Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Library School Oral History Series
and
University of California, Source of Community Leaders Series

Flora Elizabeth Reynolds

"A DUKEDOM LARGE ENOUGH": FORTY YEARS IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S PUBLIC AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIES, 1936-1976

With an Introduction by
Charles and Grace Larsen

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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Childhood in Marin County, CA; living in International House, UC Berkeley, master's degree in Latin; School of Librarianship, 1935-1936: comments on Sydney Mitchell, Della Sisler, Edith Coulter; employed at Sausalito and Mill Valley public libraries; army librarian in California, 1943-1945; reference librarian, SF State College, 1949-1953; librarian of Mills College, 1955-1976: predecessor Evelyn Steel Little, staff, students, collection development, early computerization; further on Edith Coulter; influence of Frances Clarke Sayers; teaching reference and bibiliography; working with LeRoy Merritt, Leslie Clarke, Roger Levenson; William J. Monihan and University of San Francisco Gleeson Library; retirement: Associate in The Bancroft Library.

Introduction by Charles Larsen, Professor Emeritus, Mills College, and Grace Larsen, Professor Emerita, Holy Names College.

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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In memory of Fredric J. Mosher:

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

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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 Charles and Grace Larsen

When she arrived in Oakland, on the Mills campus, in 1955, Flora Elizabeth Reynolds came well prepared to be the librarian of the hundred-year-old liberal arts college for women. She and the college made a good fit, one much to the benefit of the entire academic community during and after the twenty-one years of her service.

Her comments on aspects of her life suggest her readiness for the opportunity to make her substantial contribution. She already knew, intimately, the geography of the San Francisco Bay Area, her family's home territory, and had gained insights of the world outside from habitual reading and frequent travel.

Her academic education was first rate. At the University of California in Berkeley, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree with the distinction of election to Phi Beta Kappa, her Master of Arts in Latin, and, in 1936, a Certificate of Librarianship at the School of Librarianship, success in her studies reinforced her confidence in having the ability to deal with challenges.

She relied on it, certificate in hand, to acquire the missing element of her graduate student years, the prior experience requisite at many libraries, including Mills, for employment in library administration. In the bleak employment scene of that era, most such graduates had reason to feel that finding a position was as taxing as earning a degree.

Elizabeth made her way by offering to exchange service in the library of Dominican College in San Rafael for course work. Before long, she took a clerical job in the catalog department of the San Francisco Public Library in order to observe the details of its daily operations. She was rescued by a chance vacancy at the library in nearby Sausalito. Here, as co-librarian, she accepted the risks of having to share responsibility with the former assistant librarian. They worked well together as did Elizabeth and her assistant librarian when she moved on to become the librarian, with full responsibility, at the Mill Valley Library.

While serving in these first professional positions, as co-librarian at Sausalito Free Public Library (May 1937 to April 1939) and librarian of the Mill Valley Public Library (June 1939 to June 1943), Elizabeth said that she felt very young and not as informed about libraries and books as all the other professionals she met. She worked at making amends by diligent reading in diverse literature, visiting other libraries to note their procedures, by maintaining amiable relationships with staff members as well as patrons, by learning the

ropes of enhancing funds, sorely needed, and by attending, usually with a fellow staff member, professional meetings as they occurred in such places as Asilomar, Napa County, Berkeley, and San Francisco. She also arranged dinner parties with outside speakers, to help librarians of Marin County become better acquainted.

When she left these positions, she was grateful for her professional and social growth and satisfied that in the process, she brought the libraries to acceptable standards regarding their holdings, buildings, and equipment, as well as their services for community use, especially by children. After World War II, she added to this record service in directing the reference department of the San Francisco State College Library.

Aware of her background, the Mills College community--library staff, administrative officers, faculty, and college friends--greeted Elizabeth cordially the day in July 1955 when she assumed her duties. There were flowers in her office and, from a friend of Mills College, a check for $100 to add as she wished to its furnishings. With characteristic enthusiasm, she pitched in to share in the library's daily routine and to cope with its serious problems.

According to a Mills alumna, Mary Manning Cook Wale, a professionally trained colleague who worked in the Mills Library from 1945 to 1972, Elizabeth's tenure was marked by a steady growth of the library's holdings and its reorganization at essential times to meet needs of the community using it. She supervised the maintenance and development of its special collections: the existing Albert M. Bender Collection of Rare Books and Manuscripts, the Art Collection, first assembled by refugees from Europe, as well as the Jane Bourne Parton Dance Collection and Milhaud Archive. All have attracted scholars not alone from within the college but from various parts of the world. Alumnae and administrative officers, particularly, have Elizabeth to thank for bringing together the useful College Archive.

For the mass of unsorted books, periodicals, and documents that had accumulated in the understaffed library, Elizabeth drew up a plan--which included staff additions--and followed it rigorously until all the worthy items were available for use. Meanwhile, as the library received newly ordered volumes, some through grants she had solicited to fill gaps, and accepted gifts, which included those of entire libraries, Elizabeth won the admiration of the academic community, not excluding--at least in retrospect after the completion of the plan--that of the hardworking staff.

Along with the title of Librarian, Elizabeth held an academic one and was ever mindful of the students. She revealed her teaching skills in first-year classes she visited to inform students about the library,

and in classes she taught as Associate Professor, later Professor, in bibliography and children's literature.

She also exposed the Mills Library resources and enticed patrons to use them through bulletin notices, exhibits, and entertaining writings in newspapers and the *Mills Quarterly* journals. When the class of 1926 celebrated its fiftieth reunion the year Elizabeth retired, it contributed to the Library endowment over $100,000 to honor her and earlier outstanding librarians, Elizabeth Gray Potter, Flora Belle Ludington, and Evelyn Steel Little.

Although we were not yet members of the college community which welcomed Elizabeth, we too have reasons to appreciate her qualities after knowing her as a colleague and friend for more than forty years. I (Charles) became acquainted with her in 1957 when I became a lecturer in government. My frequent reliance on the Mills Library has continued throughout my Mills teaching career from then to the present (2000) as an Emeritus Professor of History. As for me (Grace), I was employed in 1955 at the university in Berkeley as a research specialist in agricultural economics and as a Mills faculty wife became acquainted with Elizabeth at numerous and diverse social events on campus. Always interested in the cultural life around her, she has been an engaging participant in conversations. My use of the Mills Library has been far more limited, nonetheless appreciative, in the course of my academic career on the faculty of Holy Names College from 1966 to the present, as Emerita Professor of History.

From 1957, we have been professional and personal friends. Elizabeth is a person who maintains friendships--as with the early co-librarian and the assistant in Marin County, and one of her schoolday friends, artist Eleanor Bates Streloff. The two of them often met, walked and talked in Sausalito where the artist lived. In Elizabeth's handsome home, a portrait of her painted by Eleanor Bates hangs in the living room just inside the front door.

We have valued our relationship with Elizabeth in common with others, including Professor Gerald White, a former teacher of mine (Charles) as professor of history at San Francisco State College (now University). We often commented to one another on her impeccable manners, her professional demeanor--always helpful, courteous, considerate, pleasant, knowledgeable, and receptive to the flow of book orders brought to her.

Like other patrons for whom the Mills Library has been central to their endeavors, we appreciated how she alerted us to new acquisitions, and especially, how she served Mills as a skilled administrator to keep the library running smoothly during times of reorganizations, as for structural reinforcement against earthquakes, for damage recovery after an accidental flooding, for updating the cataloging system. She was

like a good contractor one is lucky to find, who can remodel an entire kitchen without disrupting a family's home eating habits.

Countless numbers of the Mills community would assent that a notable trait of Elizabeth is her readiness to express gratitude. Mrs. Wale, in her tribute written in 1976, called particular attention to the time and energy Elizabeth found to acknowledge, promptly, every donation to the library, large or small. It was an ingrained habit, long before her employment at Mills.

An enduring and valuable gift that she left to the college was a creative kind of thank you note from her. It was a history of the Mills Library from its earliest days in Benicia to the time of her retirement (published in the *Mills Quarterly*, February and May 1977). Other writing followed. Drawing on manuscripts deposited in the Mills Library, she wrote with her friend, Mills College Professor of Music Margaret Lyon, *The Flying Cloud and Her First Passengers*, the story of Margaret Lyon's great-grandfather's trip with other passengers on the initial voyage of the clipper ship around Cape Horn to California, along with what happened to them after arrival. Published in 1992, it is available now in its second printing. Elizabeth's gratitude for her experiences in the Marin County libraries was published in 1997 in *Six Years in Marvelous Marin, 1937-1943, A Librarian's Memoir*, a delightful account filled with local color.

In the postscript years to her career at Mills, Elizabeth has volunteered participation in numerous useful projects, including at The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley and the Gleeson Library of the University of San Francisco. Through writings she has publicized their collections to the benefit of the patrons of all these Bay Area libraries.

In the several positions Elizabeth has held as a professionally trained librarian, she has made lasting contributions. If as often asserted, gratitude cannot be expected from students, she is a striking exception.

Charles Larsen
Professor Emeritus
Mills College

Grace Larsen
Professor Emerita
Holy Names College

September 2000
Oakland, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Among the narrators for the "Library School Oral History Series," Flora Elizabeth Reynolds has the distinction of being the earliest graduate of the school. In the spring of 1999, she kindly agreed to share her recollections for the series.

A native of Marin County, Miss Reynolds graduated from Tamalpais High School before earning her B.A. at Berkeley in 1934. After taking an M.A. in Latin in 1935, she completed her Certificate in Librarianship in 1936. During her year at the school, she took courses from the founding dean, Sydney B. Mitchell, and the other original faculty members, Edith M. Coulter and Della J. Sisler. Therefore, she was able to add her knowledge of these individuals to the public record.

After completing library school, Miss Reynolds enjoyed a long and notable career in academic and public libraries around the Bay Area. She was head of the Sausalito and Mill Valley public libraries, an experience she documented in the memoir *Six Years in Marvelous Marin*. She was an army librarian at three California camps during World War II, and she shared vivid descriptions of the wartime atmosphere she encountered. After the war, she worked at the San Francisco State College library before succeeding Evelyn Steel Little in 1955 as head librarian of Mills College in Oakland, where she remained for twenty-one years, until her retirement in 1976. Since that time, Miss Reynolds has been an Associate of The Bancroft Library, where she authored two editions of the *Guide to the Book Artifacts Collection*. She is also a great traveler who now, in her late eighties, frequently runs off to England or France.

Ten one-hour interviews were carried out at Miss Reynolds's home in North Berkeley during June and July. Although we sat in the quiet living room of her quiet neighborhood, our rolling tape recorder seemed to attract interference, especially from the gentleman who was refinishing and repainting the front porch. Between his sander and his radio, we picked up more than just our conversation.

Miss Reynolds used our outline to organize her thoughts and make notes before each session. So prepared was she that occasionally she introduced a new topic before I was ready. If I asked her to back up or give more detail, she gracefully complied. Her excellent memory added to the value of the interviews all along the way.

Of her many library experiences, there was just one Miss Reynolds declined to discuss, a yearlong job at the Berkeley Public Library from 1954 to 1955. She requested that we pass quickly over that time period,

saying only that the job situation she encountered there was not what she had been led to expect.

Miss Reynolds reviewed the draft transcript with a careful hand, making many small corrections and adding to the significant details of our conversation. Afterwards, she seemed dismayed that she had marked the pages so heavily, ("I think it's because I'm a librarian!" she quipped). I assured her that this is not uncommon. Indeed, I think readers will find the history contained in this volume all the more useful because of her "librarian's" attention to detail.

Laura McCreery
Interviewer/Editor

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

Regional Oral History Office
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University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name FLORA ELIZABETH REYNOLDS

Date of birth Nov. 4, 1911 Birthplace ~~SAN RAFAEL~~ CRESTLINE, OHIO

Father's full name EDWIN HENRY REYNOLDS

Occupation Loco. Engineer Birthplace CALIF

Mother's full name MARY FLORA RENIFF REYNOLDS

Occupation — Birthplace Geyserville, CALIF

Your spouse —

Occupation Birthplace

Your children —

Where did you grow up? MILL VALLEY, CALIF.

Present community BERKELEY, CALIF.

Education MILL VALLEY Public Schools + TAMALPAIS High School; Univ. of CALIFORNIA

Occupation(s) LIBRARIAN

Areas of expertise

Other interests or activities

Organizations in which you are active Alliance Française, Les Amis de la Cuisine Française, Society of Woman Geographers, Gleeson Library Associates, Commonwealth Club

I FAMILY BACKGROUND, CHILDHOOD, EDUCATION

[Interview 1: June 14, 1999] ##[1]

Maternal Great-grandparents and Grandparents; Mother's Background

McCreery: Good morning. Would you start off our session today by stating your date of birth and just telling me a little bit about where you were born?

Reynolds: I was born November 4, 1911--the only child--in San Rafael, California. My parents were not living in San Rafael, but there was a hospital there, and I was born in a hospital.

McCreery: Was that usual then?

Reynolds: I think so. Not for my mother's generation, but for mine, yes.

McCreery: Where was the family living at the time?

Reynolds: Briefly in Santa Rosa, but we shortly moved to Mill Valley.

McCreery: I take it you were named after your mother?

Reynolds: My first name, Flora, was given to me immediately. My father said, "We'll name her for her mother and add another name later." A few days later they added the name Elizabeth for my grandmother--his mother. And I was called Elizabeth always.

McCreery: I saw on your bio sheet that your mother was also born here in California, in Geyserville. Tell me a little bit about her and her background.

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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.

Reynolds: She was the only surviving daughter in her family. She was born on the farm near Geyserville, which was in our family for almost a hundred years. Her father was a New Englander from Massachusetts, the latest of many generations of New Englanders. His father was Dr. Mowry Reniff, a country doctor. My grandfather's name was Asa Arnold Reniff; he was born in Massachusetts.

McCreery: Do you know what year?

Reynolds: In 1828. He worked as a blacksmith in Broome County, New York, which is just over the border from Massachusetts. He came to California in the Gold Rush to make his fortune. He didn't make a fortune, of course, but he met my grandmother in Sacramento. She was Irish. She had come to this country with her mother and younger brother in the potato famine. She was born in Galway. She came to California after her mother died and she was on her own. She had all the legendary Irish charm apparently.

McCreery: Do you know how they met?

Reynolds: No, I don't know how they met. I don't know much about my grandfather's family except that it goes back in New England for many generations. I think the reason is that my grandmother had so much Irish charm and was so interested in talking about Ireland that my mother learned a great deal more about Ireland than about her New England roots [laughter].

She went to the local public school and Healdsburg High School, and some years afterward she went to business college in Santa Rosa.

McCreery: Can you state your mother's name and her date of birth?

Reynolds: Her name was Mary Flora Reniff. She was born March 27, 1877. She died June 25, 1973. She had a long life. I'm sure she never expected to live such a long life.

McCreery: She also was a lifelong resident of this area?

Reynolds: Of Sonoma County and Marin County. Not of this particular area, though of course she did live in Berkeley for the last years of her life.

Father's English Heritage and Roots in the Railroad Business

McCreery: On your father's side, I wonder what you might know about his parents.

Reynolds: I can give you the names. Elizabeth Lowe Reynolds and Edwin Reynolds. She was a barrister's daughter from Wrexham [England], which is a town in Wales about a half hour's ride from Chester. I visited it once when I was staying in Chester. Wrexham has a huge church--I think it's not technically a cathedral, because that's the seat of a bishop, to be correct about it. But it is a large and impressive church. I happened to fall into conversation with the church warden, who got out the record of my grandmother's birth, which was rather a thrill to see.

Her father was a barrister, and I noted that the firm is still in business in Wrexham under the same name, Jones and Lowe. But I didn't go around and introduce myself to them. I'm too far removed.

She and her sister were brought to the United States after their mother died. Her mother had remarried, and their stepfather was coming to this country to work as an engineer on the building of the Pennsylvania Railroad. That's how she happened to get here. I don't know how she met my grandfather, nor do I know what part of England he came from. But they were married in New Brighton, Pennsylvania, that I know. Their children were born--I don't know about all of them, but my father, the only boy, was born in Ohio.

They came to California, as I always understood, for the health of their children. My grandfather was in charge of the operation of a railroad. It was the San Francisco and North Pacific, and it had its terminal in a town called Donahue, which no longer exists. It was on Petaluma Creek, just south of Petaluma. The children went to Petaluma schools and took drawing and music lessons in Petaluma. But my father was enamored of the railroad, and he also was an attractive boy, very much spoiled by his sisters and the men on the road. After all he was the boss's son [laughs]. When he was older his parents sent him away to school to Hopkins Academy, but he hated it. He told them that unless they let him return home and become an engineer on the railroad, he would run away.

They knew he could support himself because he had by that time learned how to operate an engine, and also he had learned telegraphy, which was then a main means of communication. So

they let him come home. The president of the railroad came along, saw this boy on an engine and ordered him off the road, saying it didn't look well for a boy to run an engine. So he became a competent mechanic working in the railroad shops until he looked old enough to get back on an engine.

He spent his life as a locomotive engineer. He did have the opportunity to advance to a supervisory position, but by that time--he had been instrumental in bringing the union to the railroad--and he felt it was going to be impossible to be fair to both the men and the company, so he never did advance beyond being a locomotive engineer. He had all sorts of stories which were very interesting, which he would tell me. He was the better storyteller of my two parents. I always preferred to have my mother read to me; I liked her reading style better than his, but I listened from early childhood with great interest to his stories. Later, when I was in college, he wrote me many delightful letters that I enjoyed but never thought of keeping.

He had himself brought to the farm by a friend of the family in order to become acquainted with my mother. So that is how they met.

McCreery: He spotted her somewhere and wanted to get to know her?

Reynolds: I never heard more than the name of the friend, which I have forgotten, but he must have. They were married on the farm in 1909 and lived at first in Santa Rosa. When I was a baby, they moved to Mill Valley because he discovered that his daughter didn't know him. She yelled bloody murder when he would pick her up, and yet she would go very happily to my mother's brother and other relatives and friends. So we moved where he could spend more time at home and get to know his daughter.

McCreery: Where had his work taken him up to then?

Reynolds: Anywhere he wanted to go on the line. By the time I was born, the railroad had been extended from Santa Rosa down to Tiburon and Sausalito and had acquired other lines. He had enough seniority so that he could have any run he wanted.

McCreery: How old were you when your family moved to Mill Valley?

Reynolds: Not quite two.

McCreery: Essentially you were raised your whole childhood in Mill Valley?

Reynolds: Yes, as a base, because we always spent a lot of time on the family farm. Both my parents loved to travel, and they traveled a great deal. My father took extended vacations frequently. By the time I went to high school I had been in almost every state in the union. Also, we traveled a lot within California.

McCreery: Did you travel by railroad?

Reynolds: Not entirely. In California we did a lot of automobile traveling. He bought a car when I was quite young.

McCreery: Did you enjoy that travel as a child?

Reynolds: Oh, yes.

McCreery: I wonder if you know much more about his career with the railroad. I'm interested in this role he played in organizing the unions.

Reynolds: I don't know.

McCreery: You were quite young at the time.

Reynolds: It may even have been before I was born or before my parents were married. I don't know that organizing is the right word. It would certainly be accurate to say that he was very involved in bringing the union to the railroad.

McCreery: The railroad was such a force in California life at that time.

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: It's interesting to learn a little of the history in that area.

Extended Family; The Farm in Geyserville

McCreery: Were there other relatives nearby on either side of your family?

Reynolds: My father's family lived in Oakland. He went to see them frequently, always in the very early morning in order to have breakfast with them and then come home and start his work day. Once in a while, when school was not in session, he took me with him. And we would spend New Year's Day there and visit back and forth when I was young. My grandfather Reynolds, who

died in January 1918, gave me my own Victrola and a number of classical records; so I was able to arrange "concerts" for my family and friends.

My mother had two brothers, one of whom [Lewis Arnold Reniff] married but did not have children of his own, though they adopted a girl. The other one, Alvin Newton Reniff, never married, and he was very close. He was an extremely good friend of my father's. I think that developed after my father and mother were married. He was around a great deal because he operated the family farm during all my early years. There was a bedroom in our house where he was always welcome to stay. He played the violin fairly well, and encouraged my interest in music. He took me walking and driving and played games with me. He died in 1932 while I was in college and I was deeply touched that he willed his new car, a Ford, to me.

McCreery: Could you tell me a little more about the family farm before we leave that subject--where it was and what was being grown there?

Reynolds: It was a beautiful farm located south of Geyserville on Highway 101 in what is now called Alexander Valley. The Russian River was part of the eastern boundary. The house was on a hill and looked directly across the valley to Geyser Peak and Black Mountain. You could see St. Helena toward the south. Near the house on the north side, a trail led down into a wooded canyon that ended in Dry Creek Valley. We walked in the canyon almost daily, and we always took guests there. Once we attended a funeral and burial in the Indian cemetery that adjoined our canyon property.

When I was very young, most of the land was in vineyards. Then phylloxera, the plant louse that destroyed so many vines, got started and prune trees were planted.

McCreery: Did they sell the prunes locally?

Reynolds: We sold to the Sunsweet cooperative. We'd dip the prunes, and they went off. During the war I helped harvest them one summer.

McCreery: Did you? What were your duties?

Reynolds: Scrambling around on the ground and picking up prunes [laughter]. I needed to take a bath immediately afterward because the only way to do it without ruining your back is to scramble on the ground.

McCreery: You were young then.

Reynolds: Yes, younger [laughter]. After my uncle died in 1932, my mother operated the farm as an absentee landlord for a long time. Then she leased it to a neighbor for a number of years. Finally, during the 1960s, the house was broken into so often that we were afraid to stay there, and we sold the property.

Early Life and Schooling in Mill Valley, California, 1920s

McCreery: When you think about your parents, what kind of influences did they mainly have on you?

Reynolds: I never decided to go to college; it was always assumed that I would, and that I would go to the University of California, although my mother took me down to Stanford so I could see it. It had no attraction to me because it was hot and dry. Back then it was in the middle of wheat fields.

McCreery: Speaking of "The Farm." [laughter]

Reynolds: You could see well why Stanford was called The Farm in those days.

McCreery: You mentioned your mother reading to you. I take it there was a lot of introduction to books.

Reynolds: We visited the local public library together until I was old enough to go alone. Very often on my birthday we went over to San Francisco to buy some books. They would be my present. Mill Valley was a lovely place to grow up, and you could get to the city very quickly. The commute was less than an hour by train and boat. Most people did work in the city. We went to the city for all kinds of shopping--not food. Some people bought food in the city, but we didn't. We could do that very well in Mill Valley. But clothes--of course, that was a time when there were lots of interesting stores in San Francisco.

My best friend, Elisabeth Reid [Clark], and I were taken by our mothers to all the plays and operettas like *The Student Prince* and *The Desert Song*. I heard Yehudi Menuhin in his first concert with the San Francisco Symphony. We heard [Ignace Jan] Paderewski in the Civic Auditorium, which was where many concerts were given. We heard Schumann-Heink, and saw The Miracle, the famous play Max Reinhardt produced in the Civic Auditorium.

Elisabeth and I had drawing and painting lessons from a local artist, and one afternoon a week went to the Outdoor Art Club for a dancing class that introduced us to the elements of ballet. We both had a series of piano teachers. The most influential was Margaret Tilly. We admired her greatly. I took lessons into my college years. Elisabeth has studied the piano all her life.

As I look back on it I think we had in many ways a wonderful childhood. You could walk anywhere in Mill Valley at any time, day or night. And we did--we were great walkers, all of us.

McCreery: That was probably true of most people then.

Reynolds: Most of the residents, yes, though I don't know that all of them made it as much a recreation as my family did. With many residents, it was a matter of getting from here to there, although there were reliable taxis that met all the trains.

McCreery: And as you say, it was safe.

Reynolds: It was safe. That was a time when hiking was very much in vogue. We would often go down to see the trains come in and watch the hikers pile off the train, or see them straggle in after they had been out for a day hiking. You would not know that when you leave Mill Valley--I don't know whether you have been to Mill Valley or not--

McCreery: Yes, I have.

Reynolds: Well, you know, it's a valley. So you've got to climb a lot of steps or walk up a steep trail to get out of town. By the time the hikers came back they were usually pretty frazzled, and sometimes loaded with wildflowers or greens picked illegally. These would be confiscated at the station. That was entertainment for the locals [laughter].

McCreery: It's a nice picture of the hiking throngs coming in from San Francisco.

Tamalpais High School, 1925-1929

McCreery: I know that you attended Tamalpais High School there in Mill Valley. Perhaps you could tell me a little bit about your high school years and what your interests were and so on.

Reynolds: I think Tamalpais was a very good high school. We had several rather remarkable teachers. Almost everyone who took the academic course had Latin with Miss [Ruby] Scott, who lived in Berkeley. I don't think she ever taught anywhere except Tamalpais. But she was a much admired teacher, one of those people who managed to bring in all sorts of related things that advanced your general knowledge as well as your knowledge of Latin. In fact, I'm probably the only living person who heard that [Charles] Lindbergh had crossed the Atlantic--in Latin! [laughter]

McCreery: That's how you got the news?

Reynolds: I remember something about "navigabat per aerem." That's how I got the news. She used to commute from Berkeley. She had probably read the morning paper en route to school.

Tamalpais High School brought in students from other parts of the county. We had only a half hour's lunch because they didn't want us running all over, which was okay with me. My mother always insisted that I go to bed at eight-thirty in the evening, which was awfully early. The result was that it was terribly hard for me to get my work done, particularly when we had a lot of Latin to translate. Usually if I did all the Latin I was short in something else. It was a great relief for me to go to the university and have more time to do things.

McCreery: Why did she send you to bed so early? Do you know?

Reynolds: She had been seriously ill as a youngster, and she wasn't going to have it happen to me. I think that was probably why, though she never said so, and I didn't realize all this until much later.

I sang in the chorus. I was interested in the social work activities, and I was president for a time of the social work club. We did things for sick and needy children who--I'm not sure what was wrong, but I think maybe it was tuberculosis. They were at a place called Hill Farm, not far from the town of Manor.

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McCreery: You were talking about Tamalpais High School.

Reynolds: Yes. I may have said about all I had to say about it.

McCreery: It sounds as if Miss Scott was quite an influence on you.

Reynolds: Yes, she was. Since she lived in Berkeley, and during the last years of her life, not far from me, I saw a lot of her after I moved to Berkeley. I learned that many other former students also came to see her.

McCreery: She was an influential teacher all around, perhaps?

Reynolds: She was a very serious and delightful woman. The painting over here was done by one of my Latin classmates at Tamalpais High School, Eleanor Bates Streloff. And also another one out in the hall.

McCreery: We're looking at a painting of the Golden Gate Bridge over your mantel.

Reynolds: In the style of Cézanne. She went to Oberlin College but came back to live in California. She still lives out here. We were friends from high school.

McCreery: You've got some long ties there. Were there other teachers at your high school who you felt were influential to you?

Reynolds: Yes, but none so much so as Miss Scott, partly because of the fact that I knew her later. Of course, she was the only teacher I had for all four years in high school. We had Miss [Elizabeth] Keyser, who was an excellent English teacher, for the last two years.

McCreery: Do you recall about how many students were in your graduating class at Tam High?

Reynolds: No. There were a thousand students in the school; that I remember.

McCreery: Well, that gives me an idea.

Reynolds: We had an Honor T Society, and I led the drill team [laughter]. I don't know why we had a drill team, but we did. It made the letters TUHS, I think [laughter].

Family and Community Activities

McCreery: I wonder what other personal or community interests your parents had that you might want to mention today.

Reynolds: My mother was terribly interested in gardening. I remember that she had gardening friends, and they would spend hours, it seemed to me--but that's an exaggeration, I know--looking at various plants and talking about them and sharing things, while I stood on one foot and then the other [laughter]. She was not a joiner, nor was my father particularly, though he was a Mason. He was busy, because in his day locomotive engineers worked every day of the week. He took extended vacations.

McCreery: It was very concentrated during work periods?

Reynolds: That was one reason that we did so much traveling; he used to take this extended time. It was a pattern he had followed before he married my mother. I know that he had made trips to the East Coast, where he had relatives.

McCreery: Did religion play much role in your own childhood?

Reynolds: No, it really didn't. My Irish grandmother was Catholic. Her husband was Protestant of course, with all those New England forbears. She always kept herself in touch with the church, but my mother and the other children, I think because of bad country roads, were not taken to mass regularly. My mother was baptized in the Catholic Church and felt attached to it, but had not really kept up with it. My father was an Episcopalian, and he had been involved in the church before he married my mother. He had taken up the collection and done all those things.

We would go to the Episcopal church on occasion. I went to the Episcopalian Sunday School in Mill Valley and learned the ritual, which I liked very much. Churches without a beautiful ritual do not appeal to me. Then I went to Christian Science Sunday School because Elisabeth, my best friend, went there and I wanted to go too. But I found that it was very repetitious and that you knew the answer right off to the questions they asked. In the end neither of us was sympathetic.

I did not join that or any church. My parents had not baptized me when I was born because they were a divided family and they thought that later I could choose for myself. Of course the result is that--I would not say I am irreligious, but I have not been attracted to organized religion. My mother, when she was in her late eighties, decided that she would reinstate herself in the Catholic Church. She asked me if I would join the church with her. I said no because it was completely foreign to me and as a result had no particular appeal. That was all right. She accepted it immediately and

did not try to persuade me. But I took her to mass down here at St. Mary Magdalen regularly, and she died a Catholic.

McCreery: I'm also wondering about your reading interests when you were a teenager.

Reynolds: I read all the standard things: Dickens, Jane Austen, George Eliot. In fact, we all read a great deal--at least my friends --because we had lots of time during the summer. I can't say we had so much time during school. Our English teacher had us give a great many oral book reports. In the summers I read things that had appealed to me when I heard other students talk about them, *Romola*, by George Eliot and *Of Human Bondage* by Somerset Maugham, to mention two disparate types that come to mind. I read *Mrs. Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf, while I was still in high school, which was rather advanced, I think, because that was one of the first, as you doubtless know. I simply think it was one of the very first stream-of-consciousness novels to be published. Our English teacher was really keeping up with the trends in English literature, or she would never have brought it to our attention. In fact, my mother bought me a copy because Miss Keyser gave it so much attention.

We also had to write. This was preparing us for the university. At least once a week in our last year we came to English class and were given a subject we hadn't thought about, and we were told to write about it. Immediately. This is very good training for writing examinations. I doubt if any of us had to take bonehead English.

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McCreery: You remembered a couple of other things about your high school years that you wanted to mention. I was particularly interested in your thoughts of how the students from farther away commuted to Tamalpais High School. Can you tell me a little about that?

Reynolds: Those who lived in Mill Valley walked or rode on the interurban trains. If you lived in Sausalito you came by train, certainly. The school was technically located in Sausalito; that was the post office address. But it was just outside Mill Valley city limits, much nearer to Mill Valley. Students from towns north of Mount Tamalpais came on a special train, and they went home in that same special train. The district extended as far north as Fairfax, but San Rafael was not part of the school district; its high school was our rival in athletics.

McCreery: Do you know who owned and operated the train?

Reynolds: It belonged to the Northwestern Pacific.

McCreery: There was no bus service as we know it today?

Reynolds: I think the school had a bus or two--I don't know about that. If so, I never had occasion to use them. But students must have come from Tiburon and Belvedere by bus, because occasionally when it rained very hard they would not be able to get to school.

McCreery: You were also telling me a little bit off the tape about a special event regarding Miss Scott's Latin classes while you were in high school.

Reynolds: The main event we had was a Roman wedding. The stars of the show were the six students in her fourth-year Latin class. Then I think all of the rest of the Latin students were the supporting cast. We had a Roman banquet, complete with the kind of food the Romans are supposed to have eaten.

McCreery: Do you remember what that consisted of?

Reynolds: No [laughter]. I don't remember what it consisted of, but I do remember that I was the bride, probably because I was pretty good at reading Latin. One of my useless talents is that you could put me down anywhere in the *Æneid* and I could read the line, scanning it perfectly. It just came without any effort on my part, whereas most people stumbled around with it. So I'm sure that was the reason that I was the bride. I was not her best student. Her best student was a girl named Rae Hoffman, who unfortunately had a very short life. She received a medal for her excellence in Latin.

McCreery: You have these two nice pictures: one of the six students who were in the senior Latin class, and one of the Roman wedding itself.

Reynolds: And on the one with the Latin class, Miss Scott wrote on it a famous quotation from the *Æneid*: "Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit." ("And someday it may please you to remember even this.")

Living at International House, UC Berkeley, From 1930

McCreery: You finished high school in 1929. You say that it was already scripted that you would attend UC [University of California at] Berkeley and so on. Tell me, after you graduated, what happened next?

Reynolds: I came to Berkeley, but I was ill during the first semester, so I dropped out. Then I started again in the second semester. By the time the third semester came around, International House was opening. I had seen the announcements of International House, and I applied and got in.

McCreery: You had been living at home until then?

Reynolds: No, no. It was not impossible, but very time-consuming, to commute. There was a family, all of whose daughters commuted to the university, but that meant two boat trips and two train trips each way, four every day. The second semester, I did commute, but I took only a few units.

The International House opened, and they were taking 100 women. I was one of the lucky ones.

McCreery: You were in that first group to live there?

Reynolds: Oh, yes.

McCreery: Tell me a little bit about what I-House was like when you arrived.

Reynolds: The number of residents was much smaller than today, of course. You had a single room to yourself. Now they put two students in a room, I'm told. It must be very crowded because the rooms, almost all of them, have very small closets--just enough for one person. Now students come with possibly fewer clothes but certainly more equipment. How they fit in I can't imagine. It was of course brand new and very beautiful.

McCreery: Were there many foreign students living there at that time already?

Reynolds: Yes. The reason the Rockefellers gave the money for the International Houses--three of them: Chicago, Berkeley, and Columbia--was to encourage international peace [through] people getting to know one another. They selected the universities which had the largest foreign enrollment. So there was a wide variety of students. There were Germans, Latin Americans,

Orientals, Africans. I remember an Italian girl who sang folk songs. It was an interesting group of people. It is what gave the university some of the attributes of a small college--that you would get to know people.

Early Impressions of Berkeley; Memorable Courses and Faculty Members

McCreery: Had you visited the city of Berkeley very much before you came here as a student?

Reynolds: No. I stayed the first semester with a friend of my mother's who lived not far from the university. Then, there were just boarding houses for women; the university had no dormitories except Bowles Hall. It was the oldest one, up on the hill, and it was for men.

McCreery: You mentioned that you were ill during the first semester, so that was perhaps not much of a chance to really get started, but what were your impressions of the school when you were in your first year here?

Reynolds: It was very frightening even though you came from a fairly large high school. It was very frightening indeed to be in these large lecture halls and look around and think, "I did pretty well in high school, but so did all these other people or they wouldn't be here." There were instructors who contributed to that fear. I remember one--a Catholic priest, of all things--who drew a big circle and said, "Now, many of you will fall outside this circle and fail. I'll give another examination and more of you will fail." Awful. I hope this man was unique.

McCreery: Were most of your classes quite large?

Reynolds: Yes, except language classes were not large. And freshman English classes were not large. I was once, as I progressed in Latin, the only student in a Latin class, which meant I had to be completely prepared [laughter]. It shows that the university did cater to the interests that attracted small groups of people.

McCreery: At what point did you decide on your major?

Reynolds: Not until I had to, when I was becoming a junior.

McCreery: Do you recall your impressions of the campus itself, the physical environment?

Reynolds: Oh, it was beautiful--much more beautiful than it is today because it was not so built up. I just loved the city of Berkeley when I came over to take the Subject A examination, and when I came later to see the Partheneia, and we walked around the city of Berkeley. It was very beautiful. So many trees and shrubs and interesting houses. I loved it. I was always interested in seeing new places, so immediately I explored the whole campus.

McCreery: It's spread out enough and there's enough land around it--

Reynolds: There was a lot of land then.

McCreery: How about aspects of the student environment? I'm wondering how the students dressed when you first were a student here.

Reynolds: Silk dresses. Silk stockings. Shoes with heels. I remember you didn't wear a hat unless you were going to the city. My Mill Valley friend Elisabeth's mother sent her over to campus equipped with summer hats that she could wear on the campus, and I said she wouldn't want them [laughter]. She didn't.

