, came to the school and became dean. I think he ran pretty quickly into the problem of the two sides of the faculty, what to do about computerization of libraries, and how to teach for the library of the future.

It's hard for me, I never could quite figure out why he wasn't more--well, I don't want to say aggressive, but I guess that's the word, in promoting what he thought the library school ought to do. But that really isn't his style. He would wait and see.

After all, he was younger than most of the faculty, it seems to me, and had not had a position of this kind before, so he was hesitant to assert deanly authority, I think--which I think was a mistake. Well, I shouldn't say that, but I think it would have been better for the faculty if he had a definite plan in mind and presented and argued for it. But he didn't; he just let the faculty sort of continue to grope for the right answer. It may very well be that he didn't have any better solution than any of the rest of us, but it seemed to us to be his job to find out, to lead us in some direction or other.

I think he did it mostly indirectly and I'm sure he knew--he got to know the faculty very well and tried to help each member of the faculty accomplish what he thought that member of the faculty should accomplish, or was able to accomplish. And I think he was as--well, he was a very good dean--too good a dean, actually, because the higher authorities saw how good he was at working with people and administration and took him away from the library school.

McCreery: Yes, he went to the UC president's office, is that right?

Mosher: Yes, that's right, as sort of the head librarian of all the university libraries in a way. That is, he was supposed to set the plans and organize all the university libraries under one office. In essence, he would be the top librarian of the University of California library system. But I don't think it ever was like that, but he--[phone interruption]

McCreery: So Mr. Buckland was dean until 1984 and was hired away by the president's office. But returning to the early years of his deanship, you said that he tuned in quickly to the fact that there was a certain split in the faculty. Did that split stay the same in your opinion?

Mosher: It just got worse. It was always there and increasingly nearly all new members of the faculty were for the computer side. I don't remember any--well, that isn't true--some special faculty members--but most of the new faculty members would be experienced with and educated for computerization and were almost, I think, pretty close to becoming a majority of the faculty, certainly not at the beginning of the time, but that's

what happened over the next ten years. He spent a lot of time just figuring out what would be best for each faculty member.

I don't know that he--he never explained to me, at any rate, in faculty meetings or otherwise, exactly what he envisioned the library school would become. I didn't have any clear picture of that.

McCreery: The goals and emphasis were more individual than for the whole school?

Mosher: I think that's partly because he felt the whole school would not ever adopt any plan that he thought might be the best.

Name Change: School of Library and Information Studies

Mosher: I suppose a good example of the problems might be the change of the name of the school.

McCreery: Oh, yes. One of my next questions.

Mosher: Yes, it was always the School of Librarianship, and a lot of us thought that was what it ought to be, but he felt that there ought to be something in there--what did we come up with? School of Library and Information Studies, I think, something like that.

There was quite a debate in more than one faculty meeting about the change in name, which I thought was kind of silly, myself. But it didn't make too much different what the name was, and Library and Information Studies was fine, but that seemed to be a victory for--Buckland thought it was the best idea. He would say, this is part of gradually changing the whole traditional librarianship to the new librarianship for the computer age.

He realized that that was important and necessary and I think was trying to do his best to get the faculty to support whatever--but I never felt that he had a very definite plan as to what--he ran into enough opposition just changing the name, so that I can understand that if he'd begun to really revise the curriculum, there'd be a great deal more opposition to changing anything about the old school.

McCreery: Do you feel then, that the name change was primarily symbolic, rather than indicating a change of direction? I don't want to oversimplify.

Mosher: No, I think it was--well, it was symbolic, but it also was indicating a change in direction, a change that Buckland wanted, and the change that was happening regardless of who wanted it or what the cause was. Libraries were changing and the whole process of cataloging, particularly.

McCreery: Was this change of direction well articulated among the faculty?

Mosher: I don't think so, no. I didn't feel that it was. We never really debated or discussed what was happening, because it usually would get into, oh, sort of heated language--not necessarily heated, but it tended to become unfriendly, and that didn't seem to be the right way to approach it.

Everyone felt rather strongly about it and none of us older members of the faculty wanted to give in so precipitously, I guess, or so quickly. We were constantly urged by librarians we knew from the field not to rush into computerizing courses. The same old courses are fine and the computer will gradually come in, and you can gradually learn about the computer after you've finished library school. They said don't change things too much.