Then after the Depression began to be felt--you remember when I came here the Depression had not hit. The stock market didn't fail until late 1929, and it wasn't really felt, I think, by a lot of students for a year or two. We still wore dresses and dressed nicely, but began to wear cottons, which were cheaper. Skirts and sweaters, of course, were always important, and saddle shoes.

McCreery: How about the ratio of men and women students, to the extent that you can recall it, in your first couple of years?

Reynolds: You never felt that there weren't men here, but a great many of them were in engineering and sciences. There were men in [the College of] Letters and Science, but they were less numerous. My Oberlin friend came to visit the campus with me one day and she was a little astounded at the small ratio of men in the classes that I was taking. But I had barely noticed it until then. Of course there were plenty of men at International House, because there were 500 students there and only 100 of them were women. One of the reasons for that was that foreign students at that time, I'm sure, tended to be men more often than women.

McCreery: That's a good point. And the university did take many foreign students, even then.

I'd like to hear a little bit more about the classes that you enjoyed as an undergraduate. You say you didn't choose your major until you were a junior. What kinds of things--

Reynolds: Did I like? English, French, and Latin, or I would not have stayed with it. And strangely enough, economics. I even thought about majoring in that. How long I would have lasted with it I can't even guess today. I took a very remarkable class, "Sanskrit in English," which was given by one of the university's stars, a man named Arthur W. Ryder, whom it was a great pleasure to listen to. In order not to become too popular, he would not take you in his class unless you had had four years of Latin or four years of mathematics. That was his method of keeping his classes small and manageable. They were indeed small; I don't think there were twenty people in the class [laughter]. It was unfortunate in a way, because he was an excellent lecturer, and he did lecture mostly.

McCreery: When you're thinking back about different professors you had--he's the only one you've mentioned so far--are there others in your undergraduate years that you particularly enjoyed?

Reynolds: Leon J. Richardson, who was at that time head of the extension division. He taught Latin and he was very literary. He conducted very fine classes. It was he who had the idea when I took my master's degree--I was the only candidate taking it by examination--that I should report to the extension division offices [laughter]. It was two days of writing examinations. I should have complained, but it didn't occur to me; I just accepted people noisly conducting business all around me while I was writing the examination. Two men were having a very interesting political argument, which I longed to follow because politics is something my family had always been interested in, and I had heard a lot about politics at home. They were talking about [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt in his first years in office. I suffered through it and somehow I passed the examination [laughter].

McCreery: Did you have particular intentions in going so far with your Latin?

Reynolds: No, it was just something I wanted to give myself. It was a challenge, it was hard, and I just wanted to do it. I did not want to teach, because by that time I had done a little coaching in Latin and had discovered that I did not like the nitty-gritty--that is, figuring out ways to make people learn

the details. That I did not enjoy. Neither did I want to teach English; I realized that it would be a labor-intensive kind of thing if you did it well, spending hours reading papers. I had a minor in English, so I knew something about it.

By the time I had achieved the master's degree, the Depression was really taking hold. I was not personally affected, but many of my friends were. A great question for them might be "Should I take the twenty-five-cent luncheon or the thirty-five-cent luncheon?" One friend who lived at International House had figured out just exactly what she should eat that would not cost her any more than the monthly meal tickets we were required to buy. I realized that the only security you had would be the ability to earn a living.

McCreery: Perhaps you can just expand a little bit on your financial circumstances while you were an undergraduate.

Reynolds: My father always worked. He had a good salary.

McCreery: And the Depression didn't detract from that?

Reynolds: Not at all. My uncle [Alvin Reniff] died in 1932, and my mother inherited the farm, which she proceeded to operate. She bought out her other brother's [Lewis Reniff's] interest in the farm. We had that security.

My father became ill; he had a stroke. That happened just after I started on my M.A. in Latin. There was more than enough money for me to continue as a student. I never had excessive wants for rich things. I liked nice things, and I was used to nice things and going to nice places. But we were never extravagant.

My father had never been much interested in money, really. He would put his hand down in his pocket when I was in high school and say, "Here, go get yourself an ice cream sandwich after class." I wanted an allowance; other girls had an allowance. But he couldn't be bothered. So I would save the money--he gave me more than I could use; he didn't realize how much he was handing out. I saved it, and when I bought myself an expensive leather jacket he was a little stunned [laughter].

It was the realization that you needed to be able to earn a living that made me think about library school. And I wanted to do something worthwhile. I don't know that I would have selected library school if there hadn't been one right here. It was supposed to be very good, and the alternatives like

social work or nursing didn't appeal to me, nor did working in an office.

McCreery: You had already tried teaching, as you said.

Reynolds: Coaching. I didn't care for that. But the idea of working with books was attractive, and I decided to try librarianship.

[Interview 2: June 16, 1999] ##

McCreery: We wanted to talk this morning about your years as an undergraduate at Berkeley. You said you thought of a couple of other influential people that you'd like to mention.

Reynolds: Yes. Jacqueline de la Harpe, who was a charming and demanding member of the French department. She gave advanced courses, lecturing in French about French literature. I took at least two of them, maybe more--I'm not sure at this point.

McCreery: When had you begun your study of French?

Reynolds: As a freshman at the university. I've studied French informally in other places, but my whole formal education in French was at the university. Most of us, if we were rather serious students, didn't take French in high school because we learned early that one semester in the university was the equivalent of two years in high school.

The other influential person was H.R.W. Smith, also known as Alphabet Smith [laughter]. He had some peculiarities. He had been shellshocked in World War I, and so he had certain disabilities. He had trouble sometimes walking in a straight line, and when he entered a room he would be apt to aim for the desk and almost hit it, or go to the window and talk to the outside world. He was an Englishman, so it could be difficult sometimes to understand him when he did not talk directly to you. But he had extremely high standards. He taught Latin, did I say that? His specialty was archaeology. I took his seminar and also certain literature classes from him, in one of which I was the only student. That was a challenging class indeed [laughter]. His standards were high and he expected a lot from students. I liked him very much. If I had gone on in Latin, I'm sure archaeology would have attracted me. It was obvious, however, since there were men fully qualified--one of whom was Darrell Amyx, later head of the art department, who as yet had no job--that this would be unwise.

McCreery: That was enough of a deterrent to keep you from going on?

Reynolds: To keep me from considering seriously going on. If I had gone on, I probably would have found myself in some small college in the middle west or some small school, even, in the middle west, teaching language.

McCreery: What was it about archaeology that attracted you?

Reynolds: How do you explain it? Either you're interested in artifacts or you're not. It is true, however, that I liked the research involved in studying the artifacts. I discovered in more recent years that now this is a very, very active field, and that there are many women in it doing all sorts of digging. At the time I don't think I would have been particularly interested in digging--but in studying the things that came out, yes. As late as the time that I went to Mills [College], [Mr.] Lynn [Townsend] White suggested the classics seemed to be a dead field; but in the last few years it's become much, much livelier.

Master's Degree in Latin, 1934-1935; Berkeley Campus Administrators

McCreery: Was it under Professor Smith that you decided to take the examination for your master's in Latin?

Reynolds: No. I guess I was under the chairman of the department, and the chairman died within a few weeks of the start of the first semester. Then Professor Leon J. Richardson became chairman. He was already head of the extension division, so he did not give very much time to any of us. I remember that when the chairman, Mr. [Herbert C.] Nutting, fell ill, he had us collecting ablatives. The other girls in the seminar went at it wholeheartedly, and they had reams of ablatives. I thought, I'm not going to do this; I'll work on other things. I collected a few, but not a great many. Lo and behold he died, and the man who came around to take over the course, Professor [Arthur E.] Gordon, said, "If I'm going to teach this course, I have to do it in my own way. So whatever you were doing for Mr. Nutting, you can just throw out and we'll start over." [laughter] I never told the others that I had not plowed ahead collecting ablatives.

Anyhow, Mr. Gordon was especially interested in what I liked very much: trying to see how much he could teach us about Latin grammar from his point of view and also teaching us to get it by ear, which was very challenging. There was only one

person I knew who was good at that, and that was a man who had spent some time in a monastery. I don't know whether he went back to a monastery or what his future was, but at that time there evidently were such groups in which Latin was spoken.

McCreery: I wonder, what were the circumstances?

Reynolds: Why did I take the master's in Latin? Because it was offered. You could take the degree by examination rather than by writing a thesis. I'm not at all sure that a thesis was an open option at that time.

McCreery: For the master's degree then, was it additional coursework?

Reynolds: I think you took twenty-four units. I believe I completed twenty-five.

McCreery: In one year's time?

Reynolds: Yes. I suppose it was possible to postpone the exam. I don't know how often the master's degree is offered by examination now, but then it was.

McCreery: Did you continue to live at International House throughout your undergraduate years?

Reynolds: Yes. I was there for six years in all. Very unusual--not many people get to live there that long, and I think never today.

McCreery: And that took you through your master's in Latin and library school?

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: Wonderful.

Reynolds: Yes, it was. I was very lucky. I don't know--the reason that I was able to stay may well have been that--this again is only a guess--I was interviewed by Mrs. Allen Blaisdell, the director's wife. I don't think that she interviewed a great many people [laughter]. So it's possible that that had something to do with it. They were not going to question one of her interview choices.

McCreery: You knew people in high places.

Reynolds: I didn't. It was an accident.

McCreery: Someone else mentioned to me that there was a dean of women for undergraduates on campus.

Reynolds: Lucy Ward Stebbins, a very impressive woman. She often dressed in white. She always spoke to the undergraduate women she happened to meet on campus. I think it may have been she who, in a speech to the freshman class, held up Helen Wills as an example. Helen Wills had, of course, not only achieved fame as a tennis player, but she was an excellent student. I think she made Phi Beta Kappa. I saw her play in an exhibition game on campus, and she was very graceful.

McCreery: Do you know when she was attending?

Reynolds: Before my time. But she was still an important figure in the tennis world. Her major, I think, was art.

McCreery: Did you ever have a personal meeting with Dean Stebbins?

Reynolds: No. I remember that I did meet Mary Blossom Davidson, the Associate Dean, because I was living with a friend of my mother in the very first semester when I became ill. She--or someone --talked to every woman who was not living in university-approved housing. She was very charming and very pleasant, not in the least forbidding.

McCreery: Do you happen to recall what she wanted to convey to you?

Reynolds: No.

McCreery: I'm just interested in that role of having kind of an oversight for the women students.

Reynolds: She probably looked at me and decided that I was harmless and wouldn't get into trouble [laughter].

I might also add that there were other women, quite charming, in important positions on campus. One whom I remember especially was Dr. Ruby Cunningham, physician for women at the University infirmary. I remember her because I happened to ask her, not knowing who she was, how to get to the infirmary and she said, "Follow me." [laughter] She talked to me and was very nice. It was not an official connection, but again these were what we would call role models today.

McCreery: Perhaps those women who were in influential positions were noticeable for that reason.

Reynolds: Yes. There weren't very many of them.

McCreery: Did you ever feel that you had any kind of mentor relationship, as we would call it today, or a particular closeness with any of the women administrators who could help you along or advise you?

Reynolds: My freshman adviser was Hope Gladding, who was in the household art department, which was disbanded. I don't remember when. Hope Gladding was a hunchback, by the way. She lived for years with Margaret Murdock. Margaret used to play the Campanile and was important at the Women's Faculty Club. I knew her for years, as long as she was in Berkeley. Hope Gladding died younger. But I can't say that any of these people were really mentors.

McCreery: Perhaps one didn't even think in those terms then.

Reynolds: No, you didn't. And also, of course, I was not majoring in a subject that brought me to their attention.

McCreery: You took your A.B. degree in 1934 with Phi Beta Kappa honors. Tell me a little bit about the end of your undergraduate career and those honors.

Reynolds: I didn't know I got honors until I found it in the commencement program. Whether people were sometimes told in any other way I don't know [laughter]. As a matter of fact, you got your own diploma from the hand of the president of the university.

McCreery: President Sproul.

Reynolds: Yes. He was locally famous for remembering names. He did not know mine. He had not met me before. The fact that you got your own diploma meant that everybody had to arrive early enough to be lined up in a certain way or the diplomas would not come out right. This was the work of Constance Steel, who was the assistant recorder or registrar. I'm not sure of the title. It was she who masterminded all this. When she retired I think it stopped. She was rather well known on campus, and I came to know her very well later, because she was the sister of the woman I succeeded at Mills: Evelyn Steel Little.

McCreery: Where was your commencement ceremony held?

Reynolds: In the Greek Theatre. I think they had two ceremonies at that time. I'm not sure. But they certainly did when I got the master's degree, if not when I got the bachelor's degree.

And the election to Phi Beta Kappa was very important. In fact, the names of people who were elected appeared in the San

Francisco papers, which doesn't happen today, I'm sure. The initiation was an evening ceremony. I bought a new evening dress for it. It took place in Stephens Union. Max Radin, a very well-known legal scholar, was the president at that time. There was a banquet following.

McCreery: Even though you found out rather late that you had the Phi Beta Kappa honors--

Reynolds: No, no. You were elected to Phi Beta Kappa. That is quite separate, and that occurred early in my senior year.

An interesting event that occurred in the following year, 1935, was that Phi Beta Kappa entertained Gertrude Stein, who was visiting the area. She came to a special luncheon and answered questions.

McCreery: What were your impressions of her?

Reynolds: A kind of curmudgeon, really [laughter]. She was a short, stocky woman, looking just the way she did in her pictures, wearing a kind of crocheted vest, something I remembered seeing my grandmother wear, called a "hug-me-tight" then [laughter]. I think one of the professors--it may have been that well-known man in the English department, George Stewart, who asked her why she didn't talk the way she wrote. She became rather testy at that point. The *Daily Cal* reported the program as a "verbal fencing match." It was very interesting, indeed. Unfortunately I can't remember more details.

McCreery: Tell me about your decision to take the master's in Latin. How did that come about?

Reynolds: Oh, I just liked Latin and wanted to go on.

McCreery: Had you already decided by the time you were graduating?

Reynolds: No. I thought that I would have a year and get a master's degree, I did because I liked it. The master's degree was eye-opening in many ways because I saw these other people ahead of me who were not placed.

McCreery: In teaching jobs?

Reynolds: In any kind of job. At least one of them I met a few years later when I was in Sausalito in the library; she was doing social work. Another one married Mr. Gordon, and I think she had a career in epigraphy along with him--Latin inscriptions.

McCreery: As we talked about last time, this was the height of the Great Depression.

Reynolds: It was the height of the Depression, and you knew people who weren't able to marry because if they married one of them would lose a job. And the jobs weren't paying a lot in the first place. I remember a neighbor--I think he was a minister--who sold women's underwear door-to-door. My mother bought some from him. She had me in the room when he showed his samples, and you could see that the poor man was in misery--what he had to do for a living. He had a wife and child. And of course many college students were working their way through. I had met many of those.

II THE SCHOOL OF LIBRARIANSHIP AND EARLY LIBRARY JOBS

Deciding to Apply to the School of Librarianship

Reynolds: So you were very much aware that the only kind of security you could count on was the ability to earn your living. That's really why I decided to go to library school.

McCreery: Do you remember when you first thought of doing that?

Reynolds: No, I don't remember when I first thought of it. But I know that I did not make a decision, definitely, until I had finished the master's degree. Of course, that was a year of very hard work, and so I probably wasn't spending a lot of time thinking about the future, because the immediate present was very time-consuming and demanding.

McCreery: You were aware there was a library school?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. I had been aware of that for a long time. There were people living at International House who were in library school. Carma Russell Zimmerman [Leigh] was one of them. She married while she was at International House; that brought her to our attention.

McCreery: Of course, she had quite a career as state librarian.

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: You at least had a chance to--

Reynolds: I knew her slightly.

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McCreery: Let's talk about what process you followed to apply to the graduate library school.

Reynolds: By that time, my mother had inherited her family farm, and we were spending the summer there. So I just wrote a letter, having made the decision that that was what I wanted to do. I had taken one or two education courses so that I could enroll for a teaching credential if I wanted to do that, but I decided against it because the idea of teaching in high school--although I loved the kind of teaching that I later did--teaching in high school had no appeal for me whatsoever. I wrote a letter, and by return mail the library school told me that the class was full unless I had a good academic record. I sent in my full application--I don't remember what precise form it took--and so I got in. When I reported the first day of classes, I learned that I really should have gone around and talked to them ahead of time.

McCreery: You didn't meet anyone in the school before the first day?

Reynolds: No, I didn't. However, there were some students in the school whom I knew before, notably Rachel Dent [Castagna], who had been my gym partner during my freshman year, and who had graduated with a major in anthropology. She had done all the things that you were supposed to do. Her family lived in Los Angeles, and she had worked in the public library as a clerical assistant of some sort and had talked to the school about it. I think she had a loan--I know she did. Student loans were available at that point.

McCreery: From the school itself, do you know?

Reynolds: Yes, I'm sure they were. She was living at International House, so that was very pleasant--one of the reasons that we came to know each other very much better than we ever would have from just the chance of being gym partners in our freshman year.

McCreery: Before we delve into your school program itself, I wonder if you can expand on what drew you to librarianship. We talked about the other options that you had, which were somewhat limited, but what was it about libraries that drew you?

Reynolds: It was the idea of doing something with books and people, and I think the fact that none of the other options drew me. That's not what one wants to hear perhaps, but it is the truth. I can't say that I liked it especially when I was in the school.

McCreery: What makes you say that?

Reynolds: Simple honesty. The curriculum did not grip me, although I think it was very good. [tape interruption] I had been very

much interested in the work I was doing as a graduate student in Latin. And starting in at the beginning in librarianship was not appealing at first. We had to learn all of the nitty-gritty.

Recollections of the School and Sydney Mitchell, 1935-1936

Reynolds: Mr. [Sydney Bancroft] Mitchell told us right off that we would not be worth very much in any library until we had had a year or two of experience. Perhaps I had better start with the faculty, because we met them all the first day, I think it was.

The most appealing were Miss [Edith Margaret] Coulter and Mr. Mitchell. If you saw Mr. Mitchell sitting at a desk, he looked perfectly normal: middle-aged, ruddy-faced, pleasant, impressive by the force of his personality. But he had a congenital hip problem; he was born with it, I think. It made him walk with a peculiar, rolling gait, because his upper torso was normal but his legs were not. He says in his autobiography that he did not walk as a young child; he learned to walk later. This was a bit of a shock if you were unprepared for it. Of course, you have to remember that you did not see people who were handicapped on the streets in the way that you do today. So they were very conspicuous. He told us right off that if we were concerned about getting jobs after we graduated, we probably had a better chance than if we had decided to get a teaching credential. The placement figures for librarianship were better than those for education, in the immediate past at least.

Miss Coulter started right in with reference work. I should say, I suppose, that in the course of the research that I had done for seminar papers and all presentations, I had come to appreciate how helpful the university librarians in the reference department could be--and had been, for me. I'm sure that this played into my immediate interest in what she had to say. Miss [Della J.] Sisler was a small woman with a rapid-fire delivery, who immediately got into cataloging. Everything seemed to be equally important. The form in which you noted the facts of publication, et cetera, as well as the facts themselves. Then we were immediately told to make arrangements for renting our typewriters and which firm to go to. The typewriters were delivered; we just had to pay a modest rental. I might as well say at this point too that before we graduated we all had to have our pictures taken so that the dean's office

would have a file to tickle the memories of staff who couldn't place former students. This came much later.

McCreery: Do you have that photo of yourself?

Reynolds: No, I don't think I ever kept it. Probably it wasn't a particularly good photo, either. There was a man down on College Avenue somewhere who took them for each class.

Then we were alphabetically assigned to desks in the study room or whatever we called it. Has someone else described the physical arrangement?

McCreery: Yes, but why don't you go ahead? For the cataloging class, you're talking about, or the school itself?

Reynolds: Well, the school itself was on the main floor of Doe Library--the floor with the reference department and the loan desk, just down the hall on the side facing Wheeler Hall. There was the school office with a secretary and Miss [Katherine E.] Anderson, who taught book selection. Inside a glass-enclosed area near the windows was the dean's office. On the left, also facing Wheeler Hall, was the lecture room, and then immediately beyond that another glass-enclosed office occupied by Miss Coulter and Miss Sisler and the catalog reviser, who was at that time Dorothy Bronstein [Thorne]. Beyond that was the biggest room, in which there were some reference books and our desks--there were fifty of us, I think.

McCreery: Yes, I believe each class had fifty students for a while there during those years. You indicated elsewhere that in your class there were, I believe, forty-two women and eight men. Can you tell me a little more about that ratio of students?

Reynolds: I think it was larger--I'm not sure that it was the largest ever, but I think it was larger than usual.

McCreery: The number of men?

Reynolds: Yes. Mr. Mitchell was very much dedicated to getting men into the class, and I do think he favored them a little--perhaps not intentionally. Two of our men had the doctorate. One was Mortimer Taube, who later I think worked in documentation. His doctorate was in philosophy. He was a conspicuous member of the class. I have a mental picture of him running up and down the aisles talking to people about how they were doing their cataloging [laughter].

The other man was a very quiet soul named [John Jorgensen] Lund, whose doctorate was in mathematics. I believe he had a wife and child at that time. He was obviously very much in search of a gainful occupation. I looked in the school directory published in the fifties, and at that time he was listed as teaching math in a junior college in Lassen County near Susanville. I think he got a library job immediately.

McCreery: Let's talk a little bit more about Mr. Mitchell. What were his administration classes like?

Reynolds: His classes were in a way a combination of things he felt we ought to know or have a background in--library history, for example, particularly American library history: the founding of the ALA [American Library Association] in 1876, Melvil Dewey and his accomplishments and ideas. He did go back as far as Poole and Jewitt. Of course, his generation was much closer to these people than we were, so he was able to make them more vivid than they could be made later, I'm sure. And he mentioned Bray's Libraries. He talked about the Boston Athenaeum and other important libraries. I'm a little hazy in my mind about how some of the historical and practical subjects were divided between him and Katherine Anderson, who taught book selection and who was at that time the sole representative on the faculty of the public library field.

McCreery: She herself had attended the school?

Reynolds: She had a master's degree from the school that she had rather recently acquired; where her first year was done I don't know. She had had a fair amount of experience in Portland, Oregon, and I believe that's where she went when she left the school, which was not long afterward. She taught book selection and where copyright came in--whether that was hers or his, I don't know. Between them, we spent a lot of time on book selection, on publishers and publishing history. It must have been in her class that we gave a lot of attention to book reviewing--to the various sources for that. We wrote book annotations. We went over the most important fields of knowledge and pointed out leading general books in each area, things that everyone would need to know.

Mr. Mitchell was extremely practical. I remember his telling us how we might plan a book stack to enlarge the book capacity of the library. I remember his saying that when someone came to see you to be interviewed, you should seat the person with his back to light so that [laughter] you got the full view. He told us that you gave at least one month's notice before you left a job. And you didn't leave in less

than a year. Illness would have to hit you or some catstrophe if you left in less than a year. He was very emphatic about ethics.

McCreery: What else would he include under ethics besides length of service and so on, do you recall?

Reynolds: I can't recall specifically, but I think it was broader than that. I don't want to put words in his mouth.

McCreery: Did he give quite a lot of attention to academic libraries, public libraries, special libraries?

Reynolds: Yes. We had to make up our minds what our particular speciality was going to be before we started the second semester. He tried to give us an idea of what each specialty demanded. I don't remember that special libraries got much attention, probably because there weren't many openings at that time. He did say that in academic libraries you would find the ceiling very low if you were a woman, that most faculties were made up mainly of men, who preferred to deal with men rather than women. So if you would like to advance administratively, it was advisable to go into public library work.

McCreery: How did you and the other students receive that news?

Reynolds: It was the way things were. We accepted it.

McCreery: Was that any surprise to you?

Reynolds: No. I hadn't really thought about it at that point. I chose public library work because of what he had said, and because I thought it was going to be more interesting to work with a broad array of people.

McCreery: What else can you tell me about Mr. Mitchell's teaching style? Was it lecturing, primarily?

Reynolds: He lectured primarily. I don't remember that we did much talking in his class. We didn't do much oral presentation but there was a lot of class discussion, because a number of the students had had quite a lot of library experience, so they had a lot to say. They made things more interesting, but they were also rather daunting to those of us who had to imagine everything. I was one of the very few who had had absolutely no experience whatsoever. Most of the class had done at least some volunteer work as a page or something of that sort in perhaps a public or a school library.

McCreery: Did you have any placement in a library over the Christmas holidays during your year there?

Reynolds: No, we didn't. If anyone worked during the holiday, it must have been someone who had previous connections; I don't think the school did anything for us in that way.

McCreery: Perhaps we'll talk a little bit more about Miss Coulter and the reference and bibliography courses.

Reynolds: Before we go to Miss Coulter, you do realize that Mr. Mitchell had another career? He was a gardener of note.

McCreery: Yes, I've heard--

Reynolds: People have told you that?

McCreery: Yes.

Reynolds: Usually he and his wife entertained the entering class at a reception or party at their house. But in our case it was in the library because there was some impediment. I think Mrs. Mitchell had been ill. Later I was at his house for an event or two and saw the iris garden. You've had plenty of that because it's well documented.

McCreery: The irises and his interest in travel in connection with cultivating those, yes. I guess on occasion it was suggested that his interest in irises was at least as great as his interest in librarianship. What do you think?

Reynolds: I think they were equal. He did more work on his own in irises, certainly. He wrote a lot about gardening. In fact, my mother used his books on gardening. I didn't realize they were his until I got into the school [laughter]. In furthering librarianship, yes, he did not have the kind of interest that [J. Periam "Perry"] Danton had, for example, when he came along. But I don't think Mr. Mitchell slighted the school. Most days, it seems to me, we saw him sitting in the office having a conversation with Miss Coulter and Miss Sisler, which I'm sure had to do with the business of the school and the field, because they were very interested and they kept up with the field, both as instructors and as placement officers.

Dorothy Bronstein must have heard a lot of this because she sat in that office correcting our catalog cards [laughter].

McCreery: You don't know what she heard, if anything?

Reynolds: I've never seen her since. But recently she sent in a gift--or something with her name attached. She is Mrs. Marco Thorne.

McCreery: Now in San Diego, I believe.

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: Do you feel Mr. Mitchell got to know the students quite well?

Reynolds: Yes, fairly well, especially those who made an effort to talk to him.

McCreery: Was that easy to do?

Reynolds: I suppose it was, but it would never have occurred to me to go around to talk. I'm sure the men who wanted to get along in the world made an effort. The most successful of the students, I suppose, was Ed [Edwin] Castagna, who became president of the American Library Association and librarian of Enoch Pratt [Library] and married Rachel, my friend. They are the ones I kept up with.

McCreery: I know there were both typing and foreign language requirements in the school when you were there.

Reynolds: Yes, there were. I don't remember that the typing requirements were at all stringent. I don't think they were. I think you just had to be able to hunt and peck your way through the library cards.

McCreery: It was mainly for the cataloging then?

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: Do you recall how much the typewriter rental was?

Reynolds: No idea. Absolutely none.

McCreery: Were you aware, while you were still a student, how much Mr. Mitchell was involved in placing graduates?

Reynolds: Yes, I think we knew that. How we found it out, I don't know, but I think we all knew that he was aware. There was, in our class, a student whose name I don't remember, who was obviously not so well educated and not bright enough really to do the work. She had graduated from Fresno State, I think, and had applied to get in many times. They let her in, and she obviously couldn't do the work. She brought me a paper of hers to look at once, she couldn't understand why she hadn't

received an A on the paper. She had said everything anybody else had said. But she had also said all sorts of things that didn't apply to the subject. So she did not come back for the second semester; they evidently flunked her out. Apparently the school had been almost forced to admit her.

McCreery: It sounds as if Mr. Mitchell was involved in really every aspect of the school, from selecting applicants to helping to place them after they had completed their programs.

Reynolds: I think he was, so far as I know, though it was Miss Coulter who--I guess this was after he retired--who sent me over to San Francisco State College. She just said, "Kenneth [J.] Brough is now in charge of that library. I'm sure there will be changes. Why don't you go over and talk to him?"

The first job I was offered, which was in Oregon, I talked to her about, although Mr. Mitchell was still in the school. He undoubtedly knew that I was being offered as their candidate. Earlier I talked also to Helen Jones, whom I had known at International House. Rachel and I were both candidates presented to her for the San Benito County Library in Hollister. Rachel got the job.

McCreery: The placement function always had a lot to do with the openings that the professors knew about around the area?

Reynolds: Yes, and they tried to know. I should say also that in the second semester we made a visit en masse to the [California] State Library in Sacramento. We went up by train, got off in the bad section of town where all the winos were goggle-eyed at seeing forty women and few men walk down the street en masse [laughter]. There we were introduced to Miss [Mabel] Gillis and all of the heads of the departments, et cetera.

McCreery: What a nice experience.

The Physical Setup of the School; University Librarians

[Interview 3: June 17, 1999] ##

McCreery: We said that we would start off our session today talking a little bit more about the physical description of the School of Librarianship when you were a student.

Reynolds: Yes. We felt we were really almost in the middle of the work of a busy university library because we were on the same floor with the reference department, which was a very busy and a very good department. The loan department was right there too, and the card catalog. The periodicals department was on the same floor, but farther away on the east side of the building. The hall that led to the school passed the catalog department on the west side of the building. On the other side, in the hall, were many cabinets that held the depository catalog of the Library of Congress. So you passed that every day, with people frequently consulting or adding to it.

Then within the school itself, the workroom, much of the Z collection was shelved.

McCreery: Right in the school.

Reynolds: Yes, right there.

McCreery: How did that work, adding entries to the depository catalog of the Library of Congress?

Reynolds: I don't know whose responsibility it was; surely someone on the university staff. But it must have taken a good bit of time. Just before we got to the school we passed a small office, always with the door open, and at a rolltop desk sat Mr. Joseph [Cummings] Rowell, who was the original university librarian. He was retired, of course. I suppose he may have been working on the ephemera collection, which he is supposed to have started. Evidently during much of his career he made it a business to get out and collect copies of whatever was being handed out for ads or protests, which I guess were probably minor compared to those that came later.

McCreery: Did you have occasion to meet Mr. Rowell?

Reynolds: No, I don't think any of us did. He certainly did not talk to us as a group as one might have expected.

McCreery: Mr. Harold [L.] Leupp was actually university librarian?

Reynolds: Yes. I don't remember that he taught any courses during the time that I was in the school.

McCreery: Were you in contact with him as students at all?

Reynolds: No, I wasn't. Some people may have been; I don't know.

In our class one young man at least, Willard O. Youngs, worked for the library, but I don't remember in what capacity.

In some of our classes--maybe in only one--was Mrs. [Frances C.] Kehrlein, perhaps not quite middle-aged, who was the librarian at Lone Mountain College in San Francisco, the San Francisco College for Women, which had quite a distinguished collection. And that is an example of the school's feeling that they should take people already in the profession who wanted to upgrade their skills. (The college was later discontinued and the property is now part of USF.)

McCreery: What exactly did Mrs. Kehrlein teach you?

Reynolds: She didn't teach. She was a member of the class--of one class at least. I think she probably took the curriculum over a period of years. There were occasional people who did that.

McCreery: Sort of a "continuing education" or first-time education if they had not had it?

Reynolds: Yes. This had happened to me also as an undergraduate. One of the people in my classes was Adelaide Reynolds, who later--no relation of mine--became an actress of some note in Hollywood, having got her start, I think, in the university productions. She was in a French class. I remember a middle-aged man also. So it was not unheard of, but it was not usual, to have "resumers" as they are now called. Mrs. Kehrlein was, technically speaking, a resumer. Anyone who was active in the Sierra Club probably knew her husband, Oliver Kehrlein, who for many years led the base camps which the Sierra Club offered up in the Sierra.

McCreery: Were you active in the Sierra Club yourself?

Reynolds: Later.

McCreery: Was there anything else about the physical description of the school that you can think of?

Reynolds: No, I don't think of anything else.

Katherine Anderson and Issues of Book Selection

McCreery: I wanted to ask you to talk a little bit more about Katherine Anderson, who taught the book selection courses.

Reynolds: Yes. I suppose she may have been in her thirties or early forties. For her classes we did a great deal of writing and speaking about books. I can remember individual students doing that. I can't remember what I talked about. We wrote annotations and things of that sort. I think the actual preparation of bibliographies came in Miss Coulter's class.

McCreery: Was that unusual as a class format, to have a lot of student writing and talking?

Reynolds: You mean in the school?

McCreery: Yes.

Reynolds: We didn't do it in Miss Coulter's class very much, and Miss Sisler's style was not susceptible to that format. In Mr. Mitchell's classes I don't remember that we had prepared speeches, but there was a lot of class discussion prompted mostly by the people who had already worked or were working in libraries.

McCreery: I think we talked a little bit about that last time. You found that a bit daunting, I take it?

Reynolds: Yes, it was, because I was having to imagine everything. They had strongly suggested that you have some library experience before coming to the school, but it didn't fit into my life because we were up in the country on the farm when I decided to apply. So there was literally no opportunity. And there would probably not have been anything terribly close even if I had been in Marin County.

McCreery: What else would you say characterized Miss Anderson's teaching style?

Reynolds: Very restrained. I don't know whether she really enjoyed teaching or not. I don't think she taught after she left the school, but she was a very nice, pleasant, reasonable sort of person. She provided us with the idea of what a public library was going to be like to a greater extent than anyone else in the school.

McCreery: Do you recall whether any ethics issues arose in that course?

Reynolds: No, I don't think that they did. You're thinking about copyright and that sort of thing?

McCreery: Copyright and also the possibility of censorship-type of issues arising while ordering books.

Reynolds: No. I can't remember that that came up very often. Of course the population of the state of California was very different then. It was mostly Anglo. I just can't remember. Very shortly thereafter the war came along. We did certainly make a point of trying to give all sides of a question.

McCreery: In other words, ordering materials that would represent a variety of views and so on?

Reynolds: Yes. And not taking sides, and presenting--the *New York Times*, for example, which was the leading paper of record--still is--we took the Sunday *New York Times* in each of the public libraries in which I worked. It arrived by train a few days later. I don't remember what the San Francisco Public Library took, but they probably took the daily.

McCreery: What would the role of the librarian be then, in terms of seeking out a variety of sources to make available to the public?

Reynolds: It wasn't hard to find them because you read--they hoped--and they had out in the school for us to read the leading book reviews: the *Times* of London, and the *New York Times* Book Review, the *New York Herald Tribune* section called "Books," and the *Saturday Review*. How many of us read reviews, I don't know. This leads into the business of reading the daily paper, which was pointed out as important. Miss Coulter brought it home to us by giving one of her surprise quizzes after we returned from our trip to Sacramento. At eight o'clock in the morning, not many of us had looked at the daily paper. The only correct answer to "Who is the premier of France?" [laughs] would have been found in the daily paper.

But that has been a cardinal principle with me every since. I think it might have been anyway, because we always had the daily papers in my home, and when we were in the country we had a San Francisco paper, the *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat*, and the Healdsburg paper--I don't remember whether those last two were daily; I think the *Press-Democrat* was, and certainly not the Healdsburg paper. I have always felt it essential for an individual who wanted to be informed--doubly so for someone who's going to work in a library.

McCreery: And that was a message given to you at the school: be informed?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. And do not take sides--that is, in your professional capacity. It did not mean that you could not express yourself politically, but you should not choose sides in book selection.

The school and public librarians, of course, did take sides in that they did not want to present inferior material to children. And this was thought out rather specifically. Many of them did not stock the Wizard of Oz books [by Frank Baum].

McCreery: Why?

Reynolds: Because they felt that they were not up to the standard of literary output that they should offer to children.

McCreery: That's a very interesting example.

Reynolds: Of course there were many other things, like the Nancy Drew series of books, which you probably remember.

McCreery: I do, and in fact not long ago there was a controversy at the San Francisco Public Library, which had never carried them until a young girl from the East Bay wrote and asked them why. I guess over the last couple of years they have added a few titles. But it's interesting to hear you say that the Nancy Drew series is one that you remember being discussed in the thirties.