McCreery: Yet there was enormous pressure to bear on bringing computers in very quickly.

Mosher: Yes, there was. There are so many different kinds of libraries and to each different kind of library the computer means something different.

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McCreery: Continuing our session from a moment ago, we were talking about changes in the school's name and in the curriculum while Mr. Buckland was dean. Just returning to the name change for a moment, I know that many other schools who made similar name changes used the word information science rather than information studies. What do you think of librarianship associating itself with science?

Mosher: Library studies was a very definite compromise. Some members of the faculty thought it ought to be library science. Others of us, including me, thought that it was not a science and that library science was a misnomer and that we would much prefer

not to have it in the name of the school. Studies was a compromise, I think suggested by Buckland, and it met with everybody's approval, so that's what we accepted.

It took a lot of argument and discussion over this name change, but most of us agreed that it was necessary considering what was happening in the library world and that it better reflected what we were going to have to be doing, preparing students for working in the institutions that were undergoing these changes, just as we were trying to make changes as a result of what was happening in the library world.

It was a difficult time. It still is a difficult time. And I wasn't aware that anyone knew the right answers. I certainly didn't, and I'm still not at all sure what way things are going and how they should go.

McCreery: An association with science has a flip side, which is an association with art. Is librarianship art or science, both, neither?

Mosher: Oh, I guess I never concerned myself with what it was, as far as trying to name it. In some respects it's a science, in some respects it's an art; in some respects it's neither, perhaps.

I never felt it important to decide, so I don't know. Names are something that can be changed any time. They do help determine somewhat the direction and philosophy of the school, I suppose, and it certainly was considered by the computer scientist group to be a victory for them to have the name changed.

McCreery: Now, not long after that, the names of the degrees awarded were also changed to reflect that same terminology--information studies. Was there any controversy about that?

Mosher: No, see, I think that was the university policy. It had to be changed. The name of the school had to be reflected in the degrees awarded, I think. I don't know.

McCreery: In any event, it was not a separate issue in your recollection?

Mosher: No, it wasn't.

McCreery: All right. Well, in this time period we're talking about, I noted that 1979 was the start of major changes in the master's curriculum, specifically to incorporate computers, databases, and online searching into the courses. Do you remember much

discussion of that separate from the other things we've been talking about?

Mosher: This was what year, now?

McCreery: 1979.

Mosher: That was just two years before I retired, and it was happening in other courses. It didn't concern my courses at all. We didn't have any capability for doing any online searching in the reference courses. I would have liked to have been able to, but there wasn't any possibility. We didn't have any way of doing it.

Certainly it was unnecessary, it seemed to me, and far-fetched to introduce the computer into the history of the book courses. However, in the history of the book courses, we always included the computer and the early history of the computer in the course because what had happened is part of the history of communication--and I really liked that title better than history of the book. We'd start that course by going all the way back to the beginning of language on through to the computer. Of course, we spent very little time on history of language and not very much time on the history of the computer.

Then after that, after retiring in 1981, I guess it is, I don't know what's happened.

Effect of Proposition 13 on Libraries

McCreery: On another subject, but in the same period of time, I'd like to ask what you recall about the California ballot initiative, Proposition 13, which passed in 1978, and specifically what was thought at the time about its effects on libraries.

Mosher: Yes. It was a very important proposition. We haven't yet discussed the fact that I was on sabbatical 1977 to '78 in England. I think it was in '78 that Proposition 13 was passed, so we were not here during all the furor about this proposition.

I think I voted for it because it meant the taxes on this place had been going up very steadily and at least seemed to me to reach a height that I wasn't prepared to manage. What I got out of the material for Proposition 13 was that it would be

concerned only with residential property, and it would prevent the loss of homes by reason of the high valuation on property. It all seemed very reasonable to me. When I discovered that it referred to all property and then realized that it was going to affect all public institutions, I don't know whether I would have voted for it or not.

But certainly it made a great deal of difference to us. We were able to live here. Well, I guess maybe we could have continued to live here, I don't know, but taxes of similar properties all over are very, very high.

But I don't like what it did to libraries or other local institutions, and I don't think that was originally ever intended. It didn't seem to have any effect really on the university. I couldn't tell any difference, at any rate. But it certainly made a difference in local libraries.

McCreery: Was Prop. 13 much discussed among California librarians at meetings and so on, do you recall?

Mosher: No. See, I was gone during that time when it was being debated. Of course it was being discussed in meetings and faculty meetings everywhere after it became clear that this was going to mean a severe cut in funds for all civic and county institutions. It meant fewer jobs and poorer libraries all over the state. But since I was gone that critical year, I don't have any recollections of what the faculty would say about it.

Sabbatical to the British Library, 1977-1978

McCreery: I do want to ask you about your sabbatical to the British Library.

Mosher: The first year was the anniversary of a coronation of some sort. We remembered it because everything was so tight in London. We couldn't find a place to live in London. Fortunately we were able to find out about a place that we could rent from here before we went to London. It was in Sutton, the southernmost part of London, and it meant a train ride to the city all the time.

McCreery: How did you get the invitation to go to the British Library?

Mosher: I guess I didn't get an invitation. Dean Buckland, after all, knew the British scene very well. I was having a sabbatical and the question was what I should do with it. He thought it would be a good idea for me to go to England. Originally he thought of my going to Liverpool and learn about--I can't think of its name, an important rare books library there. Then I thought I'd rather be in London. There was a possibility that our younger son Allan might go there. He had money for a fellowship to go anywhere he wanted to study voice, and he thought he might go to London. But it turned out he went to Rochester, New York instead, so we went away by ourselves.

I think that Buckland had corresponded with the head keeper of printed books at the British Library and told him about me and that I was coming and what could they do for me, or words to that effect, at any rate. It turned out that the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue* was just being begun and all the eighteenth-century books in the British Library were being cataloged.

The British Library people thought I might be useful in that project. I agreed to be of service as much as I could be, although the eighteenth century was not my field. Bob Harlan's field was eighteenth century and so I had pushed it aside, pretty much.

Anyway, I got there, I went to see the head keeper, and I had various projects in mind besides the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue*. I wanted to work on a supplement to the bibliography of *Anonyma and Pseudonyma*, and I wanted to use whatever resources the British Library had in the history of printing. I was given a desk in the library, a table, and a key that would admit me to the stacks--I could go anywhere in the stacks.

I did what the eighteenth-century people wanted me to do, make suggestions or--they had regular meetings and I'd go to the meetings and we'd discuss the importance of the project to the history of printing, especially. I did some work for them indexing newspapers for printers and booksellers, and the rest of the time I could spend on my own.

I did use it advantageously. It was wonderful to have keys to the library. I could just go anywhere in the stacks, and I made good use of that.

I got interested in, oh, the problem of early bibliography entry. For example, when did bibliographies begin to carry size designation by means of format designation--whether a book

was octavo or folio or not would be included. It was not included in manuscript bibliographies because it didn't mean anything, but for book bibliographies--these would have to be the printed books--it meant a great deal to know whether the book was a folio or an octavo or a quarto. It identified the book, so rather quickly it became part of the standard bibliography entry and I wanted to know when and more about it.

The thing that occurred to me was that the very first bibliographies of printed books or practically the first ones at any rate, were the printers themselves--lists by the printers themselves of the books they had for sale, that they had published or printed, same thing in those days. I began to search for the first catalogs by printers of their books. The British Library had a number of them, and I found out about others, and it went on from there. I spent a lot of time on that project.

Well, I don't know really what else to say about it. It was a very informative and interesting time, and I found a lot of material about the early catalogs and early bibliographies and wrote several articles on it. I think I identified the very first printer's catalog that did include format designation.

McCreery: What year did that go back to, do you recall?

Mosher: Right offhand, I don't. The very early 1500s.

McCreery: How did you like living in London?

Mosher: I don't know. Sutton was a small suburb of London and nothing very much had ever happened there, I guess. We just lived there. Evelyn, of course, spent quite a bit of time there, but I took the train every other morning to downtown London and went to the British Library--what was then called the British Museum Library.

I just think that London is a marvelous place to visit. And I went to a meeting of the Bibliographical Society. I went to most of the important libraries besides the British Library and just had a really good professional experience, I would say.

The *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue* group were young librarians from all over England, and it was good to get to know them.