Reynolds: I'm not sure that they were published or in vogue in the thirties, but anyway early on. Later on at Mills I got student reaction to this. They didn't know why those had not been in their libraries.

There was an attitude among certain librarians--I think it was a bit passé by that time, by the time I was in school--the missionary attitude, that you were going to improve humanity by offering the best books and trying to get people to read on a higher level than they had previously read. When I first started to work I saw a few people improve their reading level, but only temporarily. I wasn't playing any role; probably it was a movie that led them to read something other than trash fiction. There was a great question of how much trash fiction you should buy in a public library.

McCreery: That was a question even while you were a student?

Reynolds: Yes. You didn't really call it "trash." Perhaps that's almost too strong a word today. I don't know exactly what librarians

may mean when they talk about trash fiction today, if they talk about it. They probably don't use that word. Danielle Steel, of course. Did you buy all of the Kathleen Norris? She was very much read then. And did you buy westerns or detective stories? These were really a great problem in many libraries because you could spend so much money on them, and people read them so fast that the demand was insatiable. I think particularly so in public libraries out in the state. I was very lucky because in Sausalito there was no demand for westerns, nor in Mill Valley.

The demand for detective stories was hard to meet. In Sausalito and Mill Valley both, we bought the leading authors, Dorothy Sayers, for example. But there were small libraries here and there. People who didn't have much to do, needed money, made a little extra cash by sitting with a group of books which they rented out. It would take only two or three hours in the afternoon perhaps to keep this going. I remember this was true in Sausalito. In Mill Valley, the woman who ran the rental library was more business-like, and we finally worked out an arrangement with her by which we got some of the things that she had had in her stock.

McCreery: These small lending libraries could be in almost any kind of location, I take it?

Reynolds: Yes. A corner of somebody's store often. There was a fairly large and very good one which carried also nonfiction located just outside the Stockton Street Tunnel in San Francisco, and lots of people went there. The name of it escapes me. The people who ran it really knew what they were doing.

McCreery: Returning to the coursework in the school, do you remember what kind of advice was offered you by Miss Anderson and others about how to treat these issues--whether and how much to buy trash fiction, so to speak?

Reynolds: I think the idea was that you had to gauge the feeling of your community.

McCreery: Each library would be different?

Reynolds: It might be different. But you did try to build for a permanent collection as well as you could. Certainly I'm sure that this was true in her experience, and Portland was one of the good public libraries of this period.

McCreery: It's interesting how some of the very same issues exist today in the same way.

Reynolds: It's now much more.

McCreery: You also wanted to talk about someone who came to the school to teach about county libraries.

Reynolds: That was Mrs. [May Dexter] Henshall. I think she came down one day a week from Sacramento to teach. She introduced us to the world of the county librarian. We also met Miss [Mary] Barmby, who was the librarian of Alameda County library. We were taken around the county to see their branches. I remember that one was in a converted chicken coop somewhere in the southern part of the county. I suppose that Contra Costa County was not included because at that time there was a little settlement in Orinda and a little one in Walnut Creek, but not much nearby. Alameda County was much more convenient; after all, we were in it.

McCreery: It was quite rural out there then, wasn't it?

Reynolds: Yes, it was, and it was somewhat rural in southern Alameda County too.

McCreery: How did the students enjoy Mrs. Henshall's class?

Reynolds: I don't know that we commented much about it. She had been an organizer for the State Library, I think. And this was something that we were not going to do. The state was pretty well organized at that point. The state library, I don't know that it was legally the head, but its influence was extremely important on the policies and practices of the county libraries, and the State Library had regular meetings with county librarians.

McCreery: They were actively developing that system during that period?

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: I'm sure that was good background, just to learn how it was all set up.

Reynolds: Yes.

The California State Library and Its Librarians

McCreery: You mentioned last time the trip to Sacramento to visit the state library, and you met Miss Gillis. Do you have much recollection of her personally?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. Her father had been state librarian, hadn't he? Yes. She was--like the others, like almost everyone we met--they were all ladies, well brought up, nicely spoken, nicely dressed in clothes that would have been appropriate on the street in San Francisco. We met her assistant, Eleanor Hitt [Morgan]. We visited the California room, which was then quite busy. I suppose Mr. [Allan] Ottley might have been there then; he was there for many years.

McCreery: I don't know who that is.

Reynolds: He's now retired. I think he's about ninety and has been very prominent in the field of California library service to the specialists in the history field. I remember that the room was obviously a busy place even then, and I found my grandparents in their pioneers listing.

The state library--I'm sure that Grete [Cubie] has told you more about that. She was a cataloger there, wasn't she?

McCreery: Not at the state library; she was at the Sacramento Public. Her first husband [August K. Frugé] did work at the state library while they lived up there.

Reynolds: I had thought they both did. The state library had collections of prints and other exhibition material, and they had quite a number of them on exhibit. They did reference service for the whole state of California, and I remember being a little surprised when I first began to use their reference service, as a city librarian, because I expected to get written replies. Instead, they always sent you the books that would answer all the questions that your patron had asked. The reference librarian, Miss [Beulah] Mumm, was very good.

McCreery: But rather than a written answer you got the entire book to look it up in detail yourself.

Reynolds: Yes, or to pass on to your patrons. Miss Gillis was equipped with a sense of humor, because I knew her later. She and her assistant always made it their business to become acquainted at library meetings with young people who were entering the field. I remember her telling me how pleased she was when Rachel and

Ed Castagna were married [laughter]. There were personal touches like that. I also remember her telling me that a young man had come to see her in some connection--I guess he was in the service--and she said, "He came toward the end of his stay in Sacramento so he wouldn't be involved," [laughter] with a twinkle in her eye.

At another meeting I saw the husband of Frances Clarke Sayers go to the table and move his place card to another location. He had been seated next to Miss Gillis, and she looked at me and twinkled [laughter]. So she was quite human.

McCreery: It sounds as if the community was such then that you could all get to know one other at meetings and so on.

Reynolds: Oh yes, you did.

McCreery: We talked about Miss Anderson and Mrs. Henshall and so on. Any other instructors you had while a student, who came in from the outside, that you'd like to mention? I know the curriculum was fairly fixed.

Reynolds: Yes, it was. It was pretty comprehensive. No, I can't remember anyone else coming in from the outside.

McCreery: Let me ask you to expand on one thing you said yesterday, which was that once you got into the school's curriculum, you didn't particularly enjoy it. Now I know you had already taken the master's in Latin, an academic program, and you were now in a professional school. I just wonder if you could say a little bit more.

Reynolds: It involved for me quite a lot of rote memory because the instructors thought we should recognize--and they were right--the names of famous people in various fields. They would call upon somebody like Rachel, who had majored in anthropology, in book selection, to give a presentation of the leading books in the field. I suppose Louise Darling may have done something similar in the field of botany or zoology because in the first semester she was completing her master's degree in botany. She was obviously destined for the biological sciences, and she became one of the most distinguished librarians in that field. I did not find it particularly interesting to learn all these things, but of course it was useful. Miss Coulter's work and Miss Sisler's work were more of a challenge. Also, Miss Sisler, who taught rare books, presented us with a lot of facts and names that we were expected to know. And we did a lot of reading. She covered the field pretty carefully for someone who had to do it all in one day a week.

McCreery: There was a very practical side to this curriculum.

Reynolds: Yes, there was.

McCreery: And that was perhaps new to you?

Reynolds: Yes, it was. And I found reference the most interesting thing. [tape interruption] It took a little longer to appreciate the usefulness of cataloging [laughter], but it was useful.

Della Sisler's Courses in Cataloging and History of the Book

McCreery: We thought we would talk a little bit more now about Miss Della Sisler and her courses in cataloging and classification--and also, if you wish, her courses on the book arts.

Reynolds: Cataloging and classification involved the lab three times a week, I think. We were divided into two groups alphabetically. The first part of the alphabet was in the morning, and the second part in the afternoon. There was a truckload of books to be cataloged. They had been selected to illustrate the problems that Miss Sisler had talked about that day.

Occasionally there was something puzzling, for example how to establish the name under which an author with a peculiar or foreign name should be entered--where the "von" came or something of that sort. There were certain rules you were supposed to apply and certain works that you could consult as authorities. Once in a while you'd find something that didn't fit into a proper category, so you'd have to go in and ask Miss Sisler what you should do. This meant a trip into the glass-enclosed office, at least three people could hear your whole conversation: Miss Sisler, Miss Coulter, and Dorothy Bronstein, the reviser.

I remember Mortimer Taube did a lot of consulting before he turned in his cards, running up and down the aisle talking to people [laughter]. I'm sure that it was all too much for him; with his background in philosophy, he was not interested in this sort of thing. Nevertheless, he made a career in documentation [laughter]. That was before the computer really raised its possibilities. He died rather young, but he was achieving a certain status in the field.

I don't remember how Miss Sisler gave examinations, but I know she did. Most of us found cataloging hard. Mr. Mitchell

told me that only one person in our class got a straight A from Miss Sisler and that was Miriam Yoder, who had had considerable experience in the catalog department at the University of Oregon in Eugene.

I should note that although the University of California didn't record grades with a minus or plus, the library school did.

McCreery: The main assignments that you turned in to her were the catalog cards.

Reynolds: The catalog cards were turned in every lab session, and by the time you finished the course you had a little sample catalog which you could take with you to your first job. And I did. It was indexed for various problems, and the cards were all corrected with Dorothy's neat little red marks for the commas you had missed and any mistakes that you had made. You were really very well equipped to start out on your own.

McCreery: Tell me more about Miss Bronstein's role.

Reynolds: We didn't really get to know her at all as a personality. She was just the person who did our revision. I think she lived in Berkeley. I should say that people whose first experience of Berkeley was in the school tended to hang around the workroom a lot more than the rest of us did. Some of them may have come to know her better.

McCreery: Do you know much about Miss Sisler's own background and how she came to Berkeley?

Reynolds: No. I think she was in the university catalog department.

McCreery: I believe that's right.

Reynolds: Whether she was a New Englander, Midwesterner, by birth and education, I'm not sure. I doubt that she was a Westener.

McCreery: I gather she was not given to talking on personal subjects with students?

Reynolds: No, not at all. She may have to some of those who sought her out, as I think some of the people who became catalogers did. Whether they sought her out then or later, I'm not sure. She continued to live in Berkeley after she retired, and once or twice I saw her on the street or even going up to the university library on a day when not many people would be

around. I don't know whether she did not want to see people or whether she just preferred the library when it was quiet.

When she died I went to the service for her because I was president of the [alumni] association and I felt I should. I remember that one woman, someone who had been a friend of Miss Sisler's in retirement at least--if not earlier--spoke to me about her and seemed to indicate that Miss Sisler knew me and had spoken of me. I believe that this person mistook me for someone else, or else because I was president of the association Miss Sisler may have noted that the president was one of her former students.

McCreery: But you had no--

Reynolds: I had no connections with her. It had happened that I did keep up with Miss Coulter--not that I decided to do it, but it just happened through circumstances of my life, really.

McCreery: Is there anything else you can share about Miss Sisler's teaching style in the classroom?

Reynolds: It was very rapid fire. I was a fast notetaker, and so I could pretty well keep up with her.

McCreery: When I was here yesterday you brought out the notes that you had for one of her courses. Can you just talk a little bit about that?

Reynolds: That was rare books. I think that she gave a very complete introductory course to the rare book world, especially if you did the readings that she assigned. At that time there was not a rare books department at the university. For the most part rare books were scattered through stacks. I remember that Miss Sisler took us to an upstairs room on the fourth floor, in which there were some modern fine press books but with no one visibly in charge. They must have been in someone's bailiwick.

McCreery: But I think you're right. That separate organization of rare books came later.

Reynolds: It came later. Yes.

McCreery: I believe in Miss Sisler's course there was some kind of a book arts club led by the printer Samuel Farquhar.

Reynolds: Yes. He cooperated with her in that. Oh, I should also say, perhaps before talking about that, that she did take us to the city [San Francisco] to visit John Henry Nash, the well-known

fine printer, in his establishment. We also visited a commercial printing establishment, I'm not sure which one, and the noise was terrific and you couldn't hear what we were told about the operation.

McCreery: That was your chance to see printing in action.

Reynolds: To see printing in action. It may have been a linotype machine going. I don't remember.

McCreery: Tell me a little bit about Mr. Farquhar and his involvement with the teaching of rare books.

Reynolds: He was the university printer, who later married Florence Waln, who was in charge of residence at International House. He was the brother of Francis Farquhar, who was a mountaineer and a California collector of note. Mr. [Sam] Farquhar had a limp, and he helped the class produce a book each year. [tape interruption]

I remember his being in the school at a time when we were working on our assignments. I don't remember exactly what various members of the class did under his direction. I was not involved. The world seemed to me to be full of a number of other things that were more interesting at the time [laughter]. So I did not pay as much attention as I should have.

McCreery: In general, he helped each class in the school produce a book?

Reynolds: He helped each class, and I think it must have been he who saw whatever book was selected through the press. I'm sure the books were largely his choice--probably because the university printer was much more than a printer; he was in charge of the press and he saw all sorts of manuscripts coming into the press and was in a position to choose something that had to do with bibliography in the broad sense of the word or with books and the book world, like the two that I happen to own--*Byways in Bookland*, by James Westfall Thompson, which is dated 1935, and then this one: *Twenty-three Books and the Stories Behind Them*, produced in 1938.

McCreery: In general, was that the focus of the book arts club--this production of the book?

Reynolds: Yes, that was the whole club activity. I don't think we did anything else, although the visits to the press, I suppose, might be considered a club activity--I'm not sure. But anyhow, it was a chance to go and see a well-known fine press, because

John Henry Nash was at the height of his prominence at that time.

McCreery: Tell me more about how Miss Sisler brought rare books into her classroom and talked about them.

Reynolds: I'm not sure that she brought the books in. I cannot remember her method of showing the books. That may have been something that we had to do on our own. And we certainly did not see a lot of the early books. But we could see books about them. That is, I think, chiefly what we saw. She was not making rare books librarians out of us. It was going to take far more than that. But she was trying to make us at least literate in the field. And that I think she did quite well.

McCreery: Did you ask for help from the main library staff very often, and the individual students?

Reynolds: That came in reference.

Edith Coulter, Teacher of Reference and Bibliography

McCreery: Are we ready to move on to reference?

Reynolds: Yes, I think so. The university reference department was then a section in the center of the big handsome reference room. The desk was enclosed by low stacks containing those books deemed most useful for immediate reference service. Since we had to ask the reference librarians to see many of the books that were assigned, we were in fairly constant contact with them. I'm sure that we were an annoyance; we must have been, especially when Miss Coulter would give some of her famous questions that no one had ever found the answer to. Usually some librarian, tired of hauling out first one book after another and having to return each to its place, would tip someone off that no one had ever found the answer to this question.

McCreery: Do you remember any of those questions?

Reynolds: No, I don't. I do remember that years later a librarian who as a student had preceded me, Elizabeth Bullitt Collins, was working at the main reference desk, and she came upon the answer to one of those questions and was so excited that she left the desk unattended and rushed down the hall to tell Miss Coulter [laughter].

McCreery: It was a big event.

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: I was going to ask you to describe Miss Coulter's classroom teaching style.

Reynolds: Measured, and with a certain amount of humor which she allowed to show at intervals. It was a very, very good style; you had no trouble taking notes and following. She tried to make things alive as much as she could. She drew on her own experience, which was considerable, because she had worked in the university library in the reference department. I think she had worked at Stanford a little. She was a Stanford graduate. She told me once that when she was a Stanford student she was planning to be a teacher and was sent out to a public school as a substitute. She got through so much history in an hour that she didn't have anything more left to say [laughter]. So she decided teaching in public schools was not for her.

She went to the New York State Library School, you know--the predecessor of the one at Columbia. It must have been a great adventure to go to New York--it was in Albany at that time. She had fifty dollars in gold pieces which hung around her neck under her clothing as security. She said, "It was rather heavy, so this gave me a slightly stooped look." [laughter]

She also told us about finding a print of the Piccolomini Library in Siena [Italy]. She had it on the mantelpiece in her home. Mrs. Evelyn Steel Little also had a copy, and it's her copy that I have hanging on my dining room wall. Miss Coulter would tell us about searches that were appropriate, and she had had a number of adventures in searching for material related to the publications that she produced.

McCreery: Do you recall her talking much about Melvil Dewey from her time as a student in New York?

Reynolds: No. What we learned about Melvil Dewey we learned from Mr. Mitchell. I can't remember that she talked much about the New York school. She talked more about searching for material. Once, a chance seat at dinner beside someone in a particular field gave her the information that she needed for something she was doing. A chance remark, not something she had been digging for.

McCreery: One never knew where the answer would come?

Reynolds: No. She knew the appeal of things like that; they made the subject more lively than it would otherwise have been.

McCreery: You had her both semesters, for reference and bibliography?

Reynolds: Yes. No one else was teaching it at that time. Nor, I think, would any of us have chosen to take it from someone else. She gave unannounced quizzes, and she gave midterms which might ask you what you would buy in specific fields if you were starting a library in a certain kind of place. And you had to justify your choice.

McCreery: Now what do you know about Miss Coulter's sister, Mabel Coulter, who was also a librarian?

Reynolds: Well, we used to see her most days when they'd go to lunch together, often with some other people. I think they probably went to the Women's Faculty Club, because they were both strong supporters of the club.

McCreery: Mabel was working where at that time?

Reynolds: Mabel was the librarian of the education library, which was located in Haviland Hall.

McCreery: Yes, that was the School of Education then.

Reynolds: It was a fairly large branch library at that point.

McCreery: Now where had Mabel taken her library training? Do you know?

Reynolds: Yes, California State Library, which was the predecessor of the Berkeley school. They had both gone to Stanford, I think together. Miss Edith talked about going across the wheatfields at Stanford on a warm day wearing a wool city suit and hat to have tea with Mrs. Stanford [laughter].

McCreery: Oh, my.

Reynolds: Well, there weren't many women students, and I'm sure Mrs. Stanford made it a point to entertain women students.

McCreery: I gather the two Miss Coulters shared a home here in Berkeley?

Reynolds: Yes. Their house is still there. It's on the upper part of Hawthorne Terrace, just off Euclid [Avenue]. I think they had built the house.

McCreery: Did you ever visit them there?

Reynolds: Oh, often. After I moved to Berkeley I would sometimes walk up on a Sunday afternoon and visit them. If the day was pleasant they would often be sitting on a little area just outside the front door. Miss Mabel was a dedicated gardener. She had a beautiful garden, and she worked at it all the time. Miss Edith was not a gardener, but she enjoyed the garden. I remember how she admired the trees that bloomed just in front of the Women's Faculty Club. They're still there.

McCreery: Returning now to Miss Coulter in the classroom, do you recall much of how the other students felt about her?

Reynolds: Oh, they all liked her, I think. I think everyone liked her and respected her.

McCreery: It sounds as if she had a lively personality.

Reynolds: Yes. Many students came back to ask her advice or just to drop in and see her. That was of course fairly easy to do then because it was so much easier to move around than it is now.

The Working Relationship of Professors Coulter and Sisler

McCreery: I know that Miss Coulter and Miss Sisler shared an office in the school. Do you have much knowledge of their working relationship as colleagues?

Reynolds: I think their working relationship was good, both between the two of them and between other people in the school. They were not at all similar in personality or in interests, except for one thing, which I happen to know about because when Miss Sisler died, the newspaper reported that she left $750,000 in her estate, and I think it was all for the Guide Dogs for the Blind. This astounded many people because nothing in this modest little woman's demeanor or clothing ever suggested that she had money to spare. Mr. Danton was stunned--I don't think he ever met her--that she was able to acquire this much money, and he said so. But Miss Coulter said that she knew that Miss Sisler had money because she and Miss Sisler had often discussed their financial investments. I'm sure they got on, or they would not have been discussing this subject. Also, they were both ladies; they were not about to say unpleasant things to each other or about other people.

McCreery: As you know, some people have suggested that they did not get along well with one another, but I think you've just--

Reynolds: They were not bosom friends. That was obvious.

McCreery: But they seemed to be perfectly--

Reynolds: Perfectly pleasant. Mr. Mitchell would often sit in their office talking to them for half an hour or an hour or so.

McCreery: This environment appeared very collegial to you?

Reynolds: It appeared collegial. They probably discussed any important news that they had heard about the library field. If the atmosphere had not been pleasant, I doubt that he would have spent much time in there. He did on occasion indicate the different reactions that he would get from one person or another, not mentioning names, but you got an idea whom he was talking about. And there was no indication that those reactions were anything but pleasant--just different; they had very different personalities.

[Interview 4: June 23, 1999] ##

McCreery: In our last session last week we talked quite a lot about your time in the School of Librarianship. We thought we might start off today having you tell a little bit about your last semester there and some of the activities at the end of the semester.

Reynolds: Mrs. Sayers joined the faculty the second semester. Since the school did not have an office for her, they built a little one bounded by bookcases within our room. I did not have occasion to talk to her, but at the end of the semester she was a featured speaker--actually, storyteller--at the banquet that the alumni association gave for us. It was at the Hotel Leamington down in Oakland. It was all planned and arranged by May Dornin, later the university archivist; she was then a cataloger. It was a formal banquet; we all wore evening dresses except May, who showed up in one of her usual gingham dresses. She encouraged us to join the alumni association, and I think most of us must have joined, because for the next year or two we turned up at the annual banquets in very creditable numbers. Of course, most of us were looking for work, which may have had something to do with it.

I can't remember that we did a skit; in fact, I know I wasn't in a skit, and I can't think that there was one. But in later years, very shortly thereafter, classes did do skits that lampooned the school or the faculty. Mr. Mitchell and Miss Coulter seemed to enjoy these greatly and to laugh appreciatively. For Miss Sisler, they must have been an

ordeal. She looked very serious. I was told that once she was reduced almost to tears.

McCreery: One of the skits?

Reynolds: Yes. I think she heard a phrase like, "Throwing the catalog cards in order," or something like that, which is an invitation to making fun.

Seeking Employment After Library School; San Francisco Public Library

Reynolds: Before we left school a good many of us went down to Oakland and applied for work in the Oakland Public Library. Of course there weren't any jobs. I think at least one classmate was returning to work there, but it was experience. John Boynton Kaiser, the librarian, was quite well known. I was one of those who went down.

McCreery: Did you have assistance from Mr. Mitchell or others in the school in that endeavor?

Reynolds: No, no. It was something we did on our own. I don't remember whether he suggested it; I rather think he may have said that you could do this or perhaps look for work in other libraries in the Bay Area.

During the fall I did get a job offer through the school for the order department at Corvallis--the Oregon State Agricultural College, as it was then called. I went over to the school to talk about it and I came home with my mind made up to go, but when I got home, I was shocked to find my father, who had had a stroke a couple of years earlier, wandering around the house out of his mind. I just couldn't see leaving my mother in that situation, so I declined although I was the top candidate--I don't know how many--maybe the only one, but the one being recommended. The school was in the habit of filling the jobs there rather regularly, I think.

I didn't get anything else, so after Christmas I went up to Dominican College in San Rafael and offered my services in their library in exchange for courses. I talked to the president, whom I liked very much--a nun, Sister Thomas--and she accepted me. So I started working--I don't remember how many hours--in their library and taking some courses.

McCreery: What exactly did you do in Dominican College Library?

Reynolds: I think I may have done some work in the catalog department. I remember being in there. And I know I worked at the loan desk.

Early in the spring, in February, Mr. Mitchell called and said that the San Francisco Public [Library] had openings for some temporary catalog clericals until the money ran out, which would be in June at the end of the fiscal year. He said, "I think you had better apply because you haven't had any experience. You will not want to stay there."

McCreery: Why did he say that? "You will not want to stay there."

Reynolds: Because the library had a very poor reputation. It wasn't a library where you would want to work permanently. It was also civil service--I'm not offering that as an objection to it, but it meant that the position I was in would definitely end, because it was simply an expedient to get some clerical work done while they had money that would otherwise be lost to them.

McCreery: Did you know at that time any more about why that library had a poor reputation?

Reynolds: It had had one for many years. Almost all of the staff were without library training and were inclined to be opposed to it and to people who had had it. The librarian, Robert Rea, had started as a page boy. He was then, I suppose, in his sixties, and I don't think he had ever worked anywhere else. I don't know about that for sure, but that was the impression I had. And after my interview he said, "You may have the job if you can get along with the head of the department," which caused my eyebrows to go up a little. He called her down and said I would be coming. So I started the next day.

There was another graduate of the school there under the same terms, Elizabeth Scarf [Hinkel], who shortly married Edgar Hinkel and had a career in special libraries here in San Francisco. She had graduated the year before I did, in 1935. We became very good friends. She married a man who was a psychologist. He got his Ph.D. in psychology. Physically, he was a midget. She herself had a disability, the result, I think, of polio. She wore a special shoe on one foot and she limped a little. I think they had a very good marriage. In fact, my mother at one time said, "Of all your married friends, I think she is the happiest."

To go back to the catalog department, there were then four people in it--three librarians and the head, and in an adjacent

room a young woman who also reported to the catalog department, and she did all of the physical processing of the books. It was not a happy department. I don't know how much I should say. But each morning when Miss Healy came in, she brought the morning paper, spread it out on her desk, and read it from cover to cover. When she went out to lunch she came back with the afternoon paper and spread it out and read it from cover to cover.

McCreery: Was she the head of that department?

Reynolds: Yes. All of the branch work was done in that department by one person, Miss Langpaap. Occasionally Elizabeth and I would work for her. All of the branches apparently got the same books, so we added the numerous copies that were sent out to branches--

McCreery: You were at the main library, however?

Reynolds: Yes. This was upstairs on the top floor of the main library. Sometimes one would have to go downstairs to do something at the catalog or into the stacks to get some books or something of that sort, at which time you often met the head of the reference department, who never used the elevator. She was an old woman with very white hair who dressed in long, black skirts, which were not the fashion at the time. She toiled up and down the stairs, never deigning to use the elevator as the rest of us did. Gossip had it that she sometimes hid books so that she could be smart and answer questions that stumped other people. This may have been only gossip, I don't know.

You got no break in the morning or in the afternoon. You just worked straight through. You could go to the lavatory but nothing like coffee; that was unheard of.

McCreery: Who was the head of reference?

Reynolds: I don't remember her name. The order department did seem to be a very well-run department. I sometimes would have to go there on some errand.

McCreery: With the head of cataloging occupied with reading newspapers, how did the other librarians carry out their duties?

Reynolds: Well, they were all on civil service, and so therefore no one complained. There was one member of the department who became visibly upset whenever Miss Healy talked to her, and it must have been fear that did it. The two other women in the department were younger and quite able to take care of themselves, and they did. Almost every afternoon around three

or four o'clock they would begin to kid each other to break the tension of their days. I never saw them fight; they just tolerated the situation, as it was. Of course they probably had no choice. It would not have been very easy to go out and get another job somewhere.

McCreery: Did you and Elizabeth Scarf receive any training or supervision when you started working there?

Reynolds: Not any formal training. But if I did something wrong and Miss Healy was not in a good mood, I was reprimanded. If she was in a good mood I got the benefit of that too. People who came in from the other departments sometimes got a taste of her wrath if they seemed stupid to her or if it was just a bad day.

McCreery: Were you prepared for the state of that library ahead of time?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. It was well known around here that it was not a good place to work. Over the years San Francisco has had a lot of trouble with its civil service, so that was well known.

Sausalito Free Public Library, 1937-1939

Reynolds: One day the elevator door opened and Mrs. Sayers stepped out. Somehow I knew right away that she was coming to see me, although I had never talked to her before. She told me that a position in Sausalito was open, because the librarian of the Sausalito Public--Mrs. Sayers was on the board, I should say--was about to marry her childhood sweetheart, who was widowed at that point. So they had not expected this vacancy to occur. It was tradition there to appoint the assistant. In this case it was Mabel Wosser, who had worked in the library for several years and as a very young person, had helped her older sister who had once been the librarian. So the board felt that she had to have the title, but they had decided that they could take a graduate of the school as a co-librarian. Since I lived in Marin County I seemed to be a fairly natural choice. I would have responsibility alone for book selection and for cataloging. Other things would be a joint responsibility. Mrs. Sayers said that Mabel was indeed one of the very nicest people in Sausalito. She was sure that I would be able to get along with her because Miss Wosser would want to do what was right for the library. She said Mr. Mitchell thought I should not take the job because it could be very difficult because of the job-sharing relationship. Also the salary was actually a little less than I was making as a temporary clerk in San

Francisco--ninety-five dollars a month in San Francisco, and eighty-five in Sausalito. That was the best that Mrs. Sayers had been able to persuade the board to do, and she hoped I would take it.

It didn't take me very long to accept. I don't remember whether I told her right then that I definitely would, but I know I did immediately afterward if not at that point.

I left San Francisco and went to Sausalito--was it June? The date is there.

McCreery: Yes. May 16, 1937, was your starting date.

Reynolds: Yes. Before that I went on a Saturday afternoon to talk to Mrs. James Wyatt, who was the president of the board of trustees. But I did not talk to any of the other trustees until after I had gone to work. Mrs. Wyatt shared responsibility with Mrs. Sayers for taking me.

From then on, I have written the story of my experiences there and later in Mill Valley fairly completely in a little booklet. So I think it might be best for you to ask me to fill in statements that are not clear or you feel need expansion.

McCreery: Sure. Just for the tape we'll mention the title of your memoir of your years as Marin County Librarian: *Six Years in Marvelous Marin: A Librarian's Memoir, 1937-1943*. As you say, that does cover your time at Sausalito Free Public Library and also the Mill Valley Public Library in good detail. You do a good job of talking about the size of the collection and what money you had to try to increase that and some of your book selection issues that you faced and so on.

I'm wondering if you could just talk a little bit more about sharing the duties with the other librarian who was already there, Mabel Wosser, and who assumed the title of librarian, as I understand it.

Reynolds: Yes, she did.

McCreery: It sounds as if the two of you had a very compatible working relationship. Is that so?

Reynolds: Yes, we did. She was outgoing and very friendly. I think her pride was intact because of the fact that she had the title. The overdue notices and such would go out under her name. She did all of the business things, the paying of the bills, et cetera. I had incurred them; most of the bills of course were

for books. There were other things. We had a substitute whom we could use. We had a janitress. I don't remember whether Mabel paid the janitress or whether that was done by the same source that paid Mabel and paid me. City Hall was underneath us.

McCreery: In that building?

Reynolds: In the same building at that time. Usually all that you had to do to get Mabel to agree to a change was suggest that this was being done somewhere else where it worked well. She would agree. There were one or two very obvious things that we needed to change immediately. The first one was--I don't know how long they had been doing this before I arrived--all of the brand-new books were placed on a new book shelf whenever they came back from circulation. You couldn't reserve them; you had to trot in. Readers who lived nearby were making trips in three or four times a day sometimes [laughter] if they really wanted to see something, and the library was up a long flight of stairs. You had to be hale and hearty to do that more than once a day. Changing that to a reserve system didn't take much persuasion.

Mabel would also pick flowers in the little park across the street. So we always had nice flowers in the library, and she got full credit for that; she did very simple attractive arrangements.

We also followed the sometimes embarrassing practice of writing patrons' names in books--not in the book but on the book's charge card. I didn't try to change that, although forgetting a reader's name could be embarrassing. Counting the circulation, one would find amusing identifying notes like "shaggy dog."

The cataloging and the book selection were so demanding that I didn't have time--and then of course I was responsible also for the operation of the loan desk during roughly half the time--to worry about other things. They had some unexpected money to spend before the end of the fiscal year. I've forgotten how much; the figure $500 comes to mind. That would have bought a lot of books at that time. So I was very busy checking standard lists against the catalog and the shelves. The American Library Association published standard lists, and then there was a very good one, a smaller one for the very small libraries, which was my first line of attack. I tried to be very careful.

McCreery: In addition to keeping up through the newspaper reviews and so on, you had standard lists that you could consult that were put out by the ALA and so on?

Reynolds: I didn't consult them for current book selection, but to spend this special money that was designed to improve the collection.

McCreery: And that you had to spend quickly and carefully.

Reynolds: Very quickly. Regularly I read not just the newspaper reviews but also the standard reviewing journals and kept notes on the reviews and of course also ALA's periodical, *Booklist*, which was devoted to new publications.

McCreery: Since book selection and cataloging were entirely up to you, we talked a little bit about book selection. For example, you said there wasn't much call by your patrons for things like westerns.

Reynolds: None in Sausalito.

McCreery: You did have some decision making in terms of things like mysteries or series books that were not considered fine literature but for which there was some demand?

Reynolds: That was true. In Sausalito, too, there were one or two little circulating libraries not far from us where people could borrow mysteries for a very small sum. Many Sausalito residents belonged to the Mechanics Library in San Francisco. They would tell us that they did. That, by the way, may be one of the reasons that the San Francisco Public Library has limped along for so many years. The Mechanics Library is and was an excellent general library.

McCreery: Do you know approximately when that was established? I can look it up.

Reynolds: Not off the top of my head, but in the nineteenth century, I think. There were Mechanics libraries, Mechanics institutes throughout the country at that time. My family belonged to the Mechanics Library too. We dropped it after I became a librarian; it seemed redundant then.

McCreery: You also mentioned that there were small rental libraries locally, in both Sausalito and Mill Valley, where people could rent such things as mysteries that you might not have at the public.

Reynolds: They had other things as well.

McCreery: How did those work?

Reynolds: Usually it was an enterprise of one or two people who ordered some books and rented them for--I don't remember what they charged, but it couldn't have been very much. It must have been a few cents a day.

McCreery: That was a common alternative at that time?

Reynolds: In many places. They existed both in Sausalito and in Mill Valley. The one in Mill Valley I knew better, perhaps because I was there longer. It was my home, after all. That one would occasionally show artwork as well.

McCreery: That's a nice detail to have for our tape--just the idea of rental libraries, which we don't really have now.

Reynolds: No, not very often, although I belong to the Bellevue Club down here in Oakland, which has a small rental library. You can take things home, but you pay for the privilege. Many clubs have good libraries, but how many of them charge members for borrowing privileges, I don't know.

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McCreery: To finish up about your time at Sausalito Library, let's just talk about when you left and who took over for you there.

Reynolds: Ruth Burt, later Ruth Burt Robertson, graduated from the school in 1939, and she took over on the same basis and also got along very well with Miss Wosser and I think with everyone concerned. During the war a shipyard was established in Sausalito, and she eventually went there as librarian. It was impossible then for Sausalito to get someone else on the same terms. When I left Mill Valley it was not easy to find a replacement there although there was no shared responsibility. Ruth later went to Delaware. I saw her some years later; we had a very pleasant lunch together after I went to Mills. But I have lost track of her since then.

McCreery: Do you know much about the Marinship Library and the whole operation there?

Reynolds: No, I don't. Ruth used to talk about it when I would see her, but that was not often, and I soon left Mill Valley.

Mill Valley Public Library, 1939-1943; Frances Clarke Sayers

McCreery: Again, in your memoir you've done a good job of talking about how you decided to leave Sausalito and become the head librarian at Mill Valley. Briefly, they released their long-time librarian and advertised an opening for which you applied and so on. So we won't go into too much detail about that. But I wonder if you would mind comparing a little bit your experiences at Sausalito and at Mill Valley, comparing the two libraries themselves.

Reynolds: Mill Valley was quite a bit larger than Sausalito at that time. Of course in Mill Valley I just did whatever I wanted to do [laughter]. Annabelle Travis, who was my assistant, was a very bright and practical, a very down-to-earth sort of person. If we disagreed, it was never in any important way. She just wanted to make things standard, and she had had experience many years before in the San Francisco Public as a reference librarian, before her marriage. So she was used to a large operation, and she was also extremely skilled at answering reference questions--fairly simple ones, of course--without the standard reference tools. She had read so widely that she could sometimes find answers in unexpected sources--and she was still a very wide reader.

McCreery: She, as was common then, was not formally trained in librarianship?

Reynolds: No, she wasn't.

McCreery: I also meant to ask you--I think I'm backtracking a little. You mentioned that you later went back and took the course from Frances Clarke Sayers on children's literature.

Reynolds: Yes, while I was in Sausalito.

McCreery: Okay. Maybe you can just tell a little bit about that.

Reynolds: I went over on the ferry boat--two ferry boat rides each way--half a day in all, and then came back and worked my regular schedule. I think I arranged to do it--I don't remember whether it was two mornings a week--I don't think it was three, I think it was two. I went over with her so I got to know her very well during that time.

McCreery: Because she was also commuting from Marin County?

Reynolds: Yes, she did during all the time that she taught at Berkeley. She was very generous in the time that she gave the Sausalito library. She selected all the children's books that we bought. She came in and arranged an exhibition of the new books for children's book week each of the two years while I was there.

McCreery: Tell me about her course at Berkeley.

Reynolds: It was a very general introduction to children's literature. I don't remember that she particularly emphasized storytelling. She may have, and I might have elected not to take part in that because I was pretty busy. But she talked about new children's books; I remember *Andy and the Lion* was new at that point. The Sather Gate Book Shop was just down the street from the campus; it was very easy to see new books immediately. I remember that.

McCreery: What kind of a persona did she have in the classroom?

Reynolds: Very charming, very natural. I can't remember that there was a great deal of class discussion--no particular reason for it, I think, at that time. I can't remember that anyone--oh, she did have Ella Young come in and talk to us. Ella Young was a resident scholar, I believe. She had some official presence at the university, and she was an authority--she's been dead for many years--on Irish traditional literature. She was a storyteller trained in the old tradition. I remember that she came to class and talked to us and told some of the stories that are part of the Irish folklore tradition. We did meet once in the children's room of the Berkeley Public Library with Leone Garvey, head of the children's department. I can't remember that Mrs. Sayers brought anyone else to class, though she may have. I didn't take the course for credit; I just took it to add it to my own knowledge.

McCreery: Generally by the time you went to Marin County in the middle of 1937, do you know whether your other classmates from the school--from 1936--had most of them had success by then finding work in libraries?

Reynolds: I think that most of us got placed sooner or later, certainly by the time the war started, after we began to have the shipyard and all this activity here. I remember one man who was placed in a newspaper library said that those of us in public libraries might feel we were performing a public service, but he felt it was a command performance when he got a question from the newspaperman working on a story. He had to produce immediately, if not sooner. His experience was probably a little different from ours. Several of my

classmates were in public libraries, a few in college or university libraries.

McCreery: You were active in the alumni association in those years?

Reynolds: Yes, in that I attended the annual dinners and the reunions that took place at library conferences. Mr. Mitchell had told us when we were in library school that as a thank offering we might join the California Library Association and the American Library Association. Many of us joined them immediately. When I went to Mill Valley that summer, in 1939, the American Library Association was meeting in San Francisco.

McCreery: Yes, I think you mentioned that in your memoir.

Reynolds: Yes. So we went and saw many of our classmates. I don't know how many people in classes earlier than ours may never have been able to find a job.

McCreery: Let's talk about the war a little bit. You had begun at Mill Valley Library in the middle of--

Reynolds: In the summer of 1939. When World War II really started.

McCreery: Right. By that fall war was actually breaking out in Europe and so on. Do you remember your thoughts when that happened?

Reynolds: I remember even more vividly anticipating it earlier in 1938 and '39 when we seemed on the verge. I wanted to go to Europe the summer I went to Mill Valley. My mother said, "Oh, no, because there is definitely going to be a war." Of course she was right, unfortunately. People began sending bundles to Britain; I remember that very forcefully.

I mentioned May Dornin. Years later I came to know her cousin, Ian Thomson, who was a minister in Britain. He wanted me to go to see May Dornin when I returned home. He had never met her. But he remembered all of the bundles to Britain that she had sent to his family.

McCreery: Those were much appreciated?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. They made more difference, I think, than we realized at the time.

There was a great deal of conversation in the library then about the war. It weighed heavily on our minds.

McCreery: The printed word was a much greater source of news for more people than it is now, so I can imagine the library would be something of a center of that.

Reynolds: We got the Sunday *New York Times*, which people read with interest, even though it was a few days late.

Joining the War Effort: Army Librarian in California, 1943-1945

McCreery: I won't talk with you too much more about Mill Valley, again, because you've already covered it so well. But I will ask you to tell me--as the war progressed and the U.S. entered and things were changing so much all over, tell me about your decision to leave Mill Valley and what you did next.

Reynolds: At Mill Valley, it was obvious that we were in a holding pattern. So I decided to join the war effort.

McCreery: Now when you say "holding pattern", can you expand just a little bit?

Reynolds: Not really. It was obvious that we weren't going to have any more money to spend and that it was going to be difficult to keep going. I had been very fortunate in the young people we engaged. I might say that when I was in Sausalito we bought Library of Congress cards, and that helped greatly in the cataloging because I had no one to do any typing; I had to do it all. In Mill Valley we were able to have the National Youth Administration--young people--I mentioned that in the [memoir]. But it was going to be increasingly difficult to get help in the library. And so many people were having what sounded like very interesting experiences working for the army.

McCreery: How did you go about acting on these thoughts?

Reynolds: I applied to Xenophon P. Smith [laughter]--a remarkable name--who was in charge of libraries for this army corps area--I've forgotten what the official title was, and I don't believe I kept any papers. I was eventually offered a job at Camp McQuaide. You will not know where it was, and it no longer exists. It was a coast artillery training center located outside Watsonville on the coast. They wanted a librarian and a library. They had a collection of books gathered from here and there, mostly donated by Watsonville residents who took a great interest in the past. I was interviewed by the post commander, a colonel, who engaged me.

But first I had to go to Salt Lake City for training at Fort Douglas. Two weeks in July with scorching heat and no air-conditioning. Wendell Coon was the sergeant in charge. He had two civilian assistants, very attractive young women, one of whom became Mrs. Coon after the war. My base pay was $166, which was a considerable improvement over what I had earned in Mill Valley. With authorized overtime it was $202. Of course you didn't have any time off to speak of; you worked six days a week. Practically everyone did--not only for the army but elsewhere too.

The training in Salt Lake City involved learning the army routines. There were certain rules and regulations that had to be followed in the recording and ordering of books.

McCreery: Even civilian employees had--

Reynolds: You had to follow that. If you wrote any letters on behalf of the army, you had to follow regulations, which resulted usually in your getting both sides of the correspondence in one file, all attached. You picked up property (i.e. books) on certain army records that you were responsible for. In addition to that, of course, you had to produce a catalog that soldiers could use.

At Camp McQuaide, there was a good deal of work. The post had already employed a civilian clerical employee, Mrs. Blickhahn, whose husband was a newspaper man. I don't remember just why they were in the Santa Cruz area. Before long he was offered a job in Hawaii, where they finally settled. She was a very likeable and competent person.

We had a soldier assistant, Sherman McFedries, who came from Pasadena. He was a Stanford graduate. PFC McFedries--Private First Class. He felt the work he was doing was a little beneath him. I don't mean to say that he ever said such a thing; he was too much of a gentleman to do that--but his whole attitude was that he was "assisting" these ladies [laughter] operating the library, and he would graciously do all of the menial work, toting books around and things of that sort. But you didn't expect too much from him.

McCreery: Was the library at Camp McQuaide already established then?

Reynolds: The library was across the street from the post exchange in two small rooms at the end of a large building used by the band. The first room contained a few hundred books on wall shelving, a desk and two chairs. The second, inner room held another desk, a couple of chairs, and a table spread with a few current

magazines and a newspaper or two. Most of the books had been donated by Watsonville residents who had also given lamps, and would have added easy chairs, I'm sure, if there had been room for them.

The library was slated to move to quarters in a service club under construction and also to receive the standard library selected for posts of our size. When the new books began to arrive, there was no place to put them. We were forced to open one box at a time, process the contents, re-pack them in the same box, and store the boxes in the back of the inner room.

The band practiced daily on the other side of a thin partition, and sometimes they all engaged in individual practice at the same time, or so it seemed.

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Reynolds: Two of our windows looked out on the huts in which the enlisted men lived. Every once in a while we would be treated to an inspection. They would have to get out their gear, place all their belongings on the ground in front of the huts and be inspected. We were inspected by a general once, too, and I might say that after we moved into the proper library up in the new service club building, I came back to work one day and found everything out on the lawn except the books because they were expecting a visit from some general, and they were preparing for a most minute inspection. Whether he ever came or not, I don't know [laughter]. Anyhow, things were packed up and put back in.

McCreery: How long did you stay at McQuaide?

Reynolds: In the second year they brought in what was really a school for army illiterates. And the coast artillery function was closed, apparently because it was by then obvious that the coast artillery was not so important in the pursuit of the war as had been thought. The school had their own librarian also, a woman named Helen Compton, who became a friend of mine, too. She had to try to find books that might have some interest for adult men who couldn't read--children's books for starters. This was a very, very difficult job. I think it was probably more difficult at that time than it would be today.

So then I decided that I wanted to leave. I did, but it took months for this to work out. Eventually I was transferred to Camp Beale in northern California.

McCreery: Before we move on to that, just as a practical matter, at the time you left Mill Valley, I gather you had to move down to Camp McQuaide. What were your arrangements?

Reynolds: First I stayed at a hotel, a very nice hotel, in Watsonville: the Resetar. There were two hotels, both of which had good dining rooms. Then I looked around for a room, and I found one. It was in a house belonging to a pleasant widow. The other roomers were another widow and a young teacher. The house was almost in town; so it was very convenient to restaurants and the garage. If you left your car on the street overnight in Watsonville it was ticketed.

I ate most of my meals at the camp in officers' mess. The librarians and the social workers had mess privileges. We ate very well. In fact, we had a wonderful chef until they promoted him to manager [laughter]. He didn't manage as well as he cooked. He used to serve at least once a week delicious abalone fresh out of Monterey Bay. Most of those officers would have fits! They didn't like it; they had never encountered it before. But I loved it [laughter].

You got to know some of the servicemen very well, the regular readers. I remember one man was trying to retain his Spanish and his French and his Latin, and he worked in the library on one or the other every night. He said he wasn't very popular with the other men in his outfit because he wouldn't fight with them over politics. He would say where he stood, but he would not defend his position or attack theirs. I suppose he told me what his position was, but I don't remember. You talked or listened to them a lot when they seemed to want it.

One young man--this was later up at Camp Beale--came in and talked to me every night. Of course, Camp Beale was a staging area; the men were going overseas. At the end of his stay his fiancée came out to see him and he brought her in to meet me. He told her how much I'd helped him just by letting him talk to somebody who was interested.

I remember another one up there who got left behind. He didn't know why; it was evidently a mistake. He just didn't get shipped out with his unit [laughter]. What happened to him eventually I've always wondered and never known--if they caught him up or sent him with another group. I think I left while he was still there.

[Interview 5: July 7, 1999] ##

McCreery: When we met last time, we were in the midst of talking about your service as a librarian for the U.S. Army during World War II. We've decided we wanted to talk a little bit more about the library at Camp McQuaide before we leave that subject. Would you describe for me the new library facility itself?

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Reynolds: In about six months, the new service club was finished, and we had an office, and a spacious main reading room, with enough wall shelving for our books. The new library was very nicely furnished by Barker Bros. of Los Angeles. When we got the cataloged books out on the shelves, we would often be told, "This is much better than the public library in Watsonville." That was not true, because Watsonville had a very good public library. But everything didn't look so spanking new. They could go into more depth on any subject than we could. We weren't asked to do that very often.

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Reynolds: The service club hostess and I would always have to speak to new groups of recruits who were shipped in. I think they found us a relief after the officers who told them what they could do and what they couldn't do. One time we talked to a group of engineers. They seemed to be an especially receptive audience. We learned that they came from Texas A&M, and somebody had sent them to us by mistake [laughter]. They were all engineers and they felt they were destined for higher things. I suppose they got to them eventually.

On the whole, the camp was a very friendly place. Many people had behind-the-back nicknames. Some of them were quite clever. I learned what mine was by accident. Someone had left a field telephone open, and I heard that "General Sherman is up there with Bubbles and Cuddles." So I inquired about it, because Bubbles didn't seem to me to be a nickname that suited me especially, and certainly Cuddles didn't. I learned that when I first arrived at the camp, someone had sent a very naïve young soldier up to see me, saying, "Hadn't you ever heard of Bubbles Reynolds? She is a well-known actress" or something [laughter]. I've forgotten exactly what I was supposed to be. Anyhow, it was only after the soldier saw me that he realized he had been duped.

The behind-the-back nicknames stuck. Well, when Helen Compton arrived they needed something that would rhyme with Bubbles, so that they could talk about General Sherman and Bubbles and Cuddles [laughter].

If such a thing occurred at Camp Beale, I never heard it. I think that life was a little grimmer there because the soldiers were nearer departure. It was exclusively a staging area when I was there. This meant that the camp libraries were filled night after night after night with soldiers who wanted to read. I didn't have as many conversations with soldiers. We were very busy all night answering their needs or questions, helping them, charging books to them.

Camp McQuaide obviously didn't need two librarians. Helen was the first to leave, and she finally ended up at the Oakland Army Base here and then I was transferred to Camp Beale.

McCreery: Would that have been in 1944?

Reynolds: Yes, late '44.

McCreery: They just chose Camp Beale as a place where they needed someone?

Reynolds: They needed a second librarian. There was a librarian there already, but they had two service clubs. Camp Beale was a much bigger camp. It's near Marysville. You could go into Marysville on your day off or up into the mountains; the Sierra were very near. There I also heard the band frequently, but in quite a different context. It was usually in the morning; whenever a shipment of soldiers went out, the band played them onto the train.

We had prisoners of war in the library there, cleaning up. You weren't supposed to talk to them, and most of them knew no English. The leader of the group assigned to the library and service club did know some English. They were men who had had a great deal of mechanical training, and so they could fix anything. If they saw something out of order, if your typewriter wasn't working properly, they wanted to fix it. This, of course, was late 1944 and early 1945. They would fall upon the *Life* magazine when it arrived, because it carried war pictures. They would listen when they had the chance to the radio; they were glued to it, trying to find out which places had been damaged.

McCreery: When you say the POWs [prisoners of war] didn't speak English, where were they from?

Reynolds: Germany.

McCreery: All of them?

Reynolds: All of those in the library were German. I've never heard that there were any others at Beale. They also worked in the officers' club serving in the mess, usually. They were extremely good workers, as one would expect. In fact, they moved the entire library from one service club to another for me when I was there. They did it very well. I left shortly after that. I remember the leader saying to me, "And now will we get another young lady?"

McCreery: How many POWs were there?

Reynolds: I don't know how many were in the camp. There were four or five in the library and service club. That was especially good duty for them. I think the best were picked for that, and for the officers' club.

McCreery: What was your living situation at Camp Beale?

Reynolds: At Camp Beale I lived in the--what did they call it? It was a guest house really. People who came to see their husbands or sons before they were shipped overseas stayed there. Never very many. There were little suites of two rooms for the hostess and the librarian, quite separate from the other guests.

McCreery: And your meals?

Reynolds: Officers' club. Someone from the motor pool would drive you around, because the distances were great. And also you didn't want to walk at night through what would sometimes be a deserted area. All of the place was not occupied at the same time.

I left Camp Beale in 1945. I took leave, but I did not return because I had an eye problem. I remained out of the library field until 1949. I did work at Stanford Hospital in San Francisco for a time--not as a librarian but in the medical clinic. I had gone there as a volunteer while I was having treatment. I didn't return to the library field until April of 1949. The easiest way to return seemed to be to go back to working for the army. Sergeant Coon, who had been our mentor at Fort Douglas, was now in charge of all of the libraries in this command, and the headquarters was San Francisco. I took a position down at Fort Ord in the station hospital. But the position was discontinued almost as soon as I got there. I think I was there about a month, or maybe two. Then there was an opening at the Presidio of San Francisco, so I went there--to the post library, which was quite separate from Sergeant Coon's office.

Reference Department at San Francisco State College, 1949-1953

Reynolds: Meanwhile I talked to Miss Coulter and various other people. Miss Coulter told me that Mr. Kenneth J. Brough had gone to San Francisco State [College]. She knew him because he had done some work in the library school as a GI doctoral candidate in the Stanford education department. He knew then that he wanted to be in charge of a library somewhere. She suggested that since Mr. Brough had just gone to State, there probably would be changes, and I should go over and apply to him. So I did, and I got a job almost immediately as an assistant in the reference department of San Francisco State College, as it was then called.

I should say something about the location. The college was at Buchanan and Haight Streets, a whole block that had formerly been the state's first normal school for the training of teachers. The library was in the basement of the big wooden building that also housed general administration and a few faculty offices. Maybe some teaching took place in that building. There were also two cafeterias: a small one for the faculty and a large one for the students. The small one accommodated about twenty diners, and so people who had offices nearby would regularly take their trays to their offices to leave space for the rest of us.

The reference department was in the middle of the main reading room, probably once an auditorium. Library offices were up a few stairs in what appeared to have been a small stage. Reference books were around the wall, and also bound periodicals. In an adjacent room, which was actually the room through which you entered, you found the card catalog, the circulation desk, a large number of stacks, and a reading area. It was terribly crowded. On Friday when the catalog department released new books you felt like screaming. Where were you going to put these things? How were you going to get them off your desk onto some shelves?

Of course the library was expanding greatly at that time. By the time we moved out, which was four years later, we had a very good reference collection.

McCreery: Did Kenneth J. Brough hire you personally?

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: Do you remember when you first went to interview with him?

Reynolds: Yes, indeed I do. Sitting at a desk outside was someone who tried to stop me [laughter]. He would have liked to conduct the interview himself. He was the assistant librarian. I saw Mr. Brough in a very small office. A very pleasant man. The backdrop was the dome of the city hall; you could see it very clearly from his office. I don't think he told me immediately that he would hire me; I know I had to write an application. He was a graduate of Grinnell College, and he had had some library experience before World War II. I'm not sure of its exact nature, how much of it was college teaching and how much was library. But I know that he and his wife looked back on a very pleasant life in New Mexico. Grinnell is in Iowa, and he was a native of Iowa.

McCreery: Did you have any further roadblocks from the assistant librarian?

Reynolds: No. He accepted me. We got along very well. He was just trying to find a place for himself, I think.

McCreery: Did you know anyone else on the staff at the time you started there?

Reynolds: No, I didn't know anyone on the staff. I think one or maybe two of my classmates had worked there earlier.

I should say that the library consisted also of a children's school library, which was in the Frederick Burke elementary school, then on the lower part of that same block. There was also, down there somewhere, a library for the department of education, which was quite large. Then there was a music library; I've forgotten where that was in the block. The music department was very active, and I think pretty good.

After I started work, I would be sent down there when the music librarian was away. This happened fairly frequently. She was a violinist and frequently played in local orchestras that needed a substitute. Everything in the library was completely cataloged and classified. But she paid no attention to call numbers; she arranged books and scores according to her own lights, which meant that it was a nerve-wracking place to work because you had no key to locations. More than once someone came in wanting parts for a waiting orchestra. I would have a dickens of a time finding them. Before I had been at State very long I was promoted to head the reference department, and I didn't have to substitute in music.

I should also say that finding space for classes in this expanding college was a great problem. They rented facilities

from all the churches in the area. Sometimes when you had to go to talk to a class you would find yourself in a church. The state college paid off the mortgages of most of the churches in the area.

McCreery: Was that often you were called upon to speak to classes?

Reynolds: Very frequently.

McCreery: Would that be just general discussion of how to use the library services?

Reynolds: It would depend on what was wanted. Sometimes it would be just that. Sometimes the professor would go off and leave you with a class. That is a dirty trick because a class is pretty apt to decide they don't need to pay attention to you unless there is a specific assignment. Sometimes the assignment was to help with term papers. Then you would get good attention.

I remember one class when some students got out their lunches and started to eat. I told them to put the lunches away and listen. Today I suppose you might hesitate to do that, but I didn't hesitate. I usually had quite good attention.

McCreery: How did you like being at a college library for a change?

Reynolds: Oh, I liked it very much. We had a lot of interesting faculty. Many of them had just received their doctorates and were new brooms, eager to make names for themselves. Many went on to other places. I remember some of them particularly. Since I was just talking about music, I might mention Cy Trobbe. He was not a young man. He had been in San Francisco orchestras for a long time. When I was a youngster and had my first radio, a crystal set, he was playing at one of the radio stations in San Francisco. The students at State liked him. He often got them jobs playing in theater orchestras.

I remember seeing him leading the orchestra at the Curran [Theater] years after I left San Francisco. At Christmastime, the campus was deserted, he would come around with a bag of handkerchiefs and leave one on each desk in the offices and in the library. A very nice little touch. He had a great fund of stories about his backstage experiences with the artists who came to San Francisco.

Mrs. Ruth Witt-Diamant was a regular patron. She taught English and later helped found the Poetry Center. She would come in attended by her two dogs--I think they were pugs. John

Gutmann was another regular. He was a German who had escaped Hitler early on and had been at San Francisco State a long time. He taught art history. He was also a photographer of distinction; he had a great deal of notice in his later years.

McCreery: Tell me about that promotion to chief of reference services. How did that happen?

Reynolds: Perhaps before I do that I should mention one more person. His name was Tom Lantos, who is one of our California [congressional] representatives. He was teaching economics and we did a lot of work for him.

McCreery: Did you get to know him at all?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. You got to know most of them because it was still a small college. I might say also that J. Paul Leonard, the president, wanted to make San Francisco State into a model small college. That was his ambition, but he wasn't able to do it because the state regulations did not permit it. But San Francisco State was at that time a model which the other state colleges were following because he had such a reputation. He became discouraged while I was still there, and went off to head the American University in Beirut.

But to answer your question about promotion, Mr. Brough just decided to shake things up. He had had some problems in the catalog department, which did not affect me. He took Mrs. Virginia Reuss, who had been the reference librarian--she considered herself equally competent as a cataloger, and I'm sure she was--he put her in charge of the catalog department, and that left me, by far the most experienced person, in the reference department. So he put me in charge. The actual title, chief of reference services, came when we moved out to the new building, I think. But I was in charge of the service much earlier. He hired two young women: Gertrude Ross, also called Betsy, and Marion Blackie, who was relatively inexperienced. Betsy had been a WAVE and a librarian before the war. She was working in Portland [Oregon] when she decided to come to San Francisco. So Mr. Brough engaged her. Both of them arrived before Christmas and were put immediately into the catalog [department] and then switched out to reference.

McCreery: This would have been in 1950? That's the year you were promoted, it says here.

Reynolds: Yes. They arrived, I think, in late '49. They made this move in 1950.

McCreery: How large was your reference staff overall after they arrived?

Reynolds: The three of us.

McCreery: Oh, that was it then--the two of them and you.

Reynolds: Yes, June Naboisek, who died just recently, was in the reference department, but for some reason Mae Durham [Roger], who was the children's librarian down at Frederick Burke, wanted to be away for a year--I have forgotten why. Anyhow, there was a position there, and June wanted to try it. So she went down there.

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McCreery: We were just talking about how your reference staff at San Francisco State was yourself and the two others who came. You were saying that Mae Durham had been children's librarian down at Frederick Burke and wanted to take some time off. Was it someone from San Francisco State who covered for her then?

Reynolds: June Naboisek had been in the reference department along with me when Mrs. Reuss was in charge. But June wanted to go down to Frederick Burke to see how she liked children's work, and that left the two vacancies, so then we three--Betsy, Marion, and I--ran the reference department. That was quite adequate because it was a commuting college largely; therefore we offered almost no service at night. After five o'clock there would be one professional person in charge of the whole library, and everybody took a turn, even Mr. Brough. Maybe once a month or something like that that you'd be there. With three people we were well staffed during the daytime. Of course we had documents, that is, government publications, U.S. and California, to take care of. Somebody had ordered the complete U.N. [United Nations] output, which we didn't need and soon reduced to selected series. It was a fairly active department. I don't remember how many students were on campus, but certainly they were in the low thousands, and the reference department was always busy.

McCreery: Was the library open on weekends?

Reynolds: Saturdays, yes. But what happened on Sundays I don't remember at this point. It was only a question of the evenings that everyone seemed to be involved in.

At this time Mr. Brough was starting to plan, along with the state architect, the library which was to go up on the new campus, way out near the ocean. One of his visitors was Father

[William J.] Monihan of the University of San Francisco, who was then building the Gleeson Library. He would come in and ask for Mr. Brough. He was very, almost painfully, shy, this young Jesuit priest. I'm sure that nobody would have guessed that he would become a very successful fundraiser [laughter]. That was my first acquaintance with him. Later we came to be friends.

Months before the new library was completed, I was assigned to plan how the collection would be divided into five departments--both the reference collection and the general collection, as well as the actual physical shelving and the reference service that would be offered. Mr. Brough decided on the departments. He had a science department which was to be on the main floor along with an information desk near the card catalog. On the second and third floors were the other departments: social sciences, humanities, education, and art, including music. This took a lot of doing. It meant going out and measuring the shelves, figuring it all out. Betsy, the assistant reference librarian, was a very good checker; she checked all my arithmetic to be sure we would have adequate space for all classes of books.

Teaching Reference at UC Extension; Berkeley Public Library, 1953-1954

Reynolds: At this same time I had been asked if I would teach a course in reference for the University Extension. This course had been asked for, actually, by some people in the Oakland Public Library.

McCreery: Just to clarify--this is University Extension for San Francisco State?

Reynolds: No. University of California. So I had quite a load at that time.

McCreery: Were there particular changes that you wanted to make in reference services at San Francisco State?

Reynolds: It was a question of developing rather than changing. It took quite a bit of organization to operate in such close quarters as we had. I was not really interested in the way the library was going to change. We had a nice busy reference desk, but there was not yet enough work to split us up into separate departments. It was also hard for the uninitiated to know

which department to go to. Mr. Brough's first thought was to put me into literature because of my literary background, and I said, "But that's the slowest department. Social science is where the action is." So he let me have that. But even that I did not find satisfactory, although I didn't say so. Betsy Ross was put in charge of the science section, found it too dull, and went on to a career in the outstanding science-technology department at the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has been my good friend ever since.

First, I should say that I taught over here at UC in Wheeler Hall--very likely in the room in which I had my first English class when I was a freshman [laughter]. I had a large class; there must have been at least thirty in it, many but not all from the Oakland Public--although people came from other libraries too. I remember one student in particular who was a member of the Oakland staff and of the Beat generation. He died a few years ago, and his death was written up in the paper, so he achieved a certain fame at least. But all the people in the Oakland Public knew him. He was one of those students who has to call attention to himself in class by asking questions, and every time he asked a question I would get this sea of upturned faces, trying to see how I would handle this problem-person.

McCreery: What was his name?

Reynolds: His name was John Montgomery. He was not one of the best known of the Beat people, but he was in the group. I used to meet him occasionally on the streets in Berkeley and have a conversation with him.

It was an interesting class. It's very interesting to teach people who are in the field, because they can add quite a lot to a class if you give them a chance. They often would draw you out as an instructor in ways that a class of people who have not yet worked are not equipped to do.

McCreery: To clarify, these were people who had not had full librarianship training?

Reynolds: Most of them had not, but there were one or two who were brushing up. The field of reference changes; you have to keep up with it. I don't know how it is today, but as time went on the supply of reference tools increased greatly.

McCreery: How did you land that teaching job?

Reynolds: Miss Coulter recommended me. It would not have occurred to me otherwise, because I was busy. And I might say that when we finally moved the library [at San Francisco State] I was in charge of the move. On that same day, it just happened that I moved from an apartment in San Francisco to this house. I survived.

At San Francisco State I discovered that I really did not like being in charge of all these people operating in various locations. I had always had the idea in the back of my mind, probably because of my experience in Sausalito and Mill Valley, that I would sometime go back to public library work. So when Berkeley Public [Library] offered me a job for the third time it was tempting, and I accepted.

McCreery: Was that view borne out then at San Francisco State, that you somehow preferred the public library venue?

Reynolds: Yes. I still thought that I would. Although I liked San Francisco State, I thought I'd like to go back to a public library, especially when I realized that I didn't really like working in the new building as well as I had in the old building. I was ready to go. I left there toward the end of 1953.

McCreery: May I just ask you--I take it they used the Library of Congress classification system at San Francisco State?

Reynolds: No. I think it was still the Dewey system. Whether they changed later or not, I don't know. There was a period when it became fashionable to change whole libraries. I think that reached its apex a little later, after I had left there.

McCreery: So you had mainly been working with Dewey Decimal throughout your own professional career?

Reynolds: The Dewey system entirely. I have taught in libraries that had the other system, but I've never actually worked in one.

McCreery: Continue then about being invited to work at Berkeley Public.

Reynolds: Yes. I went there at the end of 1953, and I stayed exactly one year. I found that it didn't offer what I had been led to expect, so I left. Meanwhile, in the fall of 1953 I taught in San Francisco for Extension Division again, and also in the fall of 1954 in Berkeley.

McCreery: While you were working in Berkeley Public you also did this teaching?

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: Was that in the evenings, do you recall?

Reynolds: It was always in the evening. Most UC Extension classes at that time were. A member of the Extension Division staff was usually on duty to see that things were happening as scheduled and to see that you had enough students. I think the magic number was twelve. It was Extension Division's idea to continue the course because I had had so many students; they thought there was a market. And there was for the class in Berkeley. The class in San Francisco in the fall of 1953 I remember well attracted eleven students. Each one wanted it very much, so they all went down and told the Extension officer that they would pay for an extra person. Whether she let them off without paying or whether they actually paid, I've never known. But that is a problem with University Extension teaching. Instructors sometimes prepare only for the first class and wait and see what's going to happen.

McCreery: It was in fact the same course that you had taught there before.

Reynolds: Yes. It was beginning reference and bibliography.

McCreery: In general, how did you like teaching?

Reynolds: I loved it. I'll say this about it, however: I think you're much better at teaching if you're working at the same time, because you have all sorts of experiences that feed right into what you're teaching. But of course you can't do that indefinitely; it's too tiring to teach at night and work in the daytime.

McCreery: Was it just one course at a time then?

Reynolds: For the Extension Division I never taught anything but beginning reference. I did it three times, however.

McCreery: Would it meet once a week in the evening? Twice a week?

Reynolds: Once a week in the evening. Almost all the students had daytime jobs. I warned them in advance that they needed to find a library with a good reference collection that they could use, and be sure that they had time to go to the library and use it. They came from various parts of the Bay Area. Some people were taking it just because of interest. But very often I had very good students who were re-tooling, and some people

who were fairly well known. One was a reference librarian for Shell Oil.

McCreery: Were there particular aspects of reference and bibliography that were problematic to teach or memorable in some other way?

Reynolds: I was never so happy teaching science, but that was because I felt it was my weakest point. I had to depend on information from other people. Strangely enough, when I was an undergraduate here at Berkeley, I was one of a number of sophomores chosen by lot to take a two-day examination to test our science background. To my amazement, I came out fairly high. The reason must have been that I had had a wider variety of sciences, because I had had physics, chemistry, and biology in high school, and in college astronomy and zoology. Also psychology, if you want to consider that a science. I was always happier with the arts and literature and the social sciences.

McCreery: Did your students have any personal interests that surprised you in the reference area?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. I always asked them to tell me on a sheet of paper something about themselves--their background, their interests, why they were there. I remember someone who was working in the library at Golden Gate University. Another was the librarian for the teachers' library--Mrs. Protopopoff. I run into her occasionally.

McCreery: I don't know about the teachers' library.

Reynolds: It's something to do with the California Teachers' Association. I don't know exactly what. I suppose she told me, but it was a long time ago.

III LIBRARIAN OF MILLS COLLEGE, 1955-1976

Evelyn Steel Little, Librarian at Mills, 1937-1955

McCreery: How did you proceed then, knowing that you did not want to stay at Berkeley Public, and you had this teaching on the side?

Reynolds: It happened that I had a conversation with Miss [Annette] Goodwin, who was the secretary for Dean [J. Periam] Danton in the library school. She said, "You know Mrs. Little is retiring at Mills. Why don't you go out there?" It had never occurred to me to go to Mills. I had been on the campus a couple of times with alumnae friends, and I think once for a library meeting. I knew it was a very attractive place, but I had never been in the library. So I decided to go out and have a conversation with Mrs. Little.

Perhaps this is as good a time as any to say something about her because she taught in the library school at Berkeley. She had done that before I knew her. She was a graduate of UC with the class of 1913. It's a famous class because it was President [Robert Gordon] Sproul's class. She was well known as an undergraduate. I remember one of my mother's friends who was in the same class told me about Mrs. Little. She was women's editor of *The Daily Cal*, and women's editor of the *Occident* literary magazine. When she was a senior, she won the Partheneia. That, as you may know, was a contest for the best women's pageant, which was then performed in Faculty Glade.

She was also an excellent student: she graduated with honors in Greek and in English, and a Phi Beta Kappa key. The next year, she got a master's degree in English. Mr. [Harold L.] Leupp, the associate librarian--later he was the university librarian--asked her to come and start an exchange department to receive foreign university publications in exchange for UC publications. She did that and left to become librarian of Technical High School in Oakland.

Then a Scottish cousin came to California on his way to India, and they fell in love. So on she sailed away alone, to Calcutta, and they were married in Bombay and lived there for several years. They traveled widely. He was a barrister--I had forgotten to say that.

Then one summer they were playing golf in Ceylon [Sri Lanka], and she was hit in the eye by a golf ball. It shattered her glasses and drove the fragments into her eye. There was a Viennese eye surgeon there, but even so he was not able to save the eye, and she was henceforth blind in that eye. She had a good glass eye so that you didn't know it, but nevertheless she did not have sight.

McCreery: That must have happened when she was still quite young?

Reynolds: Quite young, yes. She was married in her twenties. She might have been in her early thirties; I don't remember exactly what the date was.

Shortly thereafter she came home to Berkeley because her father was in ill health. While she was here she received a cable that her husband had drowned. He was a very strong swimmer. He swam alone. There it was. So she went back to India to close up their house and their affairs, and she came back to Berkeley faced with the problem of what to do with the rest of her life.

Mr. Mitchell, an old friend--he must have known her from the days when she was young and he had just come to Berkeley from Stanford--suggested that she go to the University of Michigan and get a doctorate. They were offering a program in which you could combine work in librarianship with English or comparative literature. So she did it. Five years--she got a bachelor's degree in librarianship and a master's degree and then the doctorate. I don't know how she could have had the courage to start off with one less-than-perfect eye to do all that, but she never complained. I never heard her complain about her eyesight or anything.

After she got the doctorate, she was teaching librarianship at Emory University when Aurelia Henry Reinhardt invited her to come to Mills. The idea was so appealing that she accepted at once, even though she had never been on the campus. Of course President Reinhardt was very good at attracting people who would be interested in what she wanted to do. Mrs. Reinhardt was then at work building the college. I should also say I call her Mrs. Reinhardt--I call Mrs. Little "Mrs." At that time, and even after I came to Mills, women with a doctorate in

literature and men with a doctorate in the liberal arts were very often addressed informally as "Mrs." or "Mr."

McCreery: You say in literature and so on as opposed to the sciences?

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: Those would be addressed as--

Reynolds: They were more apt to be addressed as "Dr.", although it depended on the person. Dr. [Alfred] Neumeyer, who was a German art historian at Mills, was always called "Dr." Germans, I think, set greater store by these titles than Americans did at that time. Many people called Mr. Lynn White, president of Mills, "Mr." Miss [Mary Woods] Bennett, who was the dean of the faculty and had a perfectly good doctorate was very often called "Miss". In fact, I've been in classes at Berkeley in which a professor addressed as Dr. would be very apt to say "Mr., if you please."

McCreery: Do you know what year Dr. Little came to Mills as librarian?

Reynolds: Yes. She came to Mills in 1936. She was always in demand as a speaker. As a matter of fact, I think I wrote in my little book about the first time I heard her speak. While I was in Sausalito, I drove Mr. and Mrs. Sayers up to Lokoya Lodge in Napa County. Mrs. Sayers and Mrs. Little were on the same program. Of course it never occurred to me that I might follow this lady at Mills one day.

[Interview 6: July 12, 1999] ##

McCreery: When we left off last time we were talking about the career of Evelyn Steel Little. You were just at the point of talking about her arrival at Mills College in the thirties.