Also, it was the first experience I'd had seeing how the computer was used. They were putting their records on the computer and this was the first bibliography, important bibliography at any rate, ever to be computerized from the beginning. I enjoyed learning all about that.

McCreery: Sounds like a wonderful sabbatical.

Mosher: It was a good year.

Promotion to Full Professor, 1979

McCreery: After you returned in 1979--well, you returned in '78, but I'm saying, a little bit later you attained the rank of full professor. Now we've talked about the whole publish and perish state of affairs and how that affected you. How did you finally pass the test?

Mosher: I wrote a long statement--Dean Buckland told me to write as immodest a statement as I could about my experience at the school just brag about myself as much as I could, which I then proceeded to do. Also, several publications resulted from this study of the early catalogs. He put it all together and got approval from the necessary faculty and submitted it to the higher administration and it was granted. The promotion was granted. I doubt that I would have made full professor if that hadn't happened, so I owe Dean Buckland that.

He was concerned that I hadn't had any promotion for I don't know how many years, twenty years or so. Both Harlan and Wilson and others who came on the faculty after I did had been promoted to full professor and I wasn't.

I still thought I was doing what I should be doing, so I wasn't too unhappy about it, but it did make a difference particularly in retirement, financially, so I was willing to argue that I should be promoted.

McCreery: How did it go preparing your immodest statement?

Mosher: I even have some of that here. I can show it to you. It went all right. I just, I thought, stated the facts. Well, I pointed out why I had been employed in the first place--to strengthen and build up a program in the history of the book--and that, plus building up the reference course and so on, I just spent all this time improving teaching. I thought that was

the most important part of my job, rather than research, so I emphasized that I spent most of my time on it.

But of course under the publish or perish theory, that didn't do any good. I can see the university's point of view, too, that I should have been able to do better than I did. I think I may have mentioned that I had two or three projects that were almost completed and somebody else preempted them, which made it difficult. But everyone agreed eventually that maybe I should be promoted to full professor, and as I said, it did make a difference in retirement.

McCreery: How actively were you pursuing a promotion before Dean Buckland took up your case?

Mosher: Oh, I never did pursue it. I probably should have. I have a letter here from Dean Wilson, saying that he would like to recommend me for a promotion, but there weren't any publications and what could I do about it? What should he do about it? I don't think I ever even answered him. It seemed to me that it was perfectly obvious what my situation was and what I was doing. I now see that if I had wanted to be promoted--and I certainly did want to be promoted because it meant a lot of difference in money--I should have been more aggressive about it and asked for it.

But also, there had been upper echelon authorities who had --well, not various, but at least one who said, "No further promotion for Mosher unless he produces, unless he publishes something." That was the problem, I just hadn't published anything.

McCreery: Well, when the promotion finally came, how did that feel?

Mosher: It felt good, of course. It was so near the end of everything that it didn't really make any difference in general. But it was good to--see, I think it was Edith Coulter who had never got promoted--partly, I suppose, because she was a woman. I don't think she ever made full professor even. She did get, I think, associate professor, but toward the very end of her career. It just seemed to be part of the job.

McCreery: You had seen it happen to others, in other words?

Mosher: Yes, although on the faculty I was on everyone got promoted before I did, and their publications were--well, I didn't think that they were so extra good. But I had not published and I just didn't publish. I hate to publish something that isn't important and really worth publishing. I didn't want to

publish anything that wasn't ready to be published, and so I was stuck.

McCreery: Are you a perfectionist?

Mosher: I suppose I am. There are too many publications in the world and I don't think anything should be published that doesn't need to be published.

McCreery: Okay, well, thank you for talking about that.

Retirement, 1981

McCreery: Let's move on to 1981 when you retired. Tell me how that came about.

Mosher: Well, in February of 1981 I became sixty-seven years of age. The policy of the university then was to retire anyone that reached that age of sixty-seven. I could have stayed on without retiring for a year or two maybe. I've forgotten all the details. I might have been able to stay on, but I would have soon been working for nothing if I had.

Buckland was, of course, dean and we discussed retirement, what the alternatives were, and he thought that I ought to retire, I guess. He thought maybe I could spend more time on research. I had all kinds of research questions and problems and projects going.

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McCreery: You were talking about retirement and how you might have stayed on without retiring.