Reynolds: Yes. She actually came to Mills in 1936 to replace Flora Belle Ludington, who had gone off to head the library at Mt. Holyoke. I'm sure that Mrs. Reinhardt wanted Mrs. Little on hand in order to have her succeed Elizabeth Gray Potter, who would retire the following year. Indeed, in 1937, Mrs. Little became librarian at Mills.

She was an immediate success. Her personality and her interests suited the Mills campus life, which was in many ways book-centered. Mrs. Reinhardt emphasized the importance of books and reading. Rosalind Keep was operating her Eucalyptus Press with the Mills College imprint. Albert Bender, who was

chauffeured usually by Ansel Adams, drove onto the campus at least once or twice a week bringing gifts of fine press books.

There was even a student bibliophile society, and there was a student contest already established for the best student library. I guess I should say that Mrs. Potter, who had been in the American Library in Paris and who was very much interested also in rare books, fostered this emphasis. Mrs. Little went ahead also to develop student libraries in the halls. Her talents for reading and speaking, and her general personality, were very well suited to a campus with this kind of atmosphere.

She had a fine background. She had lived in India, she had traveled widely in Europe. She had the "seeing eye," and she was able to describe in a telling fashion things that she had seen. She was also outgoing and friendly. She instituted programs in her house. Every week in the evening, one night a week, she had a "read and share" gathering, which was attended by anywhere from ten to thirty students and faculty. Staff members have told me that Mrs. Little possessed a really remarkable ability to take a new book home at night and return the next morning with a very nicely worded and telling assessment of the book's importance, its value, or its meaning.

I've also been told by alumnae that later on when the Japanese internment occurred, she did a great deal to make the Japanese whom she knew--one of them, Ida Shumanuchi, was her secretary; others were students at Mills--happier or at least more comfortable, should we say, in their internment down at Tanforan. Even much later, when she was retired, I remember how she used to go to the hospital to see the retainer of an old friend of hers. She had not known the retainer, but the friend was long gone and there was nobody to keep an eye on this person.

I should go on with her career. She taught book selection at the University of California library school from 1938 to 1940, and in two summer sessions at UCLA. Then in 1943 she went to London as assistant director of the American Library. She was by birth and marriage Scottish and English. So she wanted to share in the fortunes of these people. When she returned, she gave as a speech and the Eucalyptus Press published the story of her experiences there. It's called *Books Under Fire*.

On her return, Lynn White, the president, invited her to be his dean of the faculty. She was in that position for quite a little while, and she even managed while she was doing that to

be president of CLA, the California Library Association. She had been a founder earlier of the university and research libraries section [of CLA, also known as CURLS]. But in 1948 she had a heart attack, and in 1951 a second and more severe attack reduced her activities to the library.

I should say also that one reason she was able to do all this was that Helen Blasdale, whom she had hired as a reference librarian, became associate librarian and managed the library during this period. In 1951 Helen went to the University of California at Davis, which was just then adjusting to its new status as a full branch of the university, and not just an agricultural college. So Helen's background in the social sciences and the fine arts was particularly desirable, and she also had earned a second year master's degree at the University of California School of Librarianship.

An Interview and Offer at Mills; Early Impressions of the Campus

Reynolds: When I went out to see Mrs. Little in 1955, in the spring, I found her in an attractive, small office just off the circulation and catalog areas. There were hand-blocked curtains hanging on the windows, a gift, I later learned, from her sister. There were also five beautiful cloisonné figurines standing on a bookcase. They were one of Albert Bender's gifts to the college, and I enjoyed them in my office as long as I was there at Mills.

Mrs. Little showed me the library. The Julia Morgan portion had been built with Carnegie [Corporation] money. It was one of Julia Morgan's early commissions, completed in 1906, just in time to survive the earthquake. For several years the first floor accommodated the offices of the college. The second floor was designed as the library. Two additions had been made to that building in 1929 and 1939. And just completed in 1954 was another addition, a large stack wing connected to the existing structure by an attractive entrance foyer. The new area provided four floors of stacks and pleasant reading areas carrels. The long wall on the campus side was all bricks and glass so that the next time additional space was needed, it could be moved toward the oval and replaced in a style that would harmonize with Julia Morgan's original building. The architect was Milton Pfleuger.

The interior of the new wing was very attractive, and it was finished in light colors, some of them suggested by the bark and leaves of the eucalyptus trees that were ever-present on the campus--more so then than now. They had been planted during the era when eucalyptus trees were planted all over the East Bay hills.

McCreery: Do you want to tell me more about when you first came to interview with Mrs. Little?

Reynolds: Yes. She showed me all of this that I'm just describing. But it was the Julia Morgan room that captured my interest. It was large, it was very spacious in feeling, and the bookcases and the whole design reminded one of the Bodleian and other libraries at Oxford. Doubtless these were Julia Morgan's inspiration.

The room had recently been stripped of all the clutter that had accumulated during the years when it was the main part of the college library. The five exhibition cases--quite beautiful cases--that Albert Bender had given were ranged down the middle of the room. They contained, I'm sure, an interesting exhibition, but what it was I no longer remember.

I fell in love with the room and I thought, "Oh, if I could work here!" I liked Mrs. Little and also her sister Constance Steel, whom I met shortly after I was appointed. A little later, I had them here to tea with my mother, who was charmed because they were interested in everything. But I'm getting ahead of my story. I didn't take long to consider the position. I applied.

In April I was summoned to be interviewed by Dean Bennett, Mary Woods Bennett, who was a remarkable dean of the faculty. When I passed her interview, she called President Lynn White, who saw me immediately. I think they had done a fair amount of inquiring, et cetera, earlier. He talked to me about the library. He was quite frank, saying that the college's financial position was not good at that time, that they hoped to find someone who would throw in her lot with them--I think those were his words. He said that the librarian might have as much need as any member of the faculty of the security that tenure gives. Of course, he was right; it can happen that way, but fortunately for me it didn't. I never had any censorship problems at Mills. But because it was a possibility--and I do remember at least one visitor who said to me one day after walking through the periodical stack and seeing *The Nation* and *The New Republic*, she hoped that none of her auntie's money was

going to those periodicals. But that was the closest I ever came to it.

He offered me the title of associate professor with the idea that in three years--the usual term--I would get tenure. What else did he say? Oh, yes--he startled me by saying that he understood that I had an aged mother, and therefore he would not ask me to move out to the campus because aged people should not be disturbed. I was startled because it had never occurred to me that living on campus might be part of it. But at that time there was a great deal of emphasis on campus community life, so they did try to get as many faculty people on campus as they could. They had no problem doing that because financially it was usually advantageous. The quarters were very pleasant and there was a considerable variety of buildings, including some very charming houses. In fact, on retirement, Mrs. Little and her sister offered to build a home on the campus which they would will to the college, but their offer was not accepted.

I was to start on July 1.

McCreery: Did you have any hesitation about this job?

Reynolds: No, I didn't. I didn't think the college was going to fail [laughter].

The next thing that happened--I was invited to come out to have tea with the staff. There were five people--six actually, but one position was being discontinued. Mary Manning Cook, later Mrs. Wale, was the reference librarian. Although she was still on sick leave after an illness, she walked up to the campus from her home to welcome me, bringing some flowers. Katherine Brose, the loan librarian, had been at Mills in that capacity for many years and stayed until she reached retirement age in 1970. Helen Wik, whose husband was a professor of American history, was part-time. She was still there when I retired. Vivian Smith, the librarian's secretary, was also still at Mills when I retired. Geraldine Spare, the cataloger, resigned before long to start a career working with cerebral palsy victims. She herself was one.

On the first day I came to work, which was July 1--well, I should say that before that I was invited out when summer session started to a tea that marked the beginning of summer session. The first people I met at the tea were Darius and Madeleine Milhaud, who participated always in the life of the college. I didn't get the name, but I knew who this obviously

French couple must be. That was very, very typical of the way the college operated.

I don't remember whom else I met at the time, but when I came on July 1 there was a plant on my desk from Mrs. Little and a bouquet of flowers from Mr. Ratky. Mr. Ratky was the janitor, a Yugoslavian who had been at Mills many years--he was then an old man. He remembered a lot of the faculty when they were young. He dusted every book in the library once a year. I soon became aware of this because when you went into the stack, you would very often find his dust rag left as a marker at the spot where he had left off. He kept the library and the book stacks in splendid condition. He had a very beautiful garden and a nice house near Mills, which I had to visit before very long.

And on my desk was a letter which started out, "Though unknown to you, I am a very old friend of the college." It was from Edith Perkins Cunningham of Boston, who had come to know Mrs. Reinhardt a good many years before, at a time when Mrs. Cunningham was living in Santa Barbara. She had become a friend also of Mrs. Little, and she became my friend too.

She sent us every book she read. She lived in the Bellevue Hotel, just across Beacon Street from the Boston Athenaeum. She usually wrote in the books, and they would arrive three or four a week, because by this time she was pretty much incapacitated. She rarely went out, and she had a nurse full time. Theodora Perry, a friend who had a bookshop nearby, brought her all of the new books that promised to be interesting. For us, she was a splendid source of new books. Mrs. Little had kept up a very long and full correspondence with Mrs. Cunningham. I was involved in that too [laughter].

She sent me, in this first letter, a check for 100 dollars --which was probably about 500 in today's money--to use to make my office more comfortable. The office was already completely comfortable, and I, who had hitherto worked mostly for public institutions, couldn't consider doing that. I soon discovered that a microcard reader would enable us to get a file of a journal that was currently wanted, so that's what we did. Mrs. Cunningham referred to it as the "contraption" [laughter]. She wrote very well, very interesting letters, and in fact many are in the college archives. She was not an Adams, as she once said, but she was certainly extremely "well-connected."

Someone called "Cabot" came around to tell her how to vote. The president of Harvard was also a friend of hers. This I cannot forget because some years later when I was going to

Boston she invited me and my mother to stay at the Chilton Club as her guests, which we did very happily. I went in to see her twice in the few days we were there. Once she asked me--this was at the time that John F. Kennedy was being nominated for president--"Are you a Republican?" I said, "No, I'm a Democrat. That's quite an admission here, isn't it?" She said, "Yes, it is. Only the lower classes are Democrats." [laughter] I couldn't let that go, so I replied, "Well, in the West most academic people are Democrats." When I reported this to President [Charles Easton] Rothwell, he said, "Elizabeth, you could have said across the country [not just the West]." I said, "Yes, but I couldn't remember what [Harvard] President [Nathan Marsh] Pusey's politics might be." [laughter]

She was a splendid person, and later on we had an exhibition in her honor. Although unknown in person, her name was familiar to lots of readers because she had written in virtually all of the books she sent.

McCreery: How had she become connected with Mills?

Reynolds: Because of her interest in Mrs. Reinhardt. Mrs. Reinhardt had a gift for making what she was doing at Mills alive and interesting to people. Did I tell you earlier that I remember her coming to my school, the old Mill Grammar School in Mill Valley, with some students who sang for us and she talked about Mills?

McCreery: Oh, my. She started getting them young, didn't she? [laughter]

Reynolds: Yes. I think too much credit can hardly be given to her for the fact that the college achieved a lot of success rather early in her years at Mills.

First Years as Mills Librarian: Staff, Collection, Faculty

McCreery: Perhaps we'll return to the time when you first started as librarian at Mills. If you don't mind my asking, do you recall your salary when you started in 1955?

Reynolds: It was $5,000.

McCreery: That was associate professor rank, and then as you said, some three years later you were promoted.

Reynolds: No, I wasn't promoted--I was given tenure. If you had the rank of associate professor, as I did, you didn't have to be promoted to get tenure. But you had to be re-hired after the third year.

That was probably the going rate at the time, because the college always allowed you to offer the going salary rate when you hired someone new. The problem usually was that there would be somebody of the same rank already on the staff who was making and deserved more, but the college couldn't afford it. Of course at this time, nobody knew what anybody else was making. Most of the women on the staff were what one might call ladies, and they would never dream of talking about their salaries.

McCreery: Or those of other people.

Reynolds: No. So it worked. It used to bother me quite a lot, even though the college was in rather strict circumstances.

McCreery: More so than it had been earlier, I take it?

Reynolds: They were getting out of it. They were working very hard to get out of it, and they did eventually.

McCreery: Your salary of $5,000 covered a year-round appointment?

Reynolds: It was a year-round appointment, with a month's vacation and a week at Christmastime.

McCreery: I was just curious how the summers worked, and so on.

Reynolds: That was the situation for all professionals--a month's vacation.

McCreery: And you had that staff of five people. You said the position of one of the six who had been there disappeared.

Reynolds: The sixth person I didn't mention because, as scheduled, she left immediately.

McCreery: You had a staff of five.

Reynolds: Yes. And of course a lot of students.

McCreery: Yes. I did want to ask you about the use of student employees.

Reynolds: We've always had student employees. Of course the trouble is that in a college you lose them all at Christmastime when the

mail floods in, and you lose them in the summertime also. But there usually would be some who would want to work during the summer, some who lived nearby.

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McCreery: You were going to tell me the condition of the Mills library itself and the staff when you arrived.

Reynolds: Yes. They had had a hard two years moving out of the builders' way and packing up and unpacking amid noise and dirt, meanwhile giving full service to the campus. There were great backlogs. Documents, for example. Periodicals with missing issues. All this was happening while staff was declining, really.

In the basement of the then-Gray Hall of Science there were 20,000 volumes, 10,000 of which were gifts that hadn't been checked, and 10,000 candidates, possibly, for withdrawal. President Reinhardt's library had come in; it included thousands of books, many of which were duplicates, because she had acquired lots of books partly--not only her own interests, and Dante was her special interest, and probably one of the most important books in the collection still today is her 1481 Dante with illustrations attributed to Botticelli. But she purchased lots of new books as they came out, partly getting material for the many talks that she gave. Her notes would sometimes be in them. Professor [Francis H.] Herrick, an historian and a great reader, later spent a lot of time for us going through these books, assessing which ones we needed to add to the collection. It was, in a word, a "gentleman's library," but we didn't have room ever to organize a gentleman's library. That was a little farfetched for us.

We also had Mrs. Reinhardt's papers, not just her books. They were closed for a hundred years after her birth, so we weren't concerned at that point. Albert Bender's papers came with his library, which was left to us on his death in 1941. Some of his books had been dealt with, but not his papers. The State of California had made us a partial depository for state publications, and we also received a select group of United Nations documents. I might say that the college had acquired many years earlier through Mrs. Potter a set of League of Nations documents, and it was that set that was lent to the United Nations when they were meeting in San Francisco.

McCreery: I also wanted to ask you a little bit more about the staff of five that you inherited when you came to Mills. Do you recall whether they had formal training in librarianship?

Reynolds: Oh, yes. Katherine Brose, who was the eldest in point of service, had majored in English at the University of Iowa. She had a Phi Beta Kappa key. She had been her class valedictorian when she was in grade school or high school, maybe both. She had had a fellowship at the University of Illinois long before I came, working for a master's degree, but she never completed her thesis. She was very bright, but not inclined to step out and take risks of any sort. She was an outgoing person, very friendly. She shared as much as possible in the joys and sorrows of everyone she knew, including the students who worked for her and the students whom she served. She was a member of a class--the classes at Mills regularly elected someone on campus as an honorary member. It must have been the class of 1949 because they're having their fiftieth reunion this year, and one of them recently spoke to me about Katherine Brose, wanting to know where she is. She is still in a nursing home in Dubuque, Iowa, her home town.

McCreery: What position did she hold at the library?

Reynolds: She was the loan librarian. The whole thing--all the loans, the reserves, everything--always operated perfectly. She wouldn't let a mistake occur [laughter]. She used a double charging system that showed books in circulation by both call numbers and by borrowers' names.

McCreery: What about the other staff?

Reynolds: Mary Manning Cook--later Mrs. George Wale--had graduated from Wellesley with a major in art history. One of her professors at Wellesley was Alfred Barr, who soon became very important in the development of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She graduated with a major in art history and was offered a fellowship at the Fogg Museum at Harvard for the next year. But her father, a physician in the Public Health Service, was stationed in Holland. She and her sister wanted to spend a year with him in Europe.

Well, this was 1929, so when she came back not only was the Harvard opportunity gone but so was everything else that she might do. Eventually she worked at the Library of Congress for two or three years, where her training was very good. Then she met her husband, an Australian and a dentist, and they went to Australia, hoping for greater opportunities, but they discovered that life was even harder there. They returned to the United States.

When she was living here in Berkeley after the birth of her son, Thomas Manning Cook, she wanted to go back to art history.

But the University of California offered nothing in art history at that point. In fact, both Berkeley and Stanford came to art history rather late. Mills offered both graduate and undergraduate work in Oriental as well as Western art history, the latter under Dr. Alfred Neumeyer, who was a German scholar. She decided to register at Mills and became one of his best students, I'm sure. After she had completed her master's degree while she had both a young son and daughter, Barbara Cook Barnes (graduate of Mills, 1960) to take care of, the college offered her a lectureship in art history. She enjoyed that, but soon Pearl harbor brought financial problems to Mills. Parents who were terrified that the San Francisco area might be a target for Japanese bombs pulled their daughters out of the college, causing immediate financial problems. Among the various cutbacks was Mary's lectureship.

The library found a spot for her replacing Mrs. Little's charming Japanese secretary, who was shortly sent to a relocation center. At the encouragement of Mrs. Little and others on the staff, who thought she would be a splendid permanent addition, she went to the UC School of Librarianship. She graduated in 1945 and immediately went to work as reference librarian.

Another victim of cutbacks after Pearl Harbor was Mrs. Louise Farrow Barr, who had been the devoted curator of rare books since 1925. She was the author of *The Presses of Northern California, 1900-1933*, a book originally her M.A. thesis prepared under Miss Sisler in the second-year library school program. Gradually Mrs. Cook began to do whatever was needed with the rare books, but because of time constraints this was rather minimal.

Miss Brose and Mrs. Cook were the two main people. My secretary, Vivian Smith, was a main person too. She was an extremely accurate bookkeeper, and her job was very complicated. Not only did we keep track of purchases by discipline, but there were always lots of gift funds against which orders had to be carefully posted.

Mrs. Helen Wik, a part-time librarian, was going to be on leave immediately for the year because her husband, Professor Reynold Wik, had been awarded a Fulbright, and they were going to Germany for the year. I taught Vivian, my secretary, how to do most of the order work. Except for foreign orders, she did that the rest of the time I was at Mills. When Mrs. Wik returned we eventually put her in charge of the music branch up in the music building, where our music scores and recordings were located.

McCreery: Did you have occasion to hire any new staff in the first few years you were there?

Reynolds: Not professional staff in the very first year, no. But clerical staff, yes. We started increasing it.

McCreery: What about the size and quality of the general collection when you first arrived?

Reynolds: Oh, it was very good because Mills had had very good people on the faculty and in the library always. People with good taste, buying for a faculty that had always very high ideals of what they wanted to do.

McCreery: Do you recall approximately the size?

Reynolds: About 113,000 volumes and 460 periodical subscriptions.

McCreery: Upon taking over as librarian, did you particularly see much need to change things?

Reynolds: Not to change things, but to become acquainted with the college, especially with the faculty. During that first summer before college started in September, I came to know a great many of the faculty, both current and emeritus. Several living nearby came in to meet me. Some of them entertained me in their homes. I was at pains to encourage all members of the faculty to order books for the library. President White did not give me a library committee; I never had one during the whole time I was there. Mr. White didn't believe in them. In general he didn't believe in unnecessary committees [laughs]. He had me report directly to him. As a matter of fact, so did the succeeding presidents for my entire career at Mills. I must say that this is advantageous. The dean of the faculty, Mary Woods Bennett, asked me once whether I would like to report to her. Would it not be sensible for the librarian to report to the dean of the faculty who was responsible for other aspects of the teaching? I said that I knew I could work very well with her, which was true, but the disadvantage would be that another dean of the faculty might not be interested in the library, which very often happens. In that case you'd be stopped. She agreed with me, and I remained independent of all except the president.

McCreery: You said the first thing that you wanted to do--

Reynolds: The first thing that I wanted to do was encourage the faculty to take an interest in the library and see what was needed, what we could buy. We did not have a budget split up by

departments, but I always kept track of faculty orders by discipline because of course, with human nature being what it is, there were always some people who ordered tremendous amounts and some people who ordered very little. If faculty are not interested in the library, my experience has been that you usually can't rouse their interest. But if they are interested, you may have the problem of not letting them walk away with the whole budget. There were one or two people who would have done that; you had to restrain them gently and delicately. There was one man, a Middle Easterner, who I think had been accustomed to a certain amount of favoritism [laughter] before he came to Mills. Whenever he wanted some new things, he felt it necessary to explain to everybody what he wanted and why. He was the exception; most of them weren't like that.

But I was always very interested in talking to faculty about books, because this gave me an idea of what they were interested in, and so I could sometimes call their attention to reference works and special offers that might not have reached them.

McCreery: But as you say, without any kind of library committee on the faculty, you had to approach all this informally, I take it?

Reynolds: Yes, informally.

McCreery: Were there any restrictions on the number of books an individual could request or anything?

Reynolds: There was a restriction on the entire budget. Of course we kept to that. I should say also that the college year always started with a faculty breakfast given by the dean of the faculty and the president. At my first one in 1955 I was asked to speak. There was a new dean of students also. This was the first time that they happened to have two new officers of somewhat comparable rank, and so both of us spoke. I simply expressed my pleasure at the warm welcome given me and invited the faculty to come in and let me know what they needed. It was a bit traumatic to address the faculty and all their spouses [laughter] when you were brand new. I had driven up to the country the day before with my mother and had car trouble; I almost hoped that it would keep me away, but it didn't [laughter].

McCreery: I'm also interested, since you had worked at San Francisco State College as it was called then, and now you were at Mills, even though you had quite different roles in each, how do you

compare those institutions in terms of the librarianship experience?

Reynolds: At San Francisco State everything was more or less cut and dried. There was a budget for this and there was a budget for that. And the culture was completely different too. You had to learn to think small at Mills. San Francisco State was expanding, of course, at a much greater rate. Mills was trying to get back on its feet, to do its particular job in a different way.

The background of Mills suited me to a T. I liked that fact that it had a well-established graduate program. Those fields had to be built in considerable depth. Music was one, and that is how I came to know Margaret Lyon, really. She was interested in building that field. English was another. Miss [Elizabeth] Pope, the department chairman, was one of the people who were interested. And so were the Walkers, Franklin and his wife Imogen. Franklin Walker was very well known in the field of American literature. Dr. Neumeyer was insatiable. And other art historians also appreciated the collection and added a lot to it.

Courses Sponsored by the Library; Thoughts on Students

Reynolds: The Mills library had given a course in bibliography since 1908. Mary Wale was teaching it and also children's literature. It seemed to me that we could make better use of Mary's talents and our resources if she taught the history or art of the book and gave more time to the Bender or rare and fine book collection. So she took a six-month leave of absence--her own idea--to pursue advanced work with Fred Mosher and with Walter Horn, the distinguished art historian at the University of California. I took over the general bibliography course with a little bit about the history of the book, but not very much. Hers was the art of the book, and the art department was happy to offer that class, so happy in fact that they always asked her to sit in on the oral examinations they gave their graduate students.

McCreery: Your bibliography course was offered in which department?

Reynolds: In the humanities division. Sometimes the English department claimed me. In the spring I gave children's literature, because I was the only one around who had had any experience

with children's books. The education department sponsored that.

McCreery: Was that teaching part of your duty planned at the time you were hired? Was it assumed--

Reynolds: It was assumed that I might. Mr. White thought maybe I might someday teach Latin since I had a master's degree in it. They had had to discontinue Latin to considerable regret on his part. The possibility of teaching was mentioned.

McCreery: As far as the library-related courses, you were able to develop those and offer them as you saw fit?

Reynolds: Yes. The appropriate faculty committees had long ago approved them.

McCreery: Do you recall the size of the student body at Mills when you arrived?

Reynolds: I think it was probably around 700. They have always--ever since I have known the college--aimed at 1,000 students. A thousand is apparently a number that works out well financially. They have rarely if ever achieved it. It's just very difficult in this state in which large classes, large colleges, are the norm. Many people, I think, do not realize how much a small college can offer. It's difficult to explain.

McCreery: I remember you talking about the frustration of the president at San Francisco State, who wanted it to be a model small college, which is quite a different thing from the larger state institution it became.

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: Mills is also a women's college. I wonder how that might have affected your work, if at all.

Reynolds: It never seemed to me to affect it nearly so much as one might think. At that time the college offered several programs of special interest to women, including occupational therapy and a very good program in institutional management, which was dietetics, home economics, and that sort of thing. Of course, the college itself was a laboratory right at hand. President White believed that the college needed to educate a whole woman to carry on culture in the family and also to be able to manage the more practical aspects of family life. He wrote a book about it.

McCreery: The president did?

Reynolds: Yes. Is it called *Educating Our Daughters*?

McCreery: You say in general you didn't find great differences in the fact that it was a women's college?

Reynolds: No, not a lot. The faculty was mixed: you had both men and women, neither one dominating. There was at the time an organization called KIVA, which was in a sense the men's faculty club. They had a room where they lunched together daily. And there was the women's faculty club, which also lunched together but only once a week, in Reinhardt House, the alumnae house. As a matter of fact, I became president of that club and then we decided to integrate into one club for both men and women.

McCreery: In general what did you think of the students you encountered at Mills?

Reynolds: Oh, they were often very, very good, particularly in music. At that time scholarships in music were much sought after, and there were a number who were very good performers. You became aware of them because the college had an assembly every week. The music department sometimes provided a program--not too often, maybe once or twice a semester. And the dance department was very active too; both departments gave graduate work regularly. So did English and art. Psychology sometimes gave graduate work too. Every week we had an assembly at which someone spoke, or there was a dance or music performance. Excellent people came. I remember the art critic John Canady came. Aaron Copland spoke. Ralph Bunche spoke. A wide variety.

McCreery: Perhaps that illustrates your point about small colleges and how different they can be.

Reynolds: Yes. And very often these guests would also go to a class and the students would be able to talk with them informally.

McCreery: What a wonderful environment.

Reynolds: Yes. There was also an annual book contest for the best student library. It became my job to find a speaker for the assembly at which prizes were awarded. The first person who occurred to me was Wallace Stegner, and when I mentioned him to the president he said, "You get him here!" [laughter] Then I learned that he had been engaged to come in some recent year--it was a stormy day, dreadfully rainy and windy, and the

student body was all assembled to hear him and he didn't come, and he didn't come. President White had to ad lib, in the meantime wondering if Stegner were in a ditch somewhere between Stanford and Berkeley. But he had just forgotten [laughter].

McCreery: Oh, dear!

Reynolds: He did give the Book Day address at least twice after I came to Mills. We had a variety of people. We had Eric Hoffer, the longshoreman who made quite a name for himself as a writer and who wouldn't wear an academic robe. So I didn't wear mine either, although I was presiding because the president was out of town--those on the platform and members of the senior class wore academic robes to assembly. Other memorable speakers were Jessamyn West, who wrote *The Friendly Persuasion*, and Kathryn Hulme.

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Reynolds: I remember her with a great deal of pleasure. *The Nun's Story* was her best-known book. We also had Walter Van Tilburg Clark, who was an especially pleasant person. I remember bringing him into the library, and he said, "I hate libraries. I always make my wife go in because it's so discouraging to see all those books." [laughter]

McCreery: So much reading yet to do?

Reynolds: So much reading to do, and so much competition, I suppose, in a way.

Collection Development at Mills

[Interview 7: July 14, 1999] ##

McCreery: We were talking last time we got together about your career as librarian at Mills College. You were just saying to me before we started today that you were invited to read some history of Mills before you started there. Could you tell me about that?

Reynolds: I was lent the histories of the college, Rosalind Keep's *Fourscore Years*, and E. O. James's *The Story of Cyrus and Susan*. This was a very good introduction to the college because of course its history, dating from 1852, was very important to us in the library. We did so much work with the archives. I suppose this is apt to be true in any institution

in which there is a lot of fundraising going on, and in my experience at Mills, there was always a lot of it.

When I went to Mills, the college was still giving a bachelor of science degree in subjects that were not in the liberal arts curriculum. Occupational therapy was one. We had a lot of craft material in the library since occupational therapy seemed to be centered on crafts.

And at that time the college contracted with Merritt Hospital. Their student nurses came on campus for certain courses and they earned a Mills degree--a bachelor of science, I believe--in addition to their nursing credentials. Institutional administration--I've mentioned that that was very good. It was a part of the home economics major. I should also say the food at Mills was always excellent, even though the students might not think so.

One day before I had been there very long, an unprepossessing little shoebox came in containing various old college publications and a letter. There may have been two letters; there was certainly one letter that was very interesting. It was written by Emma Nevada, who had been an opera singer of some note long years before. She told Mrs. Mills about her forthcoming marriage. This whetted my interest. We didn't have any papers of Emma Nevada, and I began searching to see if there were others. She had grown up in the mining camps and had sung for miners as a child before coming to Mills Seminary, where she graduated in 1876. I did a little searching, and I tried to find original material about her. When I went to the east coast I looked in libraries in cities in which she might have sung or did sing. I didn't ever find too much that was interesting.

In 1964, when Mary Wale went to England she found Emma's daughter, Mignon Nevada, in the London telephone book. She called her and was invited to tea. As a child Mignon Nevada had visited Mills with her mother. Mary--and Barbara Cook [Barnes], her daughter--had a very warm welcome and tea with Mignon, who was then blind. She had had a career--not so successful as her mother--in opera and had taught singing for a long time, but then she was going blind. She gave Mary a portrait of her mother to bring back to Mills. She evidently remembered Mills with a great deal of affection and pleasure. So I did publish that letter with what material I was able to find; it was in *Opera News*.

In my early years at Mills, we received a very large collection of papers that had belonged to Lillie Hitchcock

Coit, for whom the tower in San Francisco is named. They came from a friend of President White's family, Mrs. Paul Scott Foster, a cousin of Floride Green, who wrote the book about Lillie that the Grabhorns published in the 1930s. They were a very interesting group of papers, not so much for Lillie's own papers as for her family. Her family went back to revolutionary days, and they had kept their papers. So we got a number of very interesting additions to the early history collection in that way.

I was also able to build up the collection of children's books because we received many generous gifts for this purpose in memory of Mary Jo Turner. This was important for the children's literature classes. Many faculty children used that collection too.

McCreery: What other collection development issues did you face over the years?

Reynolds: I wouldn't say they were issues, but we always added a lot in history, literature, and especially art. Dr. Neumeyer was insatiable, often suggesting things that he found in rare book dealers' catalogs. So we added a great deal at that time. Mary Wale, shortly, had an advantage that her predecessor, Mrs. Barr, had never had, and that was the Bender endowment which was made over to the library. We used it for books for the Bender collection. It was not a large sum, but prices at that time were not what they are today, fortunately.

So we were able to buy books that Dr. Neumeyer used in his seminar in the history of book illustration, which was given to the graduate students who were getting an M.A. He liked to show the original sixteenth and seventeenth-century editions of books illustrated or decorated by artists and books in which artists stated their theories of art. Mary used these books also in her course in the art of the book.

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Reynolds: She was able to pick up some important books on her own in London at the time she met Mignon Nevada and also in France, where she found a file of the art periodical *Verve*, which was very important. She also filled in gaps in the French art periodical we already had, *Cahier d'Art*.

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Reynolds: I explained how much work we had to do, and after I went traveling among the east coast women's colleges--the "Seven

Sisters"--I was able to state that none of them had so interesting a setting for their fine and rare books as the Bender Room. The college was always looking for ways in which it could be outstanding. This was something we could offer that other places could not offer in the same way.

Using these arguments, I was able to get more money gradually. We engaged a retired librarian, Emily Ethell, who cataloged the thousand-volume backlog of rare books. Or I should say in Bender backlog--they're not necessarily all rare; many were fine press books.

Renovation of Library Space; Funding; Student Unrest

Reynolds: Things were going along nicely. We were making progress when in 1960, in the winter, the trustees decided that they were obligated to earthquake-proof the older parts of the library. This meant everything except the new 1954 wing. So we had to close up the Bender Room, pack the books away carefully, and cover up the five free-standing exhibition cases. We decided, with advice from the contractors, that the only safe thing was to cover them.

Fortunately, my next-door neighbors--a large family in this big house--were converting from ordinary blankets to electric blankets. They gave me all their old blankets to use as protective packing and workmen built wooden crates around each case. They came out beautifully without any problems. We also had to take down and store the dark glass curtains that we had had installed at considerable expense in the Bender Room because books were being damaged by sunlight.

We moved all operations into the new wing. My secretary was installed in the stairwell. The catalog department was placed in the foyer, shielded from public view--in part, at least--by the catalog cases which we moved around a bit. The loan desk was of course stationary. The reference librarian and her assistant had desks in readers' area of the stack wing, and I had a desk at the end of the room out in the public. Nobody had any privacy.

The books in the old wing--the reference collection had to be moved into the 1954 wing too so that the reference librarian could operate. In the older stack wings, the bound periodicals were left intact. A librarian went in once a day to get whatever periodicals had been requested. That was the way we

spent the winter. We moved 50,000 volumes in order to do this. Even in these adverse conditions we did make some progress with the backlogs. It was a year and a half before we could clean off the plaster dust, rearrange the 50,000 volumes, and re-occupy the whole building.

McCreery: Was that about the size of the general collection at that time?

Reynolds: We had 150,000 volumes, at least. We delayed reopening the Bender Room until 1963 because it took us longer to get that into order. We had a celebration and Dr. Neumeyer spoke about the collection. Then we were able to engage Anne Henning [Kahle], who was a very skilled book restorer and binder. She worked on some of the early books that needed attention.

We became a selective depository for federal government documents. We had been one for a long time for California documents. Around that time, or shortly afterward, money became available under Title II for additional funds for libraries if you could match them. We did pretty well with that; we added a lot to the reference collection.

McCreery: Was that the first time getting Title II money as far as you know?

Reynolds: I think that was as soon as legislation made it available. We acted as soon as possible. Around 1963 we resumed the occasional readings in the Bender Room, which we had always offered. Throughout the 1960s we continued the Book Day assemblies and the student library contests, which had been started many years before.

McCreery: What was your role in those? Were you a judge of the contests or an organizer?

Reynolds: No, Mary Wale and I organized them. I didn't judge. I invited people from the book world to come as judges. Usually a faculty person was invited to be the chairman. The last contest, which was a disaster in some ways, is the one that stays in my mind. We hadn't had too many entrants because students were interested in other things. Assembly attendance had begun to dwindle. We were really continuing mostly because it was dear to the hearts of a few people.

It was Book Day 1969 that Kathleen Cleaver chose to bring her Black Panther cohorts to Mills and conduct a sit-in in the president's office [laughter]. The chairman of the library committee was Arthur Kaplan, an assistant professor of French, who was so caught up in what was happening on the campus that

he couldn't give too much attention to the contest. I don't remember all of the judges, but one was Mrs. [Marjorie] Stern, a key figure supporting the San Francisco Public Library for many years. She was a liberal-minded person, so she was not shocked by it all.

The president of the college at that time was Mr. Robert Wert. He was a gentleman to the core. I was told that he got up and helped Kathleen Cleaver climb over the window to get into his office [laughter]. Dr. Little, my predecessor, died the following winter. For several years she had been giving money to fund the contest started many years earlier by Mrs. M. C. Sloss. So we just decided it was time to cancel the whole thing.

McCreery: By that you mean the book collection contest?

Reynolds: The contest and celebration.

McCreery: Everything.

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: What were the other manifestations of that period of student activism at Mills, as you saw it?

Reynolds: A general readiness to complain. The students were very eager to do that about anything. A little earlier, in order to try to mollify them, President Rothwell and the trustees had assembled various committees that would discuss with students possible problems on the campus. We had a committee on the library, chaired by James D. Hart, then a [Mills] trustee and The Bancroft Library director; he was also a professor of English at UC. We met with students and discussed what might be done to improve the library. I can't remember that anything much came of this, but maybe they felt better. I could see that Dr. Hart was holding back his temper and making great effort not to say what he thought about the students' rather shrill and not-well-founded complaints.

McCreery: Did any of those events affect your work in the library?

Reynolds: No. Much earlier in the 1960s--I should mention one particularly big and excellent exhibition, "Hommage à Milhaud," organized, as all our exhibitions were, by Mary Wale. It occurred in 1963 at the time of the Milhaud festival, honoring his seventy-fifth birthday. There were two or three large concerts attracting a great deal of attention. After one of

them--I think it was the main one--we had a reception in the library, in the Bender Room, of course.

When the Milhauds left Mills for the last time--he was continued beyond the normal retirement age--the library staff gave Madeleine, his wife, a pin. It was a personal gift; not with college money. It was made by one of the Mills faculty artists, Bob Dhaemers. She had done so much for the library over the years just out of her own generous spirit. She read in the library rather frequently to students, in French usually. The Milhauds gave the library many books. They were great readers, both of them. She was in at least once a week, usually two or three times, and she would always engage in a very pleasant and fairly long conversation with Katherine Brose at the loan desk.

It was their gifts really that started us developing what has since become an important archive of Milhaud music, scores, et cetera, and material relating to him. Margaret Lyon, chairman of the music department, has also contributed a lot to that development. There has been money given at various times over the years.

There were a couple of other important gifts that should be mentioned, one of which was the gift of James Parton, then publisher of *American Heritage* and *Horizon* magazines, in memory of his wife, Jane Bourne Parton. She was a Mills alumna, class of 1940, who remembered with particular gratitude the summer session when Martha Graham was in residence. So therefore the books were for dance. The fund was established around 1964. We built up the collection very slowly over the years. It has attained considerable distinction.

I suppose this is probably the time to mention also the gift of the Florence Walter Bindery. That we owe I think largely to James D. Hart, who as a friend of the Walter family may have had something to do in persuading them that this would be a suitable memorial for their mother.

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Reynolds: They established a fund that made it possible for the college to employ someone to teach binding. Of course you had to have a studio in order to do that. It takes equipment. Unfortunately, it takes among other things a sink. The only place where we could put the studio was on the second floor of the old periodical stack, where there was an extra seminar room that could be easily converted into a binding studio, but you had to install a sink.

Everything went well. We were ready to open December 3, 1972, I think it was. I was home in the morning, I had just gotten dressed to go out to Mills for a reception in the library and a luncheon in the President's house honoring the Walter family. The telephone rang, and it was the plant superintendent telling me that there was a leak in the library. A slip joint washer had given way in the new sink and water was flooding down into the periodical stack. So I went rushing out.

We called Stella Patri, who is still alive, I believe--very old now. She had had considerable experience. She was an excellent binder, and she had gone to Florence to help after the great flood there. She said, "Oh, I'll come immediately." So she came over. This was rather early in the business of taking care of wet books [laughter]. She told us that we needed to store them in refrigerators. So we filled the refrigerators in the various halls on the campus. At that time, there were still dining rooms in all the halls. Some rather irate cooks appeared later, of course.

Within a few days, Elizabeth Trowbridge Kent, an alumna, who had industrial connections, was able to find us a commercial plant that could refrigerate our books for a longer period. To go back to the catastrophe day, we had two floors flooded. While people were moving the books out, the party was going on in the Bender Room with all of the guests unaware. They were admiring the exhibition that honored Mrs. Walter and showed some of her best bindings. She was an amateur binder who lived in San Francisco in a beautiful home overlooking the North Bay and was so skilled that her binding had been shown at the World's Fair in Montreal. While people came in to honor her memory, her daughters, her family, and her friends didn't know what was happening in another part of the library.

I decided to appoint Diana Thomas, who was then working for us. She had been with us as a valuable assistant during the 1962 period when we were in one wing. I think by this time she was a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Librarianship, working for us again now in Bender and reference, after Mary Wale's retirement in 1972. I put her in charge of the problem. We were able to take over a portion of a plant building and establish a large cleaning operation. This has been written up elsewhere, so I won't go into it. In fact, through the marvels of mass communication, which were not so great then as they are now, a relative of mine who lived on a farm in Ohio heard about us [laughter] through the news media.

Before this happened, we had celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Bender collection on Founder's Day, 1970. James D. Hart had given the talk, later published under the title, *The Scholar and the Book Collector*.

It was 1972, I think, that the administration moved out of the old administration building, which was built out of the original Sage Library and some additional space long ago added to it. They moved into Mills Hall, which had been vacated as a residence hall. There was the question of what to do with the old building. Before anybody else got into that, I managed to get there and acquire much of it for the library.

Of course, in order to use it without creating a terrible situation of running between two buildings, we had to have a connecting link built. That was designed by an architect named Jan Stypula, who did it very cleverly and very attractively. The interior was a bibliographical area where we had the National Union catalogs and such readily available to people in both buildings. The catalog division was moved into the old building, and my secretary and I moved too. We vacated a lot of space that could be used for the rapidly expanding collection and loan and reference departments. I won't go into all this, but it was an era in which we operated rather differently from the way that we had in the past.

In 1975, we had a major event for the dance collection. Angene Feves and her troupe of Renaissance dancers, who specialized in doing things authentically in the manner of the seventeenth century or the Renaissance era, put on a program in the concert hall with authentic music and authentic dance costumes. From time to time Angene directed the attention of the audience to her source material, early printed dance books in the Jane Bourne Parton Collection.

McCreery: It sounds as if you developed quite an interest in dance yourself over the years.

Reynolds: Yes, I did. That's why I did the bibliography before I retired.

Earliest Forays into Computerization

Reynolds: But at this time, of course, the computer was beginning to be an object of very considerable interest. In 1960, Helen Pillans, professor of physical science and mathematics, offered

a course in computer science. Sometime during the 1960s, she asked permission to install a terminal in the library, mainly for the use of her students. But we could use it too. For years the library and the math department had the only terminals on campus. We entered the computer age very tentatively around 1968 with a printout of all the periodicals which we held or were taking. The printouts were distributed to faculty offices and to dormitories. People could know whether we owned a periodical before they came down to the library to see it. It was an advance, but it was nothing like what we got into, of course. Stanford was working very hard on their ballots project, developing computer use for library cataloging. Every so often, they invited people from the private colleges to come down and discover what they were doing and see how it could apply to the small college library. We took full advantage of that.

[tape interruption]

Eva [Konrad] Kreshka, our cataloger, and I went down when I was here. Part of the time I was teaching in Oregon in the summertime. Soon we gave Eva release time so that she could participate in their study. Before long, she was searching the ballots program for catalog copy on our terminal. This meant that when it was possible to get a grant for establishing a computer program in the library, she knew exactly what we needed, whereas other people who hadn't taken advantage of this had a greater problem.

McCreery: You said grant funds became available. Did Mills take advantage of that while you were still there?

Reynolds: Yes. As a matter of fact, I was still there when we put in a proposal. But I left almost immediately after it was awarded, so I was never involved in the actual opertation.

McCreery: What was the source of the funds?

Reynolds: A grant from the Kellogg Foundation.

McCreery: Okay. I guess I'm wondering though, did you actually incorporate computers into the daily work in the library?

Reynolds: Not really. I was gone by the time the library advanced beyond using catalog copy from the ballots program, but that was a great advance and saved a lot of time and effort.

McCreery: Okay. Do you know how that worked?

Reynolds: No, I don't. Eva would need to be here to tell you. Perhaps this would be a good time to say something about her. She was a Czech. She came to Vassar [College] right after the war on one of two scholarships available to Czech students. She graduated from Vassar, went home to Czechoslovakia, and I think she started to take advanced work at Charles University [Karlova Universita] and there she met her husband, George Kreshka, an American. They came to Berkeley to live.

She worked a bit in the UC library because she was fluent in French and German and Czech. Her schooling had been forced on her in German. She hated the language but was quite competent in it. French she preferred. So she was a valuable asset in the university library. Then she went to library school. When she graduated she applied at Mills, and we were happy to engage her as a cataloger in the summer of 1960. She is a very talented woman, an extremely good cataloger, and a person you like to have around. She retired in 1990.

McCreery: I'm interested that she was embracing computer methods fairly early. Was she the main one on your staff with that interest?

Reynolds: While I was there, she was. I don't know how this developed later.

McCreery: Were computers much discussed among you and your staff or your other library colleagues around the area at that time?

Reynolds: We saw that it was probably the wave of the future, but it was too nebulous for most of us to discuss in detail beyond what was going on at Stanford.

McCreery: Yes, I can see how that would be true.

The Dewey Decimal System vs. Library of Congress

Reynolds: I also note that Mills Library was, and still is, using the Dewey Decimal System. I wonder if you could comment on the pros and cons of that.

Reynolds: I suppose starting out today, you'd start out with the Library of Congress system. But Dewey Decimal was very well established when I went there. We had a large collection and it was all in Dewey Decimal, which is very easy. It has many more mnemonic features; the same number will be used in various connections in related ways that you can easily remember.

There was a period in which the great wave was to change whole collections [to Library of Congress]. Well, we never had the money to consider doing it. I suppose some people would have started anyhow, but it never seemed to me to be a wise thing to do when you already had more than you could handle. I don't like redoing the same kind of thing; I'd rather go on to something new. If we had done that we would not have been able to take care of our collection nearly so well.

There was a librarian on our staff who wanted in the worst way to classify the whole Bender collection because it would make it so much more useful to the college as a whole. This was her argument. Well, the Bender collection was arranged by dates for the early books, which makes a great deal of sense, particularly in a library as small as ours, and by press for the modern books, because people who are interested in the output of a single press can see it as a unit.

The chief argument advanced was that this was what was being done in The Bancroft Library. Well, it was being done in The Bancroft Library, but I discovered when I later went there that it was over the loud objections of the reference librarian and that when Tony [Anthony] Bliss came he stopped it immediately and they reverted to the practice that we had been following all these years.

McCreery: That's very interesting. Who was the reference librarian that objected?

Reynolds: Leslie [Shaw] Clarke. Reference librarian is probably the wrong title. She was the rare books librarian.

McCreery: Yes, I think we talked about her when I was interviewing Professor [Fredric J.] Mosher.

So I take it there was never any external pressure to convert to Library of Congress--as you say, no money to do it anyway.

Reynolds: No, no money to do it.

Adding a Rare Books Librarian

Reynolds: By the time I retired, we had really a very fine collection in lots of ways. I was able to persuade the college to let me put in a request for the grant that was offered by the National

Endowment for the Humanities and the Council on Library Resources. Our proposal was to study the Bender collection for connections to the general collection and the curriculum. When we got the grant it enabled us to engage Lynda Claassen as a full-time rare books librarian.

It provided money to establish a program calling attention to Bender books with any classes to which we could find that they were related. We had a chance to search to see what books were of special interest to the curriculum as it was offered. We had a committee which was made up of the two librarians involved--the head and the rare books librarian--and professors from the appropriate disciplines. It was a rotating committee. Faculty membership changed as we shifted emphasis from literature to art to music to dance, et cetera. To stimulate interest, public programs offered speakers from outside as well as inside the college.

McCreery: Do you remember how many years of funding you received and the approximate amount?

Reynolds: I retired before it was used up.

McCreery: Even just approximately: a few thousand a year or--

Reynolds: I think it was around $50,000.

McCreery: That's fine. I just wondered if it came to mind. Was that then a fairly new thing, to apply for outside funding for library programs? You mentioned the Title II earlier, but I'm wondering how frequently that occurred in your tenure.

Reynolds: No, it was not a frequent thing. Various people had tried different things more or less, but this was part of the Great Society program, I think. The federal government was taking a greater interest in the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Council on Library Resources. Funds were much more available. I remember one instance in which we knew that money--the Title II, I think--was going to be available for libraries to enlarge their holdings in suitable ways, but we didn't know when. When we finally heard, everybody had to get to work and type for two or three days because the money had to be spent immediately. How long word may have been delayed somewhere else, I don't know.

McCreery: What a problem to have [laughter].

Reynolds: Yes, it was a welcome problem.

Retiring From Mills, 1976; Eucalyptus Press; Management Style

McCreery: I note that you retired from Mills in 1976 after twenty-one years. I wonder if you can tell me a little bit about your decision to retire, and how you chose that time to do it.

Reynolds: I had always known that I would have to retire in June of 1977 because the college rules required it after your sixty-fifth birthday--which in my case came in November. I was getting tired. I thought I would be a crosspatch if I stayed there for six months more. I decided that I would go in December. We had a new president, and things were very different. Also, I just didn't want to stay around. So I selfishly took the easy way out and said I would retire at Christmastime.

McCreery: That surprises me. Was it just so many years on the job? What led you to feel that way?

Reynolds: I had always thought that I would hate to retire, but it was a time of change and I thought it would be just as well to leave.

McCreery: Sometimes a change of administration is a natural time for such things. Was there a party when you retired?

Reynolds: I said I didn't want one, but I was honored at the Faculty Club end-of-the-year party. The college president, Barbara White, was in her first year. She invited me to the trustees' luncheon, which was my last day of work, actually. I was very pleased that on that day Franklin Walker made a special trip in just to say goodbye, which I thought was awfully nice, because he was not well by that time. Charles [E.] Larsen and Marion Ross took me to lunch. My old friends the Castagnas, who were then in the city taking care of the San Francisco Public [Library] for a short period, had me to a special lunch, et cetera.

McCreery: When you think back on your career at Mills, I wonder what stands out to you. Are there any particular rewards that come to mind? Or disappointments?

Reynolds: No, I can't say that I was disappointed, really, ever. By the time I went there I had had enough experience to be aware that you were not going to find a bed of roses anywhere you went. But on the whole as I look back on it I think I would almost have done it for no salary because I became very attached to Mills. And I managed to leave still feeling that way. But I just felt that I had had enough, that more was not going to be better.

One thing more I should say: in all the time I spent away from Mills my salary was continued just the same. There was never any deduction for summers away. That was very generous. I once remarked to a librarian working in the University of California system that there were rewards in private colleges, and she said, "Like what?" She nearly dropped her eye teeth when I mentioned that [laughter]. It would not have been possible in another kind of institution. And there were similar things they did for other people. They gave one member of the library staff, one who was a transient member, a whole summer off to go to Europe. They were very generous to Mary Wale. She spoke more than once of the library scheduling, which had often been arranged to permit her to juggle her professional life with the schedules of her two young children. Of course this was before my time at Mills.

When I arrived, her son Thomas was a student at UC Berkeley, and her daughter, Barbara Cook Barnes, was in high school. Barbara had attended the Mills nursery school. Both Barbara and Thomas had participated, as they were growing up, in the many fine programs and courses the Mills summer school always offered for children.

I should speak too about all that I owe to Mary Wale as a colleague. She was an invaluable source of information about the college in the years preceding my arrival as well as a generous, absolutely honest, and reliable assistant. She had a great fund of knowledge, espeically in history, literature, and the arts. She had impeccable taste, and she did all the distinguished exhibitions in the Bender Room. Unfortunately many people were not aware of her knowledge and her gifts because of her diffident, reserved manner. She was also equipped with a delightful sense of humor.

I was delighted that after I had been at Mills a sufficient time to appreciate her contributions and recommend her promotion, she was made associate librarian. She retired in 1972, and our friendship became even stronger. She died in her ninetieth year (1998), having been widowed twice and having survived more than one grave illness.

[Interview 8: July 19, 1999] ##

McCreery: We talked extensively last time about your career at Mills College, and we have a few more things related to that that we want to touch on this morning. In particular, I wonder if you could tell me a little bit about the reactivation of Eucalyptus Press after it had been silent for a time.

Reynolds: When Rosalind Keep died, the press was willed to the art department at the college. Before I retired, I think it was in 1975, the art department realized that they were not taking very good care of it, and they turned it over to the library. We put the big Washington hand press up in the 1954 wing because it was too heavy for the floor in other parts of the library. But the type and some smaller equipment went into the wing that we had added, which used to be the administration building. Some devoted students under Lynda Claassen, and with the help of Adriane Bosworth and Jane Holm, spent the summer largely cleaning type and sorting it, and doing other things that put the press into working order. Polly Bosworth Black, an alumna who had known Miss Keep and worked with her, gave money. We also used the Steel Foundation money so that a course in printing could be offered in the coming year.

[tape interruption]

McCreery: While we're talking about Mills College again, you were telling me that Mills faculty had borrowing privileges at UC. Can you tell me a little bit about that arrangement?

Reynolds: As far back as the presidency of William Wallace Campbell at the university and Mrs. Reinhardt at Mills, the two of them made a formal agreement that Mills College faculty were to have borrowing privileges. This was cherished. Usually it translated also into stack privileges, which were very important in those days when the stack access was very limited. I believe there was a similar arrangement of some sort with the theological seminaries in Berkeley.

The other thing that I might say about Mills is that before I retired we had entered in the National Union Catalog all of the manuscript collections in the library except for that of President Reinhardt, which was marked not to be opened until a hundred years after her birth. President Lynn White's files were there too; they were not open. Otherwise everything had been recorded. And the backlogs of books that greeted me on my arrival had also been completely taken care of.

McCreery: I have one more question about the borrowing privileges that you mentioned. Was it very common for colleges and universities to have such exchange privileges at that time?

Reynolds: No, I don't think it was. One met people who wished they could get into the university stacks, where they were sure they would find the answers to all sorts of things.

McCreery: So it was considered very desirable.

Reynolds: It was considered extremely desirable.

McCreery: And perhaps difficult to attain?

Reynolds: Berkeley was so cordial to people from other institutions--from Mills at least--that I used to be given a parking privilege on the campus. Of course parking was not nearly the problem it is today.

McCreery: That's a telling detail though, isn't it? As you say, you indexed your manuscript collections before your retirement. How did you approach that task? It sounds like a big one.

Reynolds: It is a huge task, especially for someone who is not an archivist by training. Just look through, see what you have, and if it is unorganized, make some sort of arrangement out of it. But you have to be careful to index all the names that occur that might be of some value to someone doing research. I did quite a lot of it because other people had plenty to do, and it was something that did not get me into anyone else's hair; I don't like to involve myself in work that others are in charge of. When I put them in charge, I like to leave them free to do it on their own.

McCreery: Would you say that's characteristic of your management style then?

Reynolds: I hope so. I tried to make it that, to talk to people about what we were going to do quite freely. I am not a great one for long staff meetings in which everybody tells everything about what he's doing--a show and tell operation which can easily, I think, get completely out of hand and become a great time-waster.

McCreery: Rather than looking over their shoulders you believed in discussing thoroughly and then letting them go?

Reynolds: Letting them do it, yes, as much as possible. I was always open to discussion, I hope. I tried to be.

IV FURTHER CAREER RECOLLECTIONS; AN ACTIVE RETIREMENT

Edith Coulter's Later Life and Honorary Doctorate from Mills College

McCreery: We also have talked about--and I've read in the old alumni association newsletters--about the fact that Miss Edith Coulter had an honorary degree from Mills College. I take it you had quite a role in that.

Reynolds: Yes, I suggested it. As the college librarian, I attended meetings of the educational policies committee. It was they who approved, and had the right to suggest, candidates for honorary degrees. So I suggested her. Of course Professor Francis [H.] Herrick, who was the chairman of the history department, was particularly interested. I think he examined her publications which had to do quite largely with California historical pictorial material. He decided to approve the award, so the committee recommended it. Miss Coulter was very pleased, largely because--she told me once--Professor [Herbert Eugene] Bolton, the important California historian, had told her that he would let her get a doctorate because she already had a job, and as a woman she wouldn't be taking a job away from some man who really needed it. But it happened that by the time she was in a position to submit a dissertation she was a member of the Academic Senate. As such, she could not be a candidate for a Berkeley degree. She was afraid that if she took a leave of absence from Berkeley, someone would supplant her and she would not be able to get back again. So she had not gone ahead and worked on the degree.

I think it was about the same time, perhaps a little later, that she also was awarded the Isadore G. Mudge Award for a distinguished contribution to reference librarianship. She was also made a fellow of the American Library Association.

McCreery: Tell me more about the honorary degree from Mills and the ceremony and so on.

Reynolds: By that time she wasn't feeling well, so it took a little engineering to arrange. I took her out to Mills, and she met Margaret Lyon, who was chairman of the music department and who controlled the music building. There is a Greek theater attached to the concert hall of the music building, and that was where the degree would be given. Margaret showed her where she could sit and wait until it would be time to go out on the platform. This made her feel more secure about it, that she wouldn't be in any embarrassing predicament. On commencement day I did not march, nor did she; we sat in the concert hall until it was time to go out through the faculty to the front of the stage. I presented her with the customary little speech. She was hooded and had her picture taken with President Rothwell. As she said, she would have loved to be part of the whole thing, because it would have included a dinner or some festivity as well, but I think President Rothwell made her feel very welcome. I think it was a pleasure to her.

McCreery: Do you recall whether any of her colleagues from Berkeley were able to attend?

Reynolds: I don't remember who else was there because I was in isolation [laughter] in back. We had a splendid view of the organ and I could see that the organist was playing in her bare feet, which I understand is very rare and hard to do. She came from Hawaii; that may be why she could do that.

McCreery: Around that time, were you seeing much of Miss Coulter any longer?

Reynolds: Quite a lot, because she lived not too far from me up the hill. Very often on a nice warm Sunday afternoon I would walk up the hill and find her and her sister sitting outside. They had a very pretty home with a lovely garden. Her sister was particularly interested in gardening, and Miss Coulter appreciated it all greatly. They would be sitting in the shade, just outside their front door, and I'd visit with them and come back.

I suppose one of her best friends among the students was Marjorie [Gray] Wynne, who had come to the school from Virginia. Marjorie graduated from Duke University and worked in the library for a year at least, maybe two years, in order to earn enough money to go to library school. This was still the Depression. She was an only child. One of my classmates, John [Jorgensen] Lund, was then at Duke University, and he

insisted--Marjorie has since told me--that she go to Berkeley to library school. This seemed a grand idea to her. I don't think she had been very far away from Virginia and North Carolina at that point.

So she applied to Berkeley, and they didn't want to admit her because she lived in Virginia and they felt that their commitment was to California. They didn't want her taking a job that a California student might be better entitled to in one sense. I think she even had to sign something that she wouldn't look for work in California. But they admitted her anyway. She had a marvelous time because she had not been living near a city like San Francisco before; she took full advantage of the plays and the music that were available to her.

Her mother and--I don't know whether it was a relative or a friend--drove her out. Her mother was widowed shortly after, if not before Marjorie was born, and did not remarry until many, many years later. It was not painful for Marjorie to say that she would go back to the East Coast to look for work because she felt that she had to be within striking distance of her mother when she established herself in a job.

She did find a job--I've forgotten where it was. I think it may have been in a private school, but it was for only a year or two. Then she went to Yale University, where she stayed until retirement. There she earned an M.A. in English literature. For years, her desk was next to that of the famous Chauncey Tinker, I think for fifteen years. This was in the Sterling Library, the main library at Yale. When the Beinecke Library was built for the rare books collections she went there as research librarian and was responsible for many of their exhibitions. Also she was very good at making friends for the library. When she retired, there was a big dancing party for her in the Beinecke preceded by dinners in various clubs and other venues at Yale.

McCreery: Did you attend?

Reynolds: No, I couldn't for some reason. My friend Father Monihan, who was also invited, would also have liked to go but he couldn't attend either.

I should say that I came to know Marjorie because on one of my trips east Miss Coulter had said, "You must go up to Yale and visit Miss Wynne." So she did become a friend of mine; we have stayed in each other's homes and traveled together sometimes. It was through her that I learned about the

Association Internationale de Bibliophilie, which had only three or four local members, of whom Father Monihan was one, Warren Howell another, and Barney Rosenthal still another. The great advantage in joining was the marvelous summer excursions that they offered to sites of bibliographic interest and usually art also.

McCreery: Can you think of an example of one that you attended?

Reynolds: Yes, I went to Brussels with them, and Athens and Paris. Würzburg was another site, and Copenhagen. Later on, when Barney decided that they should be invited to San Francisco and Los Angeles, he singlehandedly went to work and got a number of Californians to join, so now there are quite a few West Coast members.

McCreery: I wonder if you have any other knowledge of the last few years of Miss Coulter's life.

Reynolds: Well, that was getting near the end. She was never bedridden, but she couldn't move about as freely as she would have liked. When I was president of the alumni association [1958], the ALA met in San Francisco and we had a large reunion at the Merchandise Mart Club. Georgianne Titus had found the location for us because it was near the Civic Center, so that people could easily attend. But Miss Coulter felt she couldn't make it, and I remember Miss [Anne Ethelyn] Markley saying, "You must say that Miss Coulter is still all right, remembers everything, but is just not able to come here."

I owe an interesting experience to her, to Marjorie, and to an alumna, Kay Miller (Mills, 1953), who happened to come in to see me just before I was leaving on a European vacation. On the way home I was going to stay with Marjorie. Kay Miller was at that time working for Wilmarth Lewis in Farmington. She said, "I'm going to tell him that you're coming, and he'll probably invite you to lunch." So he did. He invited Marjorie, Kay, and me to lunch in his house in Farmington.

It was a very great pleasure because he was a Horace Walpole collector. That was his main occupation in life, really. He had grown up in Alameda, California, and gone to Yale and thereafter became primarily a Yalie. He was a charming man, a delightful host, and he had a beautiful house filled with furniture of the period. It was nice, attractive furniture, much of it associated with Walpole in one way or another. And many, many books. He was also a fascinating conversationalist with a beautiful flow of language. It was a memorable event. Indirectly I owe it also to Miss Coulter

[laughter] because without the connection of Marjorie Wynne, it probably wouldn't have been possible.

Miss Coulter died when she was getting into Miss [Elta] Camper's car. Miss Camper was another librarian, a friend of the Coulters who lived about a block away from them. Miss Camper had her mother for a long time living with her and needing attention. I don't remember what period this was, but for a semester or two Miss Coulter would go and sit with Miss Camper's mother for an hour in the morning before she went down to the university, just to have someone present until the regular care giver could arrive. Miss Camper, who was the reference librarian at the Berkeley Public Library, would often drive the Misses Coulter somewhere. They were going somewhere, I think it may have been out to a meal, and Miss Coulter died just getting into Miss Camper's car, right in front of Miss Coulter's house.

McCreery: It was extremely sudden?

Reynolds: It was not unexpected, because it was known that she wasn't well. But no one expected her to go like that, which was very hard on her sister too, of course.

McCreery: Do you know the nature of her illness?

Reynolds: Not really. She went to the same doctor I went to, Dr. Benson, whose sister had been a librarian. Dr. Benson once said to me that Miss [Edith] Coulter had various ailments, but he had never found anything wrong with Miss Mabel. Miss Mabel died some years later after she had moved to the Berkeley Women's City Club. Crossing Shattuck Avenue, she apparently had a stroke and fell down on the street. She was taken to Alta Bates and I think she lived a very short time, maybe a week or two afterward, having had a life apparently quite free of ailments.

McCreery: That is good to live relatively trouble-free up until that time. How did you learn the news of Miss Edith Coulter's death? Do you recall?

Reynolds: Someone called me. I'm not sure whether it was Miss Camper, but someone did call me--not immediately, but shortly afterward.

McCreery: Was there a public memorial service for her?

Reynolds: Yes, there was a service. I'm not sure it was what you would now call public. It was conducted by a minister who was

living, not next door but on the corner of Euclid and Hawthorne Terrace. I can't remember where it was held.

McCreery: She was quite a figure in the school's history.

Reynolds: Yes, she was. [tape interruption]

Presidency of Alumni Association, 1958

McCreery: A few minutes ago you mentioned the time when you were president of the library school alumni association, and I did want to ask you more about that. I note that you were president-elect in 1957 and then president in 1958. How did you get elected to such a high office?

Reynolds: They were looking for somebody, I guess [laughter]. I don't remember how I got elected to this office, but anyhow it was a time of financial difficulties. I found the treasury so depleted that we had to reduce the number of issues of the newsletter from four to two. Also we officers absorbed some of the day-to-day costs of the organization, because the people who had preceded us had not been very careful about how they used money. Of course, we did not want to say much about it because we didn't want to make anyone lose confidence in the funds that were being collected to memorialize our professors. We were able to offer the Sydney Mitchell Scholarship for the first time that year.

McCreery: How was it decided to make that award?

Reynolds: You mean how was the person chosen?

McCreery: No. How did the organization go about setting up that fund?

Reynolds: The funds had been set up before. I really don't know anything about that. But I think no one was against the funds; and I do think most alumni contributed to the extent that they were able. What I meant was there was enough money in the fund that year to make an award to a student. The recipient was suggested by the school. We gave it to Richard Colvig, who was the music librarian down at the Oakland Public Library for many years. I was very concerned about who should give the Coulter Lecture. At that time, of course, Miss Coulter was still interested, and came whenever she could. I remember once she went to Los Angeles primarily to attend the Coulter Lecture. But this of course was later and in Long Beach, where CLA was

meeting. I had heard Emerson Greenaway, the librarian of Enoch Pratt, speak to a small, informal group--perhaps it was a class--in the library school. He was so charming that I wanted to ask him. I did, and he came out. But he was not quite so good as he had been in the informal group. He didn't feel that he should talk--at first he thought he would talk about his career, which is extremely interesting, but he decided against it, and he talked instead about the role of research in a public library.

McCreery: That's quite different.

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McCreery: Continuing then about Mr. Greenaway's Coulter Lecture.

Reynolds: That was given in Long Beach in a hotel. It was nice to have him there, and people enjoyed him. I don't know that there's anything more that I can say about it. It was one of the lectures that Miss Coulter did not attend. She had apparently been pleased with the choice.

We did entertain the graduating class that year at a luncheon. I think that's now the pattern. Earlier, many meetings had been held at what was then the Berkeley Women's City Club, now called the Berkeley City Club. We had the luncheon--I don't remember why--in the College Women's Club on Bancroft Way near College [Avenue]. It was in fact the Berkeley branch of the American Association of University Women, although it had this other name. We had a very good attendance, a full house. Students of course were the guests. I had invited two speakers: Helen Everett, who was the librarian of Humboldt State College, and Ed Castagna, then librarian of the Long Beach Public.

Recalling Edwin Castagna and Rachel Dent Castagna

McCreery: Did you want to tell me a little bit of your recollection of Ed Castagna and his wife Rachel Dent Castagna? I know they were both close friends of yours.

Reynolds: We were classmates in the library school. I first met Rachel when we were gym partners as freshmen. I did not see much of her until the year we went to library school; we were both then living in International House. She was on a very limited budget; I think she had had to borrow money to go to library

school, and I believe that she had also a loan from the School of Librarianship.

Ed did not have any more money to spend, really. He had worked hard. He was very serious. I don't think they paid much attention to each other at that time, although because of their names--Castagna and Dent--they were seated near each other in the workroom. In the classroom she usually sat beside me because we had renewed what was really only an acquaintance when we were gym partners; we became friends during the year.

He was extremely serious, and I felt that he was one of the more unusual and promising people in the class, largely because when we had to give talks about books, he did very well. And I have heard later that Professor Bertrand Bronson, who was one of the important people in the English department, would have liked him to continue on in English instead of going to library school. But earning a living was probably very important to him at that point. We were the class of 1936, a Depression class, after all.

After we graduated, Rachel went to San Benito County and from there to one of the towns very near San Diego. Then she went to Camp Callan as an army librarian.

In 1941 the California Library Association met at the Del Monte Hotel on the Monterey Peninsula. The Del Monte Hotel is now part of the Naval Postgraduate School. It was a lovely hotel. I was talking to Rachel after breakfast or some such time, when along came Ed and he spoke to us. He looked at her, and I saw his eyes light up [laughter]. I think he was suddenly seeing her with different eyes for the first time. It was so marked that I noticed it.

Sure enough, before the meeting was over--she told me later--he had proposed to her by the swimming pool. It was a meeting of more than one day--two or three at least, I think. She didn't accept him at once. But they were married in 1943; meanwhile he had been writing to her regularly. You see, this meeting was late in 1941; I think it was October. So it wasn't very long before Pearl Harbor, when everything changed greatly.

He went into the army tank corps. He was decorated before the war was all over. But in 1943 in the summer, he had leave, came to San Francisco, and they were married. She had been transferred from Camp Callan to the Presidio of San Francisco. She was living in a hotel just behind the St. Francis, a small one. I think they went around the corner and were married in the nearby church without anyone they knew. They just picked

up a couple of witnesses. She told me she wore her black suit because that was what she had at the time.

However--this was in the morning--then he started out to take her up to see his family and friends, et cetera--he came, you know, from Petaluma. They made their first stop at the Mill Valley Public Library to tell me they had been married, only I was in the city. When I came back, my assistant reported that she had just met this attractive newly-married couple. He had written me a little note on the back of a piece of scrap paper [laughter] saying, "Rachel and I were married this morning and stopped to see you."

He was shortly going overseas. I don't remember whether he was injured at all--not seriously, at any rate. But he was in heavy fighting because he was in the tank corps. As a matter of fact, he wrote the history of his battalion later. When the war was over, they came back to Reno, Nevada, to his former position as Washoe County librarian. After that they went down to Long Beach and eventually to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore.

Marjorie Stern of San Francisco--very important in the history of the San Francisco Public Library and president of the board for a time; I don't remember her status then--met them and liked both of them very much. She tried to get Ed for the San Francisco Public Library, but her first attempt was too late, after he had committed himself to Pratt.

I know the second one was after he had been there for a few years, because I was invited--she had a large reception at her home in Pacific Heights--I was invited to that, and then to the small dinner that followed at Trader Vic's to try to persuade Ed to come. People at the dinner were Mr. and Mrs. Stern, Father Monihan, Bertha Hellum, and I. I don't think there was anyone else there. On my journey home, I gave Ed a ride back to his hotel. I said, "I hope it's an offer that can be considered," and he said, "Oh, yes, it can be considered." But he did not come; he stayed at Enoch Pratt.

Well, he did come later for six months after he had retired. Marjorie Stern got him to fill an interim period of six months.

McCreery: Do you know much about the nature of his short-term assignment at San Francisco Public?

Reynolds: I think it was just to hold the fort. They needed somebody, and I saw them quite frequently during that period. I remember

that they were interested in looking at the Mill Valley Public Library, which then had had a new building. He saw something there that he thought he could perhaps introduce in San Francisco that might make a slight difference. He was trying to do what could be done in the interim. I know when it was: it was after Kevin Starr had been librarian.

They enjoyed the time in San Francisco very much. They had an apartment with a view of the North Bay, and Ed enjoyed watching the steamers come and go because he had gone to sea for a time as a young man. They also liked to go out and sit at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor and look out on the North Bay.

He was always very, very attached to California. Rachel said, "When we had to find some California poppies to plant in our yard, I wasn't sure we were going to make it in Baltimore." [laughter] They were a devoted couple. He was extremely dedicated, both to the cause of libraries and to intellectual freedom. And he was an intellectual who wrote and spoke well, always. They were both great readers. After she married him, Rachel did only a little library work--sometimes in schools, later for the veterans hospital in Reno--but primarily she was Ed's wife.

I think they were very, very close. We drove up to Mendocino one weekend together. At that time he was always pointing out things to Rachel; they were extremely dependent on each other.

I visited them in Baltimore once. I was invited the second time--we were going to make a little trip together--and Rachel called to say he was ill and they didn't know what it was, but it turned out to be encephalitis. So of course I didn't go. He was ill for a long time and seemed to be getting better. Then he took a turn for the worse. I would call her and talk to her on the telephone from time to time. The last time I talked to her she said that he was extremely depressed.

[tape interruption]

After he became ill and we had the joy of seeing him getting better apparently, and then to have this relapse was just too much. So during November--I think it was the Thanksgiving weekend--they were found having committed suicide in their apartment. An empty bottle of aspirin was found. It was certainly a planned suicide because everything was in order. Later on when I called one of his relatives to talk to her about it, she said that there had been signs that nobody

recognized. Rachel had sent various things like his watch home to his relatives. She was well, but she made it possible for him to commit suicide.

McCreery: How did you find out?

Reynolds: I had a letter from the attorney. She had left everything organized: people to be notified. These were sent out promptly. I think I got the letter before any public announcement appeared.

McCreery: What a blow for you.

Reynolds: It was. I went down to see my friend Mary Wale, who was then ill, and discovered on arrival that I had on a pair of mismatched shoes. She said, "This has upset you quite a bit, hasn't it?" It had, really.