Mosher: I might have. It was just at this time that there was national concern over forced retirement anywhere. Age should not force people to retire, but the university still maintained its special exception for some reason or other that everyone had to retire at sixty-seven. But Buckland said that I could stay on to teach one course or something. We discussed the options, none of which seemed to be very good, and I decided, well, I'd just retire.

McCreery: Did you want to retire?

Mosher: No, I didn't want to retire. But it seemed to me that--the problem was that you had to have the faculty continue you, and I don't know whether anyone ever voted for or against my retiring from the faculty. Buckland also said that he thought I could be called back to teach courses, but nobody's ever suggested that and I never was called back. I've never taught since June of 1981.

McCreery: Would you have gone back if you had been asked?

Mosher: Probably. During the first ten years or so, certainly, but it's too late now. There would be just too much for me to go back now. But what I miss, you see, is the association with students. I didn't think I would. I didn't think that would be a problem at all, but it's the one thing that I find lacking. It was constantly sort of rejuvenating and exciting to be associated with these students and teaching them. I found I really--well, I knew I liked to do it and I'd been doing it. I really missed teaching. I didn't miss any of the rest of it, but I did miss teaching.

But be that as it may, I never was asked again to teach a course, even though there were times when they needed a teacher in the history of the book course.

McCreery: Did you ever make a move to suggest it yourself?

Mosher: No, I didn't, and of course I had plenty to do to keep myself occupied. One of the good things about being a university professor is that, you know, you never retire; you always have the research part of it. It keeps going. And I had more than I could possibly do just in research trying to do some of the projects that I'd not managed to complete.

I was working very hard on the early catalogs of printed books. I had all of the material that I'd got from the British Library and from other sources and had a research assistance grant to book those catalogs on the UNIX computer. But I couldn't read the results at all. It would have been so much simpler now. But anyway, that's what I was going to do first, was to get that publication out on the early history of bibliography entry of printed books.

Writing for the German *Lexikon*, From 1984

Mosher: But then about the same time the *Lexikon des Gesamten Buchwesens* editors approached me and wanted me to start writing articles for them. It seemed to me to be a good thing to do and I started it. Well, I didn't realize how rapidly it would become a full-time job, which it did, and so I've been too busy to do anything else. All I've done is prepare these bibliography entries, which seems to me to be more useful, perhaps, than these research projects I've been working with off and on for so many years.

I discovered when I was teaching and working with the students in history of the book that the *Lexikon des Gesamten Buchwesens* entries were very useful, even though you couldn't read German. You know, the student can't read German, but every entry has a bibliography at the end of the entry that leads you on to further information. And this *Lexikon* was so helpful and useful I thought it would be worth spending time on, so I did.

They began to ask me to make suggestions for entries and gave me more and more and more to do, so I just continued to do them, expecting that--well, I don't know what I was expecting--somehow or other I would get back to my research projects.

Right now it would be so much easier to do the study of bibliography entry because I can use the computer myself and put things just the way I want. I spent so much time correcting and revising and changing the UNIX production that it discouraged me, but now I could get that done really rapidly, I think, if I could spend as much time at the computer as I want to.

McCreery: I notice you've been working on the German project since 1984. That's fifteen years. How many entries have you completed, would you say?

Mosher: Oh, I don't know. I was doing about 100 a year for a number of years. I did a lot of them. They'd give me the title of an entry, and I'd make a folder for it and start researching in the library and bibliographies and get all the information xeroxed that I can find. Then I write an entry in English and send it to them to translate into German. Then they set that up in proof and send me the proof, and I have to correct that, proofread it, and send it back. It takes a lot of work, time.

McCreery: Do you have any favorite entries that you've worked on?

Mosher: Not necessarily favorite ones. The one on New York took an awful lot of energy and time. No, I don't think I had any favorite ones. They were all really interesting. I think I had the ability to compress the important information.

As I said earlier, the really useful part of it is the bibliography that's added to each entry. I spent a lot of time trying to find the best sources to lead people on to additional information. It's very broad in scope because everything was to do with the production and distribution of printed material, mainly, but also of manuscripts and anything to do with libraries.

Contact With the School Since Retiring; The Advent of SIMS

McCreery: Well, I'm curious. What kind of relationship did you maintain with the library school after retiring?

Mosher: Oh, for a while I went to library school faculty meetings, but it didn't seem to me to be worth going to them. Nobody needed my knowledge or experience, I guess. I was just there observing.

Oh, I should say that right about this time the university passed a general resolution of some sort that said that emeriti professors were a part of the faculty and they could attend faculty meetings, but they couldn't vote on anything. So what you do is attend a meeting that you can't vote on.

Also, gradually, the questions that were being discussed were not anything I was particularly interested in or knew anything about, I guess, and this stirred this feeling of division in the faculty. Most of the time there was no real dean and the interim deans were just that, pretty much interim, and it was not very interesting to me to see what was going on.

I felt that, speaking for just one retired professor, that I just am totally eliminated. Nobody ever inquired about what I thought or what I was doing, officially. Although I was given a part of an office--part of a desk in part of an office --and I could use the xerox machine and the mailing services, that was about all there was to it.

McCreery: Do other emeriti feel the same, do you know?

Mosher: I think so. I don't know about Wilson and Harlan, how they feel now. Swank felt this way pretty much. After he retired he quit going to faculty meetings. I don't know about Harlan and Wilson.

McCreery: Do you think there could be a stronger role for emeriti at all?

Mosher: Oh, yes. Certainly they could have used me for teaching at least one course every term. I could have kept on teaching reference courses, but, well, I wasn't asked to. Of course, I also might say, I'm not sure that I would have accepted it if I'd been asked. [laughs]

McCreery: Okay. Well, let me ask you quickly, as we've touched on before and has been much discussed among everyone, the school closed and then reopened as the School of Information Management and Systems. What are your views of this to the extent that you know about it?

Mosher: To the extent of what I know about it, I think it's a calamity. I think that if you go back a little farther, the school was reviewed more than once to see whether or not--well, not whether it should be continued perhaps, but just what was happening to it. And every review has always been in favor of the school--despite pointing out various problems like the disagreements among the faculty.

These reviews often happened in connection with looking for a new dean. When the review would be favorable and they'd start looking for a dean, then some higher authority, I guess, would cancel--say the review had to be done over again or something of the sort.

It was when the university was suffering severe budget restrictions, and the library school was an almost perfect example of a school that could be eliminated entirely without causing too much trouble. It would save the whole budget of the school and provide a building right in the center of campus for some other more important school, in the opinion of a lot of people.

It was a school that was having difficulties finding a dean, presumably, and there were disagreements among the faculty. It seemed to be a ripe candidate for just being abolished, so I don't know. I wasn't in on so much of it that I hesitate to say anything about it, but as I understand it, the present dean [Hal R. Varian] was one of a number that were being considered for the dean of the school--I don't think

necessarily a new school, just a dean of the school--and the faculty voted against him but the administration employed him.

He, I think, as I understand it, was avowedly opposed to libraries and had never worked in libraries, didn't know anything about them. Yet he was made dean. The administration committee, or whoever was deciding all this, decided it had to be a new school--not a library school--and changed its name to what it is. This is what I understand or I hear.

What's happened is, of course, that it doesn't have any basic constituency now. The libraries were the organizations for which the school existed, and now that the school doesn't admit the existence of libraries, there's nothing much for the school to--well, it has to do something entirely different. I'm not sure that anyone has articulated what it is, or knows what it is. I don't know much about the new dean. I don't see him as having a very clear picture of what he wants the school to be.

McCreery: The new school has decided not to seek ALA accreditation at this time. What are your views on that?

Mosher: It probably wouldn't be granted because they hardly have a--I guess I don't know enough about it, but they don't have a program for educating librarians, and that's what the ALA is all about. The ALA is concerned with educating librarians, not with information specialists of various sorts.

I think it would be tragic, of course--I think it is tragic that the university here at Berkeley doesn't have a school concerned with libraries. But that's the way it's happened.

McCreery: I know that many library schools have faced similar crises; many have closed and/or changed their names.

Mosher: Yes.

McCreery: Now UCLA in our own UC system made a different decision by incorporating its library school into the school of education rather than closing it completely. Any thoughts on what kind of a solution that is?

Mosher: I've heard nobody talk about what has actually happened. I would not approve of its becoming part of a School of Education. One reason is I have a real prejudice against schools of education. Well, I suppose it's better than being closed to have it continue under some other school, but I don't know how it's working out. I haven't talked with anybody from

UCLA about it at all. I gather from what I've heard, it's not doing particularly well. I think that--well, I don't have any thoughts about it really.