McCreery: Thank you for sharing that. [tape interruption]

More about Presidency of the Alumni Association; Professional Meetings

McCreery: I'd like to return for a moment to the year you were president of the library school alumni association. You mentioned when we began talking about that that the association was in some financial straits and that you didn't want the membership to lose confidence and so on. But I noted in reviewing the old newsletters that during your presidency year, the association dues rose from one dollar a year to two dollars a year [laughter]. I wondered if that was considered a big deal at the time?

Reynolds: I don't think so. I would not have been able to recall it if you hadn't told me [laughter].

McCreery: It sounds like such a small amount now, but yet it's doubling what they had been paying.

Reynolds: But we had a good membership. People always turned up in enthusiastic numbers for the luncheon or dinner at CLA, and usually I think also for the annual luncheon for the graduating class. At CLA they always wanted to stand up with their classes; you always had to include that. I remember that the dean brought a hula hoop once and demonstrated his prowess [laughter].

McCreery: This is Dean Danton?

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: [laughs] Oh, tell me!

Reynolds: Well, that's all I remember; I've told you the whole thing. He always talked about how the school was getting on, and for a number of years he would say that he hoped soon to be able to offer the doctorate, and eventually of course he was able to say that he could offer the doctorate.

McCreery: Yes, I know that was very important to him. Did you have occasion to get to know him very well?

Reynolds: As well as I wanted to. I sat beside him a number of times, of course, during the time that I was president or teaching in the school. He was always very pleasant, but he was not what you could call a tactful person. He was nice to me when I was teaching in the school especially. When you went there to teach, I think he routinely invited you to a lunch or a dinner --it was a dinner in my case--with members of the school, some of whom of course I knew very well already, like Ethelyn Markley and Fred Mosher.

McCreery: I will want to return and talk about that in more detail, your teaching there. Perhaps we'll just finish up about your presidency of the alumni association. Other than the things you've already mentioned such as choosing the Coulter lecturer and so on, what were the president's duties?

Reynolds: Well, those were the principal things that you did. You had to manage the business of the association, of course. I remember being in Santa Barbara for a Christmas vacation and going to L.A. to meet Ed Coman, who was my successor--he was librarian of UC at Riverside then--to talk about the association and its welfare, et cetera.

I can't remember that the association ever took any stand in how things were going in the school--at least not to my knowledge--but I think some members of the association took it upon themselves to talk to the dean.

McCreery: Do you know on what subjects?

Reynolds: On the school in general. There were people who were concerned about the way it was developing. There were some people who felt that there was entirely too much attention given to rote work, memory work, by some of the people teaching in the

school. Just which ones, I'm not sure at this point, so I couldn't say even if I wanted to. It's hard to draw the line because librarianship does depend a lot on a good memory. You can't operate unless you have something in your mind to start with [laughter].

McCreery: Did you enjoy being president of the alumni association?

Reynolds: Yes, I think so. I did enjoy the association with the people. Otherwise I might not have become friends with some of them, notably Barbara Campbell, an outstanding public county librarian, who has been one of my best friends ever since. I was also president of CURLS [College, University, and Research Librarian Section of CLA]--when was that? Shortly afterward.

McCreery: Yes, let's talk about that. It's a section of the California Library Association.

Reynolds: The main thing I remember about that really, is that the president of CLA wanted the association to have a pin made that would honor all the past presidents. He wanted to have all the past presidents walk across the stage at a meeting to receive their pins. Well, I didn't think much of this idea, and I tried to be discouraging about it and let it drop. Nobody said very much.

At the final meeting he brought it up; he was all ready to go with it. At that point I thought, "I can't be a party to this," so I said that I was opposed and felt we should not be spending money in this way. At that, everybody else joined in and we killed his entire program. [laughter] I would rather he remained anonymous in this. But that is my principal memory of the association.

We had a lively discussion when I presided at the main CURLS meeting, but exactly what it was about I can't tell you at this point. I don't think it's important enough to make an effort to find out. I suppose somebody kept minutes. Again, that was here at the Claremont Hotel.

Perhaps it would be interesting to say a word or two about one or two other organizations. About CLA, one interesting thing I might say is that Wendell Coon was the elections committee chairman, which meant he had to manage the elections. He was, as I have said earlier, very good at organization. So he organized the vote counting in a very pleasant way. We went to Edna Yelland's house. He would ask people to come, friends and people he thought might enjoy it. You'd be there for an all-day meeting, count the votes, and have lunch. Or you could

stay half a day, whatever amount of time you wanted to give. I went several times.

Mrs. Yelland was the executive secretary of the alumni association--very nice person. She was actually Mrs. Raymond Yelland; her husband was the well-known Berkeley architect who did Hansel-and-Gretel style of architecture. He did Normandy Village down here near the university. I think it's on Spruce Street. He also did the Tupper and Reed store with the original Pied Piper restaurant upstairs. He would sometimes be there too.

The college librarians--people not part of the University of California, where problems were totally different from ours --would sometimes meet informally at various libraries. I remember Mr. [Kenneth J.] Brough and Father Monihan suggesting it, and I remember once Father Monihan had just returned from a buying trip to England, and he told us about that.

There was another group, the He-Librarians Mutual Protective Association--that may not be the exact title, but it certainly started out as the He-Librarians Mutual. I think they were very informal; they had a good time eating and drinking at various places in the Bay Area without any women present. This of course has just melted away [laughter].

McCreery: Yes, I suppose so. Do you know their statement of organization?

Reynolds: I don't think they had one. I think it was totally informal, except they must have had some organization to get a mailing list out, which they evidently did. I know I have seen copies of their invitations. I don't know how long this lasted. I really can't say anything more about it than that. I think they probably hang their heads [laughter].

McCreery: Do you know who some of the members were?

Reynolds: Yes, but I don't think I should say because it would put undue emphasis on one or two who may not after all be the main organizers.

McCreery: Good point. Thank you, though--I have seen some reference to the group but never anyone who could come remotely close to giving the name of it, so I appreciate that tidbit.

You may have one or two other organizations you wanted to mention that you were involved with at that time?

Reynolds: I used to go to ALA. Not every time, but usually when it was at an interesting place--Montreal, for example. I was there, and the Castagnas were there when they were setting off for Baltimore. At ALA I enjoyed particularly meeting people from other small colleges because of course the great place for small colleges is in the east, not in the west. I met the librarian of Bryn Mawr, whom I liked and who invited me to visit her there. And I also met the Radcliffe College librarian, who I just recently discovered is a cousin of my old friend Elisabeth's [Clark] husband. I remember her particularly because she gave me some suggestions for interesting travel in Nova Scotia.

Teaching Reference during Fredric Mosher's Sabbaticals, 1958 and 1964

[Interview 9: July 21, 1999] ##

McCreery: We said that we would start our discussion today about the times that you came to teach reference and bibliography at the School of Librarianship in place of Professor Mosher. How did all that come about the first time in the spring of 1958?

Reynolds: I really don't know why they asked me to do it. Perhaps because I had taught the subject for the Extension Division at Miss Coulter's suggestion.

Also, I had just gone to Mills and of course I was teaching the same sort of thing--well, I hadn't <u>just</u> gone to Mills; I had been there almost three years and was teaching the same sort of thing but in much lesser depth with a different emphasis, mainly to graduate students. Their interest was primarily in the subjects in which they were getting a master's degree, and I was trying to teach them how to find their way around in the subjects new to them, and how to record what they had found, and give them some idea of the depth to which they could go.

Professor Mosher was in residence the first time I taught, which was 1958, so I saw a fair amount of him in his office and learned immediately that he expected me to teach to his pattern, which was much more intense with less class participation than my own style. He had extensive files even by this time, so it wasn't difficult to do. We emphasized the bibliographical pattern that underlies the publishing records in this country and in England and France and Germany.

McCreery: Was that quite different from the way you were used to teaching it?

Reynolds: No, it was just more detailed. In a class of one semester you're usually not going to go into publishing records in languages other than English. After that you know how to orient yourself in another field, one hopes. He also went through the main fields of human knowledge and the main reference works. He had extensive files of problem questions in each field. Of course, I gave quizzes and the final examination.

The first time I taught was in 1958, and the second time was in 1964. Then Bob [Robert D.] Harlan had recently joined the faculty. He had one section and I had the other. If I remember correctly, we gave the same final examination. Whether we gave the same midterms, I don't know; that's not important. Anyhow, I enjoyed getting to know him, and we have been on very friendly terms ever since. I think he was one of the particularly good additions to the faculty made after the original faculty had retired. I don't know that I have anything more to say about UC.

McCreery: I'm just wondering--returning to the first time that you went back to teach in 1958--did you know many of the other faculty who were there at that time?

Reynolds: Slightly, yes. Ed Wight, and LeRoy [C.] Merritt were already there, I think. I don't know whether Ray Held was there before 1964. Ethelyn [Markley] was in residence and teaching. I had known her for a long time; we were on very friendly terms. She was greatly admired. Miss Coulter took full credit for Ethelyn's appointment, at least to me, saying Dean Danton had been about to appoint a man, when Miss Coulter told him that after her retirement there ought to be at least one woman on the faculty.

McCreery: How did the students at Berkeley compare to those you had taught elsewhere or through Berkeley's Extension Division?

Reynolds: Many of the students in the Extension Division were already in the field in some capacity, or else they weren't in the field and wanted to enter. In the library school they were mostly students just going into the field. I don't remember that I had very many who had had much experience or who talked much about it. They were usually good students. One was a girl I had known at Mills, who was very good in music. She is now, I think, at Princeton. Or maybe she's retired by this time.

McCreery: Okay. That's a nice piece of continuity. Do you have much idea how the curriculum at Berkeley had changed since you had been a student there yourself?

Reynolds: I think the reference and cataloging were still much the same, in general, perhaps reference in more depth. I think that Mr. Mosher tried to cover a great many fields in as much depth as possible, whereas Miss Coulter's idea was to teach you how to do it. You would be able to do it yourself later on. He didn't leave quite so much to the future--and you--as she did. Of course the world was changing greatly too: reference works were coming out at a great rate at that time and shortly after. If you were away from reference for a while you would have to catch up with quite a lot of new tools.

McCreery: What was the best way to keep up with those changes on an ongoing basis?

Reynolds: To watch for new books as they came out and examine them.

McCreery: As you say, it never ends?

Reynolds: No, it doesn't end.

McCreery: What was it like to be on campus again for you, just in general?

Reynolds: Oh, I enjoyed that very much, but I had never really been too far off because one of the reasons that I was given a parking pass at Berkeley was that it was assumed that the Mills librarian would want to come on campus rather often. I didn't do bibliographic errands for faculty people, though if someone had asked me, I would have. But there were things that you were interested in seeing--new reference works, for example.

McCreery: When you taught for Professor Mosher, where was your class held? [tape interruption]

Reynolds: I really can't remember. When I taught the second time, I definitely remember that the students had desks in the cubicles on the east side of the fourth floor, space that had formerly belonged to The Bancroft Library.

McCreery: Do you have any particular recollection of the ratio of women students to men, not exactly, but did anything stand out to you?

Reynolds: No, but I'm sure that there were more women than men at that point.

McCreery: The School of Librarianship itself had been under the wing of Professor Danton as its dean since 1946. In your view, how had the school changed since the time you had been there as a student?

Reynolds: That ties in with the nature of the faculty. I think it was Ed Wight who specialized more or less in the public library, and LeRoy Merritt--Ray Held came later. He was history of the library; he was there the second time I taught. I don't think he was there the first time. He and his wife are both gone now. LeRoy Merritt was especially interested in intellectual freedom. In a way they covered the subjects that had been Mr. Mitchell's earlier and that had also been taught in book selection. There was a certain expansion, of course, since there were two people giving full time. I don't think Mr. Mitchell ever taught full time. Danton was also involved principally in university and college library administration, and he had had a lot of experience.

McCreery: The second time that you taught there, in 1964, Raynard C. Swank was the school's new dean since the previous year.

Reynolds: I can't remember him as a presence on campus. While at Stanford he did a lot of traveling. Possibly he still had travel commitments.

McCreery: I just wanted to ask you if you knew Mr. Swank.

Reynolds: Yes, but not well. He was a pleasant person; we had him out at Mills one time to help judge the student libraries.

McCreery: The second time again, in 1964, you were there in the spring. On the larger scene at that time, President Kennedy had just been assassinated recently, and the events were building towards the Free Speech Movement that later broke out on campus. I know you were just there the one semester for a short time, but I wonder if you have any particular thoughts or recollections of the campus atmosphere at that time. Is there anything that stands out to you?

Reynolds: I remember the campus in turmoil, but I don't believe that I was aware of it in my teaching role at all. I remember one day, but I think it was later, coming back to Berkeley and having to skirt around the streets that were in turmoil, and later talking to people who had been there, who had been much closer than I to what was happening. But I can't remember that this impinged at all upon my teaching. And are you sure that it had started in Berkeley by the spring?

McCreery: Actually it was in the fall, but I'm just thinking of--

Reynolds: Forerunners.

McCreery: Forerunners, or if there was any--

Reynolds: No, no, I don't think so.

LeRoy Merritt and Summer Teaching at University of Oregon, 1966-1970

McCreery: If you're ready, perhaps we'll move on and talk about your various summers teaching reference at the University of Oregon.

Reynolds: This happened because LeRoy Merritt had gone there. I think he was a bit disappointed after serving as acting dean in Berkeley, not to become the dean permanently. For that reason he was ripe for a move. The University of Oregon wanted him, and I think he was very pleased to go there. He called me and told me that he would not be present in the summer of 1966, but he hoped I would go because they had asked him to suggest someone to take the reference position in the summer session. I thought it would be fun. I had never spent much time in Oregon, and I enjoyed it very much. I drove up so that I had my car and was able to see the state.

I discovered that the classes were filled with a very interesting mix of people. Oregon required that there be someone in each public school who had completed a certain number of units in librarianship. This meant that a large number of students were taking summer work. They came from all over the state, disappeared over the weekend to go home, and then came back each Monday morning ready to start out again.

They were of various ages and backgrounds. One of them, a young black woman named Carolyn [O.] Frost went on and is now--or at least was some years ago--still teaching cataloging at the University of Michigan library school. There were a number of students who were teaching in the Oregon public schools. One was a woman who simply couldn't do reference. She was rather old and had taught children for so long that she had great difficulty stretching her mind to something else. This is not because children's subjects are necessarily so inferior, but because she evidently hadn't tried to stretch her mind at anything. I remember her particularly because she was so very

nice. She came up to me and said, "Now I don't want you to worry about me. I just can't do it, and don't worry about me."

I had a minister who had been a college chaplain. I don't know whether he had lost his faith or whether he no longer wanted to be on a campus. I had a young dean who didn't want to be a dean of students any longer. She was trying to retread herself. I had a retired encyclopedia salesman. All sorts of people. Mostly they were extremely likeable. Of course, this was the sixties, as you have just said. [tape interruption]

There was less unrest visible in Oregon, during the summer session at any rate. The school was very quickly accredited after the year LeRoy Merritt got there--really almost a record. I enjoyed it very much. He came just once during the first session I was there, on a visit. It was obvious that he was very happy about his new position. Perhaps I should say something about him at this point.

McCreery: Yes, please.

Reynolds: He was short and unimpressive as far as stature was concerned. Very solid appearance. He was an honest, genuine sort of person. Very polite, but a bit unpolished, a little bit homespun.

He told us one evening when I was invited to a supper party with a small group of people--he told us a story about his youth, how he had worked in the Milwaukee Public Library shelving books. After he entered the University of Wisconsin he came home weekends to shelve books. He would do this all through the winter. After a weekend of shelving books he would ride back to Madison on the tender of a locomotive. He thought the train crew knew he was there. Mary, his wife, who was not his wife at that point, would go down to the station with him to say goodbye. When he was telling the story she said, "But you had a warm coat, LeRoy." Well, you know, in midwinter it must have been pretty cold on that tender at night.

I think he was a little naive about people. It's quite possible, for I've heard rumors that there were problems among the staff in the Oregon school. They had added archives management to the regular library curriculum. I suspect it was LeRoy's suggestion, but I don't really know. However, I do know that the archives students felt themselves a little bit superior to the garden variety librarians [laughter].

But whatever the reason, there were problems in the school during the last year of his life. I learned about this when I

went back to teach in 1970--I taught 1966, 1968, '69, and 1970 --the last time he had just committed suicide by jumping from a campus office building adjacent to the library. Someone reported hearing sounds of a person walking back and forth and back and forth in the hallway on the top floor before this happened. Probably it was he.

I know that he had also had other problems. He had moved his mother and father from Berkeley to Eugene. Of course, the earlier move to Berkeley had been a big change for them too. Apparently they weren't happy in either place. And there was an accident of some sort. I think one of them was hurt seriously in a wheelchair out on the street. This also added to his problems.

LeRoy's death was a great shock to everybody. During that year, the summer of 1970, I saw quite a bit of his wife, who was of course devastated. Every conversation got around eventually to the problem of LeRoy and why he did it. I understand that later she went off to Japan to teach. I think she may have earned a second degree, or at least I know that she had taken work at the Pacific School of Religion here in Berkeley.

So far as I know, she may still be alive in a retirement home in Eugene. I've not heard directly from her. I no longer hear from anyone in Oregon except the friends whose apartment I lived in.

McCreery: Knowing you were just there those several summers, how would you compare that library school to the one here?

Reynolds: It didn't take itself so seriously as the one here. Of course I don't think that they offered anything in the way of work beyond the first degree. I don't remember whether they gave a degree or a certificate--probably a degree because by that time virtually all library schools were giving a degree instead of a certificate for the first year's work.

There were very good people. They were closer to actual practice than most of the people in Berkeley.

McCreery: In part, as you say, because of that rule about having a certain amount of librarian training in schools, do you think?

Reynolds: Well, the students certainly were closer to practice than many of the students here. That was one of the things that made it very interesting. A lot depends on the particular mix of students you happen to get. I remember an Oregon class in

advanced reference that was one of the nicest and most interesting I ever taught. That was due largely to the mix of students. The same thing was true, sometimes to an even greater extent, at Mills in the reference and bibliography classes that I taught there. I would sometimes get a mix of students that sparked each other in one way or another.

McCreery: It's certainly true that one class can vary from another greatly. You taught in quite a number of schools and settings over the years. How did your teaching methods change as time went on?

Reynolds: I don't think I changed a lot. Maybe I did. Because I had had a fair amount of experience before I taught, it was never just an intellectual enterprise devoid of practical experience. I think there's quite a lot to be said for having related practical experience from time to time. But of course if you're in an institution that demands research results, you're very limited in what you can do. You have only so much energy and time.

McCreery: On the whole, how did you like teaching?

Reynolds: I loved it. I also loved Mills. I liked both. I enjoyed having a combination of both during practically all of my career.

Becoming an Associate in The Bancroft Library; Working with Leslie Clarke

McCreery: We want to talk about some of your activities after retirement in a little bit more detail. First of all, after your retirement from Mills you became an associate in The Bancroft Library, a position you still hold today. How did that come about?

Reynolds: The fact that I have the title "associate" is due to the publication of this, the *Guide to the Book Artifacts Collection*, which had to be signed. Jim [James D.] Hart said, "We'll make you an associate," so I could have a title that shows some connection with the place.

My going to the Bancroft came about because when I retired he made a gift in my honor to the Mills library. When I wrote to thank him, I said--one of those offhand statements one

makes--"If there is something I could do for the Bancroft, don't hesitate to ask me."

I must admit that I had thought maybe they needed people to stuff envelopes sometimes or something like that, but very shortly he was on the telephone, and he said, "There is a little project which you could do if you're interested. There are some objects that are used in teaching and for exhibitions that need to be recorded. Perhaps you would be interested in doing it." I asked what they were, and he mentioned things like facsimiles of a rune stone, a Roman tablet, or wood engravings. I said, "I hardly think I'd be qualified to do this." "Oh, that's nonsense. Come down and see! Of course you are!" [laughter]

The upshot was that I went down the next time they had a "do," and he arranged for me to talk to Leslie Clarke, whom I already knew--the rare books librarian. She had been out to Mills with Annegret Ogden as a luncheon guest at least once. And Roger Levenson was the other person he wanted me to talk to. Of course I already knew Roger, who was a well-known printer. So I talked to them. Since Leslie would be working on the project too, I decided that I would be interested.

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Reynolds: About April 1977 I began going into the Bancroft regularly for a few hours a week, and I worked with Leslie. I think I should say something about her. She was a remarkable woman. She had graduated when she was young as an RN [registered nurse]--I guess a bachelor's degree as well, in nursing, at Stanford Hospital--and had been a housewife and mother for a number of years thereafter. Then in 1962 she graduated from Berkeley with highest honors and a Phi Beta Kappa key--the highest honors were in English. She went to library school the next year.

She was a scholarly sort of person by nature, always interested in learning, and a painstaking worker. She was keenly interested in people, particularly the young. She had a special rapport with them. She had two sons and a daughter of her own. She was always very, very pleasant to be with. I enjoyed working with her.

As we went along she devised a classification scheme for the objects. No sooner had we gotten started than people began to find all sorts of things that hadn't been recorded and ought to be recorded. For example, woodcut blocks, rubber engravings, linocut blocks, photoengravings, electrotypes,

binders' tools--a very large collection of binders' tools that had been in Blake House because Mrs. Anson Blake, who with her husband owned that house--now it's the university president's residence--was an amateur binder. We had printing presses, type, all sorts of things.

It was Leslie Clarke who selected the name for the collection, the BART Collection. Together we couldn't think of any other symbol or acronym to stand for a book artifacts collection. Larry Dinnean, who was the curator of pictures, had already used the word objects in his domain.

Leslie and I became very good friends. When I told her about my travels with AIB [Association Internationale de Bibliophilie], she became interested and joined also. We planned to go together to their congress in Brussels in the summer of 1979.

But during the spring she seemed to be ill quite a lot. She would be absent from time to time, and then she'd seem to be all right, and she would be back again. I remember that we went to a Book Club party in San Francisco and a month later she was gone. She became ill while on the reference desk at the Bancroft one morning and someone on the staff took her over to Alta Bates Hospital. They diagnosed liver cancer, which is fatal.

It's probably just as well that she didn't discover it earlier. Since she was a nurse she may have had an inkling that something was seriously wrong, because nurses' and doctors' reactions to illness are often rather odd. They sometimes want to deny it. Whether that's what she was doing or not, I don't know. Anyhow, she was shortly gone, and that was a great shock to everyone. I told Mr. Hart that I would finish the job that she and I had worked on. I didn't imagine that the staff would find so much to add to the collection as they later did!

Roger Levenson and the Tamalpais Press

Reynolds: Then Roger Levenson, who had come in [to the Bancroft] only occasionally up to that point, began to come regularly. He had been a lecturer in the history of the book and fine printing in the school for about twelve years but had rather recently retired. I should say at this point that he had also learned something about papermaking in order to establish a papermaking

mill in the school and give the students some hands-on experience with papermaking.

I think I should probably tell his story to some degree, though his papers are on file over at Gleeson Library of the University of San Francisco. They bought them. He had a shop called the Tamalpais Press across from the campus on Bancroft Way. He was a New Englander, born in Maine. I'm not sure whether his bachelor's degree is from the University of Maine or whether he earned it after the war here in Berkeley. Anyhow, it was in Maine that he started to learn printing.

When the war came, he was in the Air Corps, and en route to Hawaii where he was stationed for the duration, he was briefly at Hamilton Field--near enough to see San Francisco and the Bay Area. He decided right then that this was where he wanted to live when the war was over. He was a sergeant. I don't remember the exact rank. He did mostly office work in Honolulu.

When he came back he attended the University of California. He must have gotten a teaching credential here because he did teach for a while in Piedmont High School and I think also at the [California] College of [Arts and] Crafts. Then he had his own press, which he called the Tamalpais Press. He did a lot of work on the press and became known as a typographical authority. That was his main interest, printing and type. In fact, we have one or two teaching devices in the BART collection that he made for use here. One of them is a little stand with examples of punches in various stages of development from new material to a finished punch carrying the design of a character to be cast.

Another main interest was music. He had studied music here at Berkeley and made friends in the department. Among his best friends were Andrew Imbrie and his family. Andrew Imbrie was a composer of modern music, but Roger's main interest was [Richard] Wagner. He used to go regularly to the San Francisco Wagner performances, and sometimes to the Wagner festival in Seattle.

His third interest was railroading. He had a friend who owned a private car, and Roger used to help him with the private car and go out and get some hands-on experience every once in a while. He felt like a swimmer who hasn't got to the sea [laughter] if he couldn't get some railroading experience from time to time.

So in those three fields he tended to make his friends, and he had lots of friends. He was generous, always ready to come at the drop of a hat if someone needed help. He has got many a printer out of some kind of jam [laughter] with a printing project.

McCreery: How did you meet him?

Reynolds: I think I met him for the first time just in the course of book events here. I remember that it was he who advised us that we should put Miss Keep's Washington handpress in the 1954 wing [at Mills College]. We asked him whether its weight would be too much for other floors, and he thought that it would.

I was about to say that I remember once that the San Francisco Symphony broadcast a need for some piece of equipment or instrument--I'm not sure what it was, I think a glockenspiel. But Roger had some money at hand that was free and he gave it to them. This was rather generous for somebody who was not rich. His father had left him a trust, but it was in the care of some very conservative relatives in Boston. I know it didn't produce a great deal of money. He sometimes talked about it. He lived a rather simple life: he did not have extravagant tastes. In fact, his everyday outfit very often included a railroad cap.

In the Bancroft he was extremely friendly and he knew everybody. He was very good at scrounging boxes and protective material for the artifacts that we were adding to the collection. He was also good at constructing something with his own hands that would hold outsized and unusual objects. I continued the classification that Leslie had established, as closely as I could, in the pattern that she had set. But I always talked over the problems involved in describing the objects and learned as much as I could from Roger and showed him what I had written.

After we had worked for a while together, he decided to move to Santa Barbara, which he had long contemplated. He had spent many summers there and made a lot of friends. He called them his beach friends: a group of people who liked to spend time on the beach. He went down there to live, apparently permanently, and stayed four years. But eventually he came to feel that it was too far away from all of the friends and the interests that were centered in the Bay Area, and he came back.

Before he came back we had published the first edition of the *Guide to the Book Artifacts Collection*. When he came back he lived in Opera Plaza in San Francisco, and later he moved to

a retirement home in Marin County. But he used to commute to Berkeley, and he came as long as he could. He, too, had cancer of the liver, which as you know is fatal; so he knew that he was doomed. He came up until just a short time before he died.

I should also say that he loved both printing and teaching. He always wanted everybody to know as much as possible about printing. The Bancroft has a number of his gifts, one of which is the Berkeley Albion handpress. That was the press he had used in his printing office. Another gift is a facsimile of a seventeenth-century press, which he had built at his own expense and gave to the Bancroft. It's there if you want to demonstrate the methods of seventeenth-century printing. Printers of that period often made corrections as they went along. That's one of the reasons that there can be so much argument about Shakespeare's original texts, et cetera.

In 1988 he and I had a fellowship at the Huntington Library for the month of January. The idea was that we would investigate--I should say first that one of the gifts to Bancroft for which Roger deserves a great deal of credit was the Merrymount collection of typographical typecast ornaments. The Merrymount Press had belonged to Daniel Berkeley Updike, one of this country's most distinguished printers, a Bostonian. Roger had handproofed on the Albion press--which was originally his--all of these ornaments, a big job. It took a long time.

We wanted to identify as many of those as we possibly could. The Huntington was supposed to have an almost complete collection of books printed on the Merrymount Press, and they also had the Updike papers. So that was the purpose of the fellowship. The results are contained in two big binders which go along with the records, the two other binders that contain the records of the whole BART collection.

Roger acquired a personal computer as soon as they became available, quickly adapted to it and became very adept. He enjoyed it, and he proceeded to write the book for which he had been accumulating material for many years: *Women in Printing: Northern California, 1859-1890*. Without the computer I think he would never have been able to complete the book before he died. That was in 1994.

McCreery: I'm wondering about some of the other projects you may have worked on for The Bancroft Library. What are you working on now, for example?

Reynolds: Now it's the second edition of this guide.

McCreery: Has that actually come out yet?

Reynolds: I think in press, at this point.

McCreery: You worked on that for how long?

Reynolds: Oh, I don't know. It would be impossible to say how long it has been. We have added some important things that have been acquired since the original edition. An example: the punches that were made under [Firmin] Didot in Paris. Another example: a nineteenth-century engraver's and etcher's rolling press. And I have been engaged in cleaning up and occasionally finding something that can be stored in acid-proof bags that were not available when we first started working.

I have not worked on anything else for the Bancroft. This has been a big job in itself. There are literally hundreds of objects in the collection.

Father Monihan and the Gleeson Library at the University of San Francisco

McCreery: Tell me now a little bit about your involvement with the Gleeson Library at the University of San Francisco.

Reynolds: When I retired, Father Monihan, whom I had come to know--I think I said I met him first when he came in to San Francisco State to talk about his new building with Mr. Brough, who also had a new building underway. Over the years I came to know Father Monihan a lot better. He had graduated with the Berkeley class of 1952, I think, though I believe he attended classes over more than one year. He had not intended to be a librarian, but the Jesuits decided that he should, possibly because he had a stutter, and Jesuits are great preachers, I believe.

The first time he called me on the telephone at Mills, I think I nearly hung up on him because he could have great difficulty getting out "Miss Reynolds." I thought I had a wrong number or someone a little touched in the head. After we got to first-name terms it was much better [laughter]. Of course, after one experience of that sort I knew who was calling. He used to call me for information about what we were doing at Mills, things that he could use in connection with his own work. We were on the same committees occasionally.

I was invited to join the Gleeson board immediately, in 1977, and I have only recently retired [from it]. Because he was such a generous, outgoing person, so committed to his library, and to USF, he attracted a very interesting group of people to his board. I think everyone on the board thoroughly enjoyed the meetings for their social aspects at least. [laughter]

He traveled the country for the Gleeson Library, making friends, attracting gifts. He was so genuinely committed to what he was doing that he was extremely successful. In that respect, I think that he and James D. Hart were the most successful people of their era. Both of them made a friend of Norman Strouse, the bibliophile who lived in St. Helena and established the Silverado Museum. He made generous gifts to both libraries. In the end, The Bancroft Library got the major things, partly I think not only because of James D. Hart but also because of Tony Bliss, in whom Mr. Strouse saw someone who was very, very well-equipped to appreciate and make very good use of his gifts. That is also always an incentive to a donor.

Father Monihan always wore his priest's outfit. He explained to me once that he felt that some stranger might want a priest's help, and he was happy to give it. I saw him do that once when someone down and out approached him. As I said, he belonged to AIB.

He had two sabbaticals in France, where he lived in a Benedictine monastery, Abbaye Sainte-Marie, at La Pierre-qui-Vire in Burgundy. The monks produce a very fine series of books on Romanesque art.

He gave symposiums at USF each year, which were very, very helpful in raising the image of the institution and in making friends. They were on subjects as diverse as William Butler Yeats, Egypt. One on astronomy once. Unamono was another subject. These symposiums were not only intellectual feasts but also very enjoyable from a gourmet point of view. A meal might be served at the Pacific Union Club--a formal dinner--or the Yacht Club was another place that he liked to use. I think once at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor.

I became increasingly involved with the Gleeson, and I was president of the association for a couple of years from '86 to '88. Then in 1990 Ruth Teiser, who had been editing the newsletter, decided that she didn't feel she could continue it any longer. She was finding it too hard to find suitable topics. She was getting toward the end of her life, and she was not feeling well.

So Father Monihan prevailed upon me to take over editing the newsletter, and I did that from 1990 until 1996 when he died. My last newsletter was devoted to him and his contribution to Gleeson and the world at large.

McCreery: It sounds as if Father Monihan was an important figure in your life.

Reynolds: Yes, he was. We had birthdays on the same day, and we usually celebrated them together. I just enjoyed him, and I guess he enjoyed me.

McCreery: A lot of shared interests of course, and opportunities.

Reynolds: The odd thing is that I am not religious person. I have in my life at least three times made very good friends of people who were not just religious but either priests or ministers. [tape interruption]

McCreery: Can you tell me something about your interest in French over the years?

Reynolds: I had a minor in French as an undergraduate. I had taken actually more than I needed for the minor. I think I took some French when I was getting the master's degree in Latin too. I had always kept up a reading knowledge to a certain extent, but I decided that when I retired I wanted to review and improve my knowledge of French language and literature. So I joined the Alliance Française. It was then centered actually in Piedmont, and they had been to Mills a couple of times to the Bender Room for programs, which I had enjoyed, so I had met some of the members. I found that most of them had graduated from Berkeley, it turned out, but I had never known any of them as undergraduates, though I could have as far as age is concerned.

I became somewhat involved, and eventually I became vice president. I arranged such things as a trip down to Stanford to see the Rodin collection, things of that sort. But I did not want to be president because I'm not sufficiently articulate in French. I would not want to get up in front of a group and conduct a meeting. But I'm still active in the Alliance and also in the other organization, which is an offshoot of the Alliance, Les Amis de la Culture Française--I enjoy both.

Collaborating with Margaret Lyon to Write *The Flying Cloud*

[Interview 10: July 26, 1999] ##

Reynolds: Although I brought the computer to the Mills Library, I retired immediately and have not learned to use it. The text of the book that Margaret Lyon and I wrote together, *The Flying Cloud and Her First Passengers*, we prepared in the slow, old-fashioned way: by typewriter and by hand. It took a long time to gather the material, partly because we both had other projects. She was preparing for publication her research on an English composer who was very important in the Renaissance. Also, she retired two years after I did. So she wasn't really free to devote much time to *The Flying Cloud* until then.

The subject was inspired by the family papers of the I. W. Lyon family--that's Margaret's family. They are the people who manufactured Dr. Lyon's Toothpowder. But the papers for that firm are not part of this collection; they were given long ago to the Baker Library at Harvard. The family gave Mills papers that were more personal. This was shortly before I retired. I went over them with Margaret before recording them in the National Union Catalog.

The most interesting item to me was a vest pocket diary that her great-grandfather, I. W. Lyon, kept when he and his two sisters sailed aboard the clipper ship, the *Flying Cloud*, from New York to San Francisco. It was the ship's very famous maiden voyage, setting a record, eighty-nine days. That stood until 1989. After they got to San Francisco, the two Lyon sisters were married aboard the ship, Ellen to Reuben Boise, the New Englander she had come out to marry, and Sarah to one of the passengers, Laban Coffin of Nantucket.

We began the search for other first-hand material and found very little until I visited the Marblehead Historical Society. It was on our list because the captain, Captain Josiah [P.] Creesy, one of the most famous clipper ship captains, came from Marblehead. I arrived the day before the building closed for the winter. Since Margaret's sister, Virginia Gideon, had visited the society a little earlier while vacationing in New England, they knew about our project and immediately showed me a letter which had just been received. It was from Mrs. Sarah Bowman, who sailed aboard the ship with her son to join her husband in San Francisco. It was really a kind of an epistolary diary written at different times during the voyage and carried all the way to San Francisco.

We searched also for the fate of other passengers. There were only twelve of them in all. That counts the three Lyons and Captain Creesy's wife, who also sailed with him. They were not goldseekers; almost all of them were attracted by the business opportunities in California.

We found a lot about some passengers, but nothing, really, about two of them, although we searched as widely as we could. For example, the New York Historical Society, California Historical Society, and other local sources, MIT, Boston Public [Library], Peabody, and Essex Institutes in Salem, and various genealogical societies. I even spent time at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. We wanted to find background information about the ship, the voyage, the captain, and the people involved.

When we came to the actual writing, the division came about rather naturally. Margaret wrote the chapter on the voyage and the chapter on the Lyon family. She was also responsible for most of the documentary material that appears in the appendices. Martin Antonetti, who was then in charge of rare books at Mills, wanted to publish the book, so it became the first publication of the library's new Center for the Book.

I should say that the program for the master's degree in book arts, which was established after I retired, on the Elinor Raas Heller bequest, had by that time developed problems within the faculty of the college. Therefore the trustees replaced it with the Center for the Book, funding it on the Heller money.

But Martin went to the Grolier Club in New York after he had started our project, and his place was taken by Renée Jadushlever, who is now in charge of the entire [Mills College] library. She handled it. The book was published in 1992 in a very small edition which sold out almost immediately. There was a publication party sponsored by the center and the National Maritime Association aboard the *Balclutha*, which is docked at Hyde Pier in San Francisco.

The book was reprinted without significant change last year [1998]. I might say that we wondered if after the book was published some other information would turn up about passengers or possible passengers, but nothing really did. There were one or two people who thought someone in their family had been aboard the *Flying Cloud*, but we were never able to establish anything.

McCreery: Tell me a little more about Margaret Lyon and how long you had known her and in what connection.

Reynolds: She was one of the professors I met when I first came to Mills. She was always very interested in the development of the library--the music aspect of it. She made tremendous contributions during the period that she was there. That was really the thing that brought us together. She is a music historian rather than a performer. Her graduate students were getting the master's degree and writing a thesis, so therefore they had to take the course I taught. I had her advice early on for the music sources that they should know. I very quickly learned--I certainly never asked the question--that they greatly respected her and liked her. I might say that we traveled together to France one year--it was 1973, and the Milhauds, who were both still alive, entertained us with dinner and lunch and took us to a concert of one of his students. That was for me a very interesting experience. [tape interruption]

We were staying at a hotel at Place Vendôme--not the Ritz [laughter]--and we had decided that we would buy some flowers and take a taxi out to the Milhaud residence in Place Pigalle. We got the flowers and found that suddenly the taxis were on strike. I should say that Margaret was a very handsome woman whose hair was prematurely white so that in a crowd she stood out. We had to take the oldest subway in Paris to Place Pigalle. We were very conspicuous with this big bouquet of flowers and Margaret so handsome [laughter]. But we got there. When it was time to go home Madame came out with us and selected the driver to take us back, a woman with her dog riding along with her.

McCreery: I take it *The Flying Cloud* is the only one of your publications where you had a full collaboration with another person. What was that like?

Reynolds: It's not easy because we had somewhat different ideas of what we were doing, really. But it was very rewarding in the fact that I think we each contributed ideas that might not have occurred to the other alone.

McCreery: In the end, are two heads better than one? [laughter]

Reynolds: It might have been a more unified work if one person had done it. On the other hand, it might have contained less information because the search for information was not easy. It took a lot of patience over a long, long period of time. When you write to an institution they rarely respond by return mail. Sometimes it is a long time before you hear from them.

McCreery: How long did the whole project take, do you recall?

Reynolds: We were at least ten years on it. I, at least--maybe not quite so long for her. But of course both of us had other things going, which made it less of a strain.

McCreery: It's physically a beautiful book. They did such a nice job.

Reynolds: It was Leda Black, who had been a student in the book arts program at Mills, who designed it. I think she has gone into something else now; we tried to get in touch with her about the reprint, but were unable to reach her.

Center for the Book at Mills College; Other Publications

McCreery: Now you said that *The Flying Cloud* was the first publication of the newly formed Center for the Book. What has become of the center?

Reynolds: The center is still operating. Their second book contains material from the Arturo Torres-Ríoseco collection. Just recently they published a book drawn from Lillie Hitchcock Coit's papers.

McCreery: But the center's projects are carefully selected?

Reynolds: It's in Janice Braun's bailiwick.

McCreery: Rare books and so on.

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: You have quite a list of other publications, and we've talked about several of them--books and pamphlets that stand on their own, as well as quite a number of articles published in periodicals. Which of these do you think is most important or memorable, one or more than one?

Reynolds: Well, most of them were written in support of the [Mills] college library and its holdings in one way or another. The dance collection is important at Mills, because dance has always been so prominent in the course offerings, and the degree offerings too. The college I'm sure still gives a master's degree in dance and has produced a great many teachers of dance. So I suppose that that has a certain importance. To me, the one that I feel contains my best writing is the *Six Years in Marvelous Marin*. That is something that I had also

done over a long period of time. I started it after I retired from Mills.

We were talking about who did what in *The Flying Cloud*. Did I say that I did most of the rest of the writing?

McCreery: No, you didn't say that.

Reynolds: Margaret did the family and the voyage. I had started in the introductory material, and so then the natural thing for her to start with was the voyage. Of course after that, naturally, her own family.

McCreery: I can see why that project took a while. Quite ambitious, really.

Reynolds: Yes, and frustrating in that we did think we should be able to find at least one of the two passengers we couldn't find, Martha A. Gorham, because that is not a common name. Another puzzling name was William H. Hall. There must have been dozens of William H. Halls in Massachusetts and California.

Issues in Librarianship: Computers, Public Image, Gender

McCreery: You started off today touching briefly on the role of computers--not so much in librarianship but in the process of writing books and so on. Could we return to that for a moment and see whether you have any particularly strong thoughts about how computers have changed librarianship, recognizing of course that your own retirement preceded much of this?

Reynolds: Yes, and I've had no real experience, so I suppose my words are without too much foundation. But it does seem to me that for people like me, they have made things more difficult. It's very convenient indeed to be able to call up a library and discover whether the book you're interested in has actually arrived, is on order, or is in circulation or whether you may reasonably expect to find it on the shelf if you go in. But I have difficulty when I search for an author's name. For one thing, you have to have the exact spelling. With a card catalog, you're not hopelessly stuck if you can't come up with it, because you can browse the card catalog and probably find it.

For subject entries there is no selectivity; you get a tremendous mass of stuff and no way, really, to select what is

most likely to contain what you want. You can't browse among the headings; often you can't subdivide them readily. If you have a card catalog in front of you, if it's a subject with lots of headings, or if it's a voluminous author like Shakespeare, there are always guide cards to tell you how the subject has been divided. And there are other means the card catalog offers too: contents notes that clue you in. You can also find tracings, which is the word we used for subject headings, and see what subject entries have been chosen. These are a big help.

Other librarians have told me that it's infuriating, particularly when working with children or very young people, who want a CD-ROM for a question that could easily be answered by going to the shelf and picking off an encyclopedia volume and handing it to the student. Finding the CD-ROM and setting it up is much more complicated.

The librarian of the Sausalito library told me that one day a youngster having difficulty with the computer pointed to a statement on the screen, "See the shelf." She said, "Have you looked on the shelf?" He said, "Oh, no, it's not on the shelf, it's in the machine."

Computer users have no idea how knowledge is organized, the nature of the various books in which knowledge, opinions, literature, are recorded. Nor do they know that there is a whole system of bibliographies recording published works from the time books were first printed. Computer users are accustomed to getting masses of information or just one bit of information, and no means of discovering how authoritative the source may be.

One of the things I always tried to teach in reference was the danger of depending upon a particular source, just one source, for pinpointed information. I usually had several questions that would lead you to differing statements of presumably the same facts, which I think is very salutary to see early on. I do think that librarians should not have adopted the computer so wholeheartedly at once, and in many instances destroyed the written records. They should have insisted upon adaptations that would not lose all of the characteristics that the written, old-fashioned records produced.

McCreery: The local writer Nicholson Baker published several articles on librarianship in the *New Yorker* magazine, one dealing specifically with some of the issues you've just raised about card catalogs and how online catalogs are used so differently

from the old ones. Do you recall the effect of that article on the librarian community when it came out?

Reynolds: No, nobody said anything terribly revealing to me. But I believe that he may be responsible for the fact that San Francisco Public [Library], at any rate, had to look over the books that they were discarding--but that was a slightly different issue and a different article from this one on catalogs. He did get a lot of publicity because Virginia Pratt, the UC Berkeley librarian whom he interviewed for that article, tells me that she heard from people all over the United States whose attention was caught by that piece in the *New Yorker*.

McCreery: One thing that interested me about both those articles, the one about the San Francisco Public and the one about card catalogs, was that they were in a very popular publication. It made me realize one doesn't read about librarianship all that often in the lay press.

Reynolds: No, you don't.

McCreery: That led me to think a little bit about the general public's understanding of what librarianship is. How well do you think the public knows and understands what librarians do?

Reynolds: Not very well, and perhaps that is our own fault. Perhaps we should have blown our own horns a little more loudly and explained a bit more what we were doing. You find many people who are extremely supportive and want a good library, and not always the people who are the best educated, either. I learned early on, when I was in Mill Valley particularly, that some of our greatest support came from people who had had the fewest opportunities. There are many, many writers who have expressed their gratitude to the New York Public [Library], for the hours that they were able to spend there.

McCreery: People have expressed similar thoughts about other libraries, but New York is kind of a flagship in some sense.

Reynolds: A flagship, and there were, of course, so many writers.

McCreery: You said a moment ago that perhaps we should have blown our own horn a little better. Do you suggest that librarianship has not blown its horn?

Reynolds: I don't think particularly.

McCreery: Do you feel that's been true for a very long time or only in more recent years?

Reynolds: No, I don't think that there is a change. If there is a change it must be in the more recent years that I don't know about.

McCreery: I'm also interested in this theme of the public service aspect of librarianship.

Reynolds: That was extremely important when I entered the field. I can recall one friend who was offered a job in one of the private companies that was developing a machine for the library mechanical processes. She considered it very carefully, and then she decided that she could not do it because she had never in her life worked for profit in that way.

McCreery: That public service ethic was very, very strong. Was it part of the training at the library school, would you say?

Reynolds: No, but it was accepted. And also when I was very young in the field there was a certain missionary zeal, which was largely lost or being lost by the time I came along, people who thought they could raise taste by encouraging the reading of good books. Also there was a period in which democracy was quite important and libraries tried to advance democratic ideals, democratic ways of doing things. Then I think we finally got down just to service, which was very important. When I went to the army to work, no one would have considered not having the library open because somebody was ill.

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Reynolds: At Camp McQuaide, the first time nobody showed up to replace me at lunchtime, I skipped my lunch. I learned that in the army you don't do that; you simply hang out a sign saying "Gone to lunch" or "Back after lunch." [laughter]

We usually had staff meetings at Mills, not every Friday, but we tried to pick a Friday in the late afternoon when there wasn't going to be much library business. If someone called for Miss Brose, for example, we stopped our meeting. She went out to take the call and we waited until she got back. So it goes against my grain when I call a business at nine o'clock in the morning on Monday and learn they're having a staff meeting. We tried to do such things in a way that would not interfere with service.

I think that the telephone systems that are now available do sometimes add something. It is very nice to call up and get

a number that will give you the library hours, but it is very annoying to have to go to great lengths to get a human being. That's true in practically every field in which I've had occasion to make a telephone call, including librarianship. I think that is a mistake.

McCreery: It certainly is very different from the kind of library operation you've been describing.

Reynolds: Yes. You never forgot in a public library that you were the servant of the public. In fact, down at the Berkeley Public Library for example, if you had occasion to read the paper you were advised--and this is good advice--to spread the paper out on the desk in front of you, have a pencil in your hand. Don't give the impression that you're reading just for fun. After all, you weren't; you were looking for something, or in some instances indexing something.

McCreery: You also mentioned earlier the importance of keeping current with things in general as part of book selection and being a good reference librarian.

Reynolds: Yes, that is always very important; I'm sure it still is.

McCreery: But as you say, there was an image to be presented to the public of the librarian.

Reynolds: You didn't want to look as if you were just having a good time or being lazy or goofing off among all those books [laughter].

McCreery: I'm wondering if you care to comment on changes to library school training and the schools themselves.

Reynolds: I don't know anything about that, really, because in California UCLA and San Jose State [University] may still be offering the traditional--or something of a traditional--school. How they may have adapted it to the modern world I don't know. I haven't talked to anyone who has direct experience either, though one occasionally hears murmurs about somebody who is looking for a traditional library school experience. It does seem to me that knowing how to produce a catalog--at least the rudiments of it--should still be very important.

McCreery: At Berkeley's own school, the school you attended, there's been a complete transformation of the school itself and the curriculum and so on. I assume you followed that whole process with interest?

Reynolds: With interest but not with specific knowledge, largely because I don't know too many of the later people.

McCreery: The faculty and so on?

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: I'm also interested in your thoughts about gender in librarianship during the active part of your career. I want to be careful not to apply today's ideas about gender to periods where they don't apply. You did talk about your reasons for going into librarianship in one of our earlier sessions, and the fact there were a limited number of options available to you to earn your living. I wonder, given your time in school when the dean, Mr. Mitchell, was so interested in bringing more men into the profession and so on, do you recall thinking about those kinds of issues very much at that time?

Reynolds: The irritating thing about bringing more men into the profession was not so much bringing them in as that they almost automatically--just by being male--got the better positions at that time. I myself have never felt that I was passed over for a man. I don't know how many women felt that they were. I didn't go into librarianship only because it was a field open to women, but I didn't have any talents that led me to want to enter one of the professions that were largely male.

McCreery: In general, I think we often think of traditional librarianship as mainly a profession of women, and yet I wonder, in your view, have the men continued to get top positions more readily?

Reynolds: I don't know whether they do or not. It seems to me the chief difficulty is that for so many positions you have to have a nationwide search and a committee. Committees--or the people in them--so very often have their own agenda, and this does not always lead to the best choice from a field of candidates. In fact, it led at Mills to two disasters. One of my successors, who did not last very long, had severe psychological problems. I think the old-fashioned procedures might have turned this up; people are willing to say informally something specific they are not willing to put in a letter. But even without that particular problem--that's an exaggerated one--it's very interesting to me that in organizations like the Commonwealth Club, for example, there are a lot of young people who are extremely interested in networking and establishing contacts one with another. In the library world and in many parts of academia, we're trying to do everything democratically, by a committee, and here's the rest of the world networking

[laughter], which we used to do and are not supposed to do officially.

McCreery: It's almost as if it has come around again.

Reynolds: Yes, in the same way.

McCreery: Being more about who you know--that sort of thing. It's interesting to see how things change in that regard.

Just a couple more thoughts about men and women in librarianship.

Reynolds: Let me say that I have worked with quite a few men. There were several on the staff at San Francisco State, and some of them were extremely good and I liked them and enjoyed working with them.

McCreery: That's a nice comment to hear. In general, has librarianship in your experience been a type of work that is welcoming and comfortable for both men and women?

Reynolds: Oh, I think so. Of course I can't speak for the present, which is very different. It has been in the past, I think.

McCreery: I've come nearly to the end of things that I planned to ask you about. Is there anything else I should have asked you that you can think of at this point?

Reynolds: No, not at this point. I think I have been very fortunate. The classes that I taught away from Mills usually contained people who were already in the field. They would ask me about the profession, because they knew I had had a fair amount of experience. I would always advise them to try to move if they found their work stultifying--or dull and uninteresting are better words for it. Librarianship is almost as varied as the world is, so there are all sorts of libraries. With any kind of luck and a fair amount of mobility, you ought to be able to find something in the field that interests you. I've been very fortunate, I do think, because almost all the time I have had jobs that were interesting. I had the happy situation of being mobile; I can't say I moved a lot, because I really didn't--but I knew I wasn't stuck. I was just lucky, being born into a family that could keep me--I could have floated without working, which gives you a certain security.

McCreery: It sounds as if you may have followed your own advice to keep seeking interesting jobs and opportunities.

Reynolds: Yes, I did. When I got to Mills I very shortly became quite involved and loved it.

Thoughts on Influential Family, Colleagues, Friends

McCreery: You mentioned your family a moment ago. I wondered if you wanted to add any last thoughts about your mother. I know she lived with you here in Berkeley.

Reynolds: Elisabeth Clark, my oldest friend, and I were talking the other day about our mothers and all of the concerts and plays they took us to. This always meant a trip to San Francisco and often lunch at the Stewart Hotel. So far as we can remember, we never met any of our school friends on these excursions.

Perhaps first I should include something about Elisabeth. Our friendship has not been without a hiatus or two in the degree of closeness. The first occurred when she was sent to private school in Ross and I remained in the Mill Valley public schools. She went to UC, spent her senior year at International House. There she met her husband, Dayton Clark, who was also a resident. He became an obstetrician, practicing in San Francisco.

When I lived in the city, I saw a lot of them, much less after I moved to Berkeley. My life became complicated, and hers too, in different ways. Dayton's profession was demanding. They reared their own two children, and they gave a lot of attention to several young people, whom they called "adopted," although the bonds are not official. Elisabeth always studied the piano, and was always heavily involved in volunteer activities, the most important of which was designing costumes for the Children's Theatre.

Now in old age, we take great pleasure in our long association.

I find it difficult to characterize my mother or to describe her personality, although I owe her more than I can say. I remember the schoolmate who said to me, "What a nice mother you have," and how she usually managed to join us on any of the school expeditions in which my mother participated. My mother was always interested in others, and must have been good at drawing them out, for people liked to talk to her. Wherever she went, she always discovered interesting people. Among our neighbors in Berkeley, there were, at different times, at least

three young girls, each from a different family, who chose her for a special friend, telling her about the special events in their lives.

She herself had been a very good student at school. She was always delighted when I did well, but never pushed me, or wanted me to compete with other students. She always did all sorts of things for me, and gave me a lot of attention.

She sewed nicely, often made me attractive clothes, and did beautiful handwork. I still have some of her embroidery. Once when I needed a small tent as protection against rain on a Sierra Club High Trip, she took a large tarp and constructed a one-person tent on the living room floor. It worked well. In Berkeley she spent a lot of time in the garden as long as she could.

She died in 1973, the year that I went to France with Margaret. In fact, she died while I was in France, though the doctor had told me that there was no reason not to go, that she would survive longer. Unexpectedly, she had a stroke, and so she didn't know that I wasn't here during her last days.

McCreery: I'm sorry; it's difficult. But you come from a wonderful California family, and it's been a pleasure to hear about your family farm.

Reynolds: Well, I still have friends, the descendants of friends in the area. They're younger than I, so they don't remember too many of my family. Nevertheless that's a joy.

McCreery: It's nice to know that you're still working away at the Bancroft on revising your guide.

Reynolds: Thank you. That should come out very shortly: the second edition of the *Guide to the Book Artifacts Collection*.

McCreery: Thank you very much for spending these many hours with me, talking about all of these topics.

Reynolds: Well, I thank you. I feel it's been an indulgence for me [laughter].

McCreery: It should be a little bit of an indulgence [laughter], but it's been a great help to our series on librarianship and the library school.

Reynolds: I hope so. I feel I do owe a great deal to Miss Coulter, whose suggestions were very helpful always. Maybe someone should say

something about Miss Mabel, who was very sweet and tremendously interested in all that her sister was doing, and her sister's friends, although she always kept in the background.

When Miss Edith died, Miss Mabel moved into what was then the Berkeley Women's City Club with the advice of Mrs. [Jeanne S. Clock] Van Nostrand, I think it was, who helped her. She had two front rooms furnished very nicely with her own things. I used to go to see her fairly often and take her to lunch or bring her here to dinner. She was always very interested in what was going on in the field of librarianship. I think she missed all of the reports that had come to her via her sister.

She gave me glassware, two Chinese rice dishes, and Miss Edith's bed at the time she moved. Miss Edith's prints of the Piccolomini Library and the Humboldt Library were given to the school. I understand it was Miss Edith's wish that her prints be hung in the scholar's lounge or common room, which she hoped would someday materialize. Of Miss Edith's bequests, the largest personal one went to Marjorie Wynne. I happen to know that because I saw the will, since she included Mills among the institutions and organizations she remembered. She was specially generous to Stanford because, in Miss Mabel's words, they got their education "for practically nothing."

McCreery: Can you think of anything else? [tape interruption]

You were just recalling a last thing related to Frances Clarke Sayers that you wanted to share with us.

Reynolds: When I knew her, she and her husband were living in Sausalito. He wasn't working, though he went to the city a great deal. I don't know exactly why--whether he just enjoyed going to various libraries, bookstores, and perhaps other places in the city. But among their very good friends were Alfred [V.] Frankenstein and his wife Sylvia Lent. She was a violinist, and a very good one. Mr. Sayers had once worked in the New York Public, and he had had a bookstore in Chicago. One of their clerks was Alfred Frankenstein, then a student. My impression is that they had no other old acquaintances in this area, although her mother and sister lived in Los Angeles. So when the Sayerses came out here, they came to know him very well. He was then a music critic writing for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and doing very, very well.

If the Sayerses hadn't happened to choose Sausalito as a place to live, I would not have had that job because no one else would have had the patience and the skill to convince the [Sausalito] library board to break with tradition and get

someone who had been to a library school. She was a delightful person. It was extremely good to listen to her talk to the board when something a bit controversial came up. She was very skilled.

McCreery: Diplomacy was among her many talents perhaps.

Reynolds: Yes.

McCreery: It's nice that you've finished off by telling us what important influences Mrs. Sayers and Miss Coulter were on your career.

Reynolds: Mrs. Sayers used to say that she thought the School of Librarianship had hired her for comic relief [laughter].

McCreery: Perhaps we'll end on that very nice note, and if we think of anything later we'll add it in writing. Thank you so much.

Reynolds: Thank you.

Transcribed by Gary Varney
Final Typed by Robert Dirig and Shannon Page

TAPE GUIDE--Flora Elizabeth Reynolds

APPENDIX

Flora Elizabeth Reynolds

Academic Record

1934	A.B., Honors, Phi Beta Kappa, U.C., Berkeley
1935	M.A., in Latin, U.C., Berkeley
1936	Certificate in Librarianship, U.C., Berkeley

Employment

1937 Feb.-May	Temp. Catalog Asst., San Francisco Public Library
1937-39	Co-Librarian, Sausalito Public Library
1939-43	Librarian, Mill Valley Public Library
1943-45	Librarian for U.S. Army (California posts)
1949-50	Senior Librarian, San Francisco State University
1950-53	Chief Reference Services, San Francisco State University
1953-54	Instructor, Reference & Bibliography, University of California Extension
1955-76	Librarian, Mills College (with title Associate Professor at first, later Professor. Taught bibliography and children's literature)
1958 Spring }	Taught Reference at U.C. while Prof. Mosher
1964 Spring }	was on sabbatical

1966 Summer quarter }
1968 Summer quarter } Taught Reference & Bibliography at
1969 Summer quarter } University of Oregon School of Librarianship
1970 Summer quarter }

Offices

1955-56	Chair, East Bay Reference Librarians
1958	President, U.C. School of Librarianship Alumni Association
1961	President, College & University Section, California Library Association
1963-64	President, Women's Faculty Club, Mills College
1967-69	President, Zeta Chapter, Phi Beta Kappa (Mills College)
1981-83	Vice-President, Alliance Française East Bay
1986-88	President, Gleeson Library Associates (University of San Francisco)

Honors

Pi Sigma (Latin Honor Society), University of California
Fellow, Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco
Fellow, Huntington Library in 1988

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Six Years In Marvelous Marin

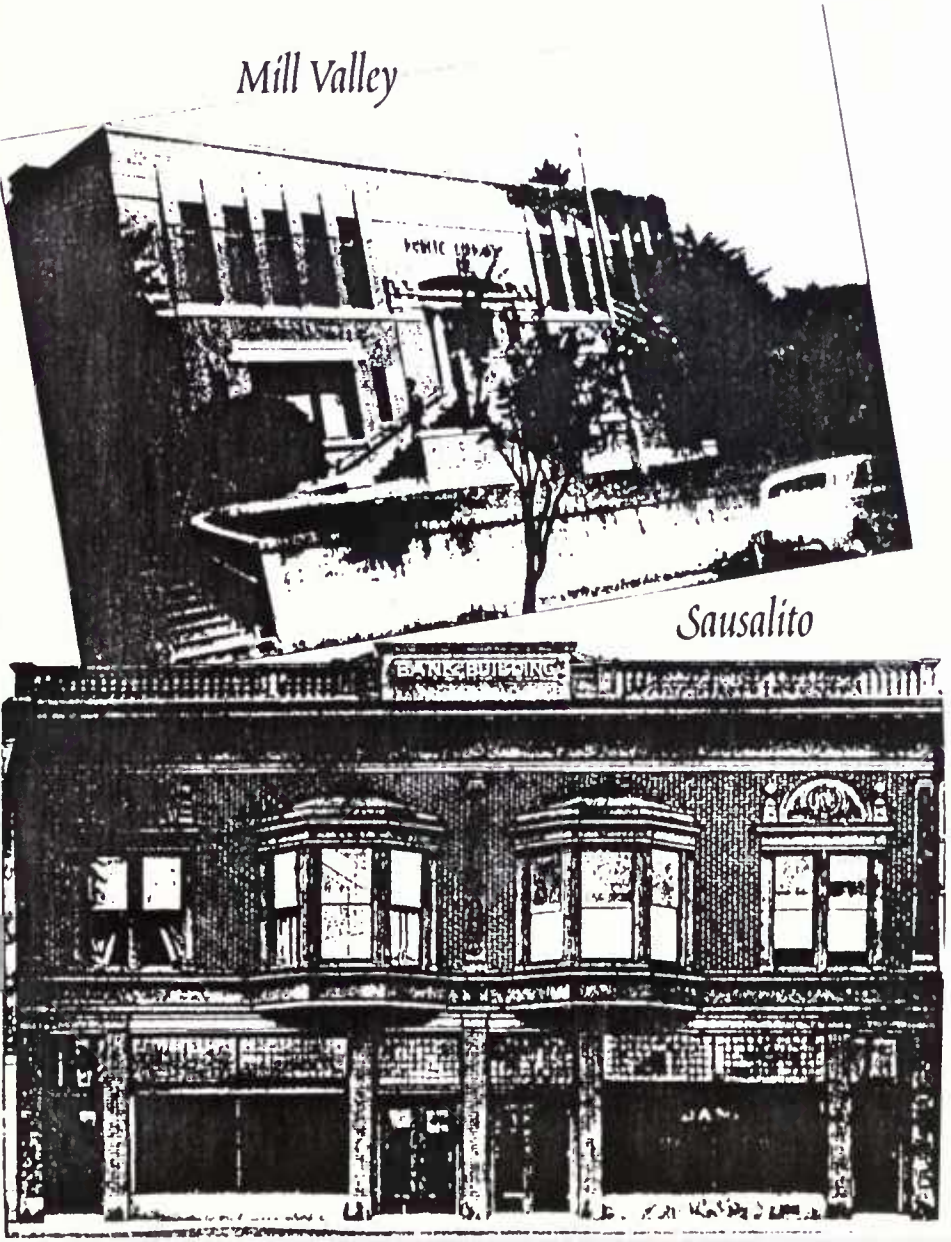
Mill Valley Historical Society
Friends of the Sausalito Library
Sausalito Historical Society
Friends of the Mill Valley Library

1997

A Librarian's Memoir

—1937-1943—

Flora Elizabeth Reynolds



Sausalito

IN APRIL 1937, I was working as a temporary clerical assistant in the San Francisco Public Library. I had gone there two months earlier at the suggestion of Sydney B. Mitchell, Director of the School of Librarianship, University of California, who said, "You won't want to stay, but you had better get some experience." A graduate of the School with the class of 1936, I was still, like many of my classmates, without a professional position, although a few months earlier I had negotiated an arrangement with Dominican College in San Rafael to take courses in exchange for service in their library.

One sunny afternoon, when the outside world beckoned strongly, I was sitting at a typewriter in the catalog department patiently adapting sets of Library of Congress catalog cards for local use. This entailed applying an electric eraser to statements that did not accurately describe incoming books and neatly inserting a cataloger's corrections. It was a minor challenge, for the eraser easily overheated and burned the cards. The afternoon was droning on when the elevator door opened and out stepped an arrestingly handsome woman, tall and dark. She was Frances Clarke Sayers, one of the most important figures in the world of children's literature, then a lecturer in the School of Librarianship on the Berkeley campus. I had never talked with her, but somehow I knew instantly that she was coming to see me.

And she was: she offered an escape into a broader world, although she did not use those words. As a trustee of the public library in the town of Sausalito, where she lived, she was authorized, she said, to offer me the position of co-librarian. She talked about the town, the library, and the untrained librarian with whom I would work, carefully noting that Mr. Mitchell did not approve of the shared responsibility and advised against accepting the offer. Obviously such an

arrangement could be difficult, and for some people, impossible; yet the town of Sausalito, which I had known all my life, was most attractive, particularly in the spring, and the position seemed so much more interesting than any opening I had heard of that I accepted immediately.

When I went to work in the Sausalito Free Public Library on May 16, 1937, the Golden Gate Bridge was almost completed. The town, the southernmost in the county boosters called Marvelous Marin, was still a quiet suburb connected with San Francisco by two ferry systems. Approximately 3500 people lived within the city limits, the most affluent on the hills, usually in fairly modest houses with pretty gardens and often spectacular views. Along the waterfront were more houses, a small business district, and the railway and ferry terminals. Slightly north, but still within the city limits, stretched the Northwestern Pacific Railroad shops and yards, and more stores and houses. A certain tension existed, I soon learned, between the merchants who wanted "progress" and the hill people who hoped to avoid it.

In the center of town, flanked by business establishments, stood the city hall, a two-story building of dark brick. At its north end, a door opened on a long, steep staircase that led to the second floor, which was entirely given over to the library. The reading room was spacious, light, and welcoming, some 7000 books lining cream colored walls. Along the front, bay windows, open in all but the coldest, rainiest weather, looked across a little park and the tracks of the railway terminal to Richardson's Bay and the rocky west side of Belvedere. All the furniture was light oak, simply designed and newly built by convict labor in San Quentin Prison. The centerpiece, a large round table, held a good selection of current magazines spread like spokes of a wheel around a bowl of flowers freshly picked in the city park across the street.

On a previous Saturday afternoon, I had gone to the Sausalito library to meet the president of the board, Mrs. James Wyatt. I did not meet the other trustees, the Catholic priest, the Episcopal minister, and a local rancher-merchant, until after I had started work. Apparently they engaged me entirely on the recommendation of Mrs. Sayers, who spoke of course for the School of Librarianship. It is possible, however, that private inquiries were made, for I had

grown up in Mill Valley, the next town to the north, where I still lived with my family.

Although the Sausalito library was established in 1907, it had never before employed anyone professionally trained, and probably no one who had had a formal college education. The vacancy I filled was due to the unexpected resignation of the librarian, Lillian Shoobert, a long-time resident who was about to marry her widowed, childhood sweetheart.

By unwritten, local custom, the assistant librarian was entitled, regardless of education or training, to succeed the librarian. Mabel Wosser, the assistant for four years, had a particularly strong claim. Not only was she the thirteenth and youngest child of an Irish family well established in Sausalito, but she had often helped her sister Bertha operate the library in earlier years. And so the board gave her the title of librarian and me that of co-librarian stipulating that all responsibilities were to be equally shared, except book selection and cataloging, which were mine alone. How much of this was Mrs. Sayers' idea I am not sure, but she endorsed it heartily, saying that Mabel was "the nicest person in Sausalito". This was true. Mabel wanted with all her heart to do what was best for the people of the town, and I soon learned that she could be persuaded to change some archaic procedure if I could convince her that service would be improved.

At that time Mabel must have been in her early fifties. She was a slight, active woman with auburn hair, a quick step, a ready smile, and a lively sense of humor. A devout Catholic, she played the organ for mass on Sundays, and had always considered music her special talent. She came to work in a little Ford roadster, which she drove with uncertain skill, but somehow she always escaped disaster. When she left to lunch with members of her family in their home on Pine Street, she carefully straightened and put away her work in case, she often explained, she should die unexpectedly. She lived into her ninety-eighth year, still, I believe, in the house in which she was born. I heard from her every Christmas as long as she lived.

My salary of $85 per month ($95 the second year) with a month's vacation was slightly below standard, but only slightly. Except for the part-time janitress who always had the library clean when one or

both of us arrived at 9 A.M., Mabel and I were the whole staff. In order to cover the service hours, 10-12, 1:30-6, 7:15-9, Monday through Saturday, we worked a five and a half-day week that included three evenings. We alternated a free Saturday afternoon and evening with a free weekday afternoon and evening that was often Thursday because we soon decided to subscribe jointly for a single season ticket to the Thursday afternoon concerts of the San Francisco Symphony. (I had the good luck to draw George Gershwin as conductor and soloist shortly before he died.)

Although we could engage a substitute when necessary, we rarely called her except for vacations. Nor did we think of taking morning or afternoon breaks, which so far as I know were unheard of before the war. Mrs. Wyatt did suggest that we make tea for ourselves during the afternoon, but neither Mabel nor I had the slightest inclination toward makeshift cookery, in spite of the ease with which we could have installed a hot plate in the sunny workroom that faced the steep, rocky hillside behind the library.

The workroom contained the after-hours book return, a wooden chute built into the permanently locked door to the stairwell landing. Furniture consisted of a large desk, a large work table, and two chairs. Most of the wall space was lined with book shelves.

It was there that I met my first backlog, for those shelves were loaded with uncataloged gift books. I still remember toiling over the complications of a complete set of Mark Twain's works. Soon, however, I was able to institute the ordering of Library of Congress catalog cards, then a prompt and efficient service.

Shortly the library had several hundred dollars to spend on beefing up the book collection. The source escapes me, but I remember hours and hours spent poring over book selection aids in order to fill gaps in both fiction and non-fiction as wisely as possible.

Throughout my tenure, I worked hard on book selection, reading and keeping notes on books reviewed in *The Saturday Review*, *The New York Times*, *The New York Herald Tribune*, and *The San Francisco Chronicle*. We were able to buy virtually all new books of general interest; fortunately, we had no demand for westerns, then very popular in many towns. Furthermore, we were stingy about supplying mysteries, which were available for a few cents a day in one or two small local rental libraries; but we did purchase such outstanding authors as Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers, whose *Gaudy Night* and *Nine Tailors* were much read. This policy was not protested, perhaps because in those depression years it seemed natural that the library, too, had to husband its money.

I was a little stunned one day, however, to be told that the Catholic bias of the board was very evident in our book selection. The patron had noted that three of our five trustees were Catholic, and I had to explain that I, a Protestant, was doing all the book selection, presenting the board at each monthly meeting with a list of books already purchased. The only board contribution came from Mrs. Sayers (also non-Catholic), who from time to time selected additions to the children's collection, since my knowledge of the rapidly growing field was confined to books I had read as a child. (In the spring I arranged to audit her course at the University of California.)

The library was a pleasantly busy place. Readers who lived nearby popped in frequently to see whether Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* or some other best seller had been returned and placed on the new book shelf. Obviously readers who lived farther away were at a disadvantage, and Mabel quickly agreed that we should start a postal-card reserve system. Soon we also offered telephone service so that patrons need not visit the library to ask a question or renew a book.

Books for home use were charged at the circulation desk by the librarian who wrote the borrower's name on the book card. Counting circulation in the morning, one sometimes came upon a strange notation like "Airedale dog" substituting for a personal name that simply wouldn't come to mind. We were on friendly terms with most of our readers and chatted with all who were inclined to talk.

When school started in the fall, I visited classes to speak about the new children's books Mrs. Sayers was selecting for our collection. I was doing a lot of reading to orient myself in a field that had grown substantially since my own childhood and was about to blossom spectacularly with titles like James Daugherty's *Andy and the Lion*. Unfortunately I attracted to the library a number of children who attended Sausalito schools but were not eligible for free borrowing privileges because they lived outside the city limits. Mabel and I asked the board for permission to break the rule, and

Mrs. Sayers pled eloquently on behalf of the children. But in spite of the fact that the Marin County Free Library offered no service in southern Marin, four of the five trustees remained adamantly opposed, and we had to refuse disappointed and uncomprehending children.

To celebrate Book Week in November, Mrs. Sayers arranged an exhibition of our new children's books, which included many brand new copies of old favorites as well as recent titles. And it was through her good offices that we were able to present a special afternoon program, a talk in the library by Hildegarde Hawthorne, author of *Romantic Rebel*, the life of her grandfather, Nathaniel Hawthorne. The next year, 1938, we offered an evening program with another children's author, Laura Adams Armer, whose book *Waterless Mountain* had won the Newbery medal a few years earlier.

Throughout the year we scheduled children's story hours on certain Saturday mornings, sometimes with Mrs. Sayers, sometimes with Marian Hayes, a local resident who had had considerable dramatic experience.

In the summer of 1938 the city council unexpectedly cut the book budget for the fiscal year 1938-39. With the help of Mrs. Sayers, Mabel and I wrote what seemed to us a carefully reasoned letter of protest, only to have our board president, Mrs. Wyatt, demur when she returned from a vacation