Thoughts on Retirement

McCreery: I was interested to hear you say you missed students so much after you were so reluctant to go into teaching in the beginning.

Mosher: Well, yes. [laughter] I was reluctant because of my experience teaching freshman English.

McCreery: Which is quite a different, thing, yes.

Mosher: Yes. Like I said, I liked the students here. Obviously I continued to enjoy teaching or I wouldn't have stayed on in the library school. My folders are full of offers of doing something else in library work, but I chose--well, I must say perhaps partly because of the location. I enjoyed teaching and what I was doing. On the whole, I was able to do what I wanted to do and teach how I wanted to teach, and I always felt appreciated by the students, and they probably contributed a lot to my life and experience.

McCreery: Well, I congratulate you on your career. It must be nice to know that the effects of your teaching are still being played out in all of these libraries today.

Mosher: Well, yes. I certainly don't dwell on it at all. I have not tried to keep in touch with students. There are too many of them and I have too much else to do, I guess.

McCreery: What else are you doing with your retirement?

Mosher: I don't know--just daily living, I guess, absorbs most of my time. I have tried to correspond with my family as often as I can and with good old friends who need, I think, to be kept in touch with. Both Evelyn and I are very much involved in Trinity Church here in Berkeley, and that takes a lot of time.

For example, tomorrow is an all-day meeting about the future of the church--it's the Methodist church right across the street from the Congregational church--and what should be done with the sanctuary building, because we meet in the chapel. It's a very small congregation now. It used to be one

of the large ones in Berkeley, but it no longer is, so the whole day tomorrow is to be devoted to what you should do with a building that can't be changed because it's a historical landmark, can't be demolished and so on, that sort of thing.

Then we're also involved in a local earthquake group that meets at least once a month. One Saturday we spent the whole day on what various people have been doing to prepare for the next earthquake and what we should be doing.

But otherwise, the *Lexikon* takes up most of my time. Then of course I do all my own income taxes, you know.

McCreery: That's right--during the course of our interviews.

Mosher: Yes. I find I don't have the time and energy to do very much beyond just keeping going.

I am surprised, when we've been going over this, at how much time I spent on intellectual freedom at the beginning of my career here in the library school. I didn't realize that I'd spent quite so much time and energy and effort. On the whole, I think that was good.

But I don't have anything to do with libraries or the library school any more at all, just my so-called successor, Mary Kay Duggan. You know, she taught history of the book, and she has been just ousted from the faculty.

McCreery: She's over at the music department, now, isn't she?

Mosher: Yes, and not even allowed an office in South Hall. She's the one I get most--we communicate with each other and I find out what's going on through her.

I occasionally have talked with Bob Harlan, but not very often because he lives in San Francisco. I seldom have got to campus since I broke my hip.

McCreery: Is there anything else I should have asked you about your library school career?

Mosher: Oh, millions of things, I suppose, but I don't know what they would be. I just don't know.

McCreery: I have enjoyed so much hearing all the details of your teaching and research careers at Berkeley.

Mosher: Thank you.

McCreery: And your thoughts on these issues of passion, like intellectual freedom. I really enjoyed it very much. I appreciate your candor and willingness to answer questions that came out of the blue many times, I know.

Mosher: Well, it's hard to organize something like this, too, and to say the things that ought to be said. There are, I'm sure, a number of things, if I stop to think about it, that are important in the history of the school that I know about, but I can't think of them with a tape recorder. [laughter]

McCreery: Yes. Well, you've done a great job. Thank you very much.

Mosher: Thank you.

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TAPE GUIDE--Fredric J. Mosher

INDEX--Fredric J. Mosher

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Laura McCreery is a writer and oral history consultant whose interests include California social and political history, history of libraries, public policy, higher education, and journalism. She has been a consulting interviewer/editor at ROHO since the inception of the Library School Oral History Series in 1998. She has also done oral history consulting, project management, training, interviewing, and editing for such clients as the East Bay Regional Park District, Prytanean Alumnae, Inc., and the Berkeley Historical Society. She holds a B.A. in Speech Communication from San Diego State University and an M.S. in Mass Communications from San Jose State University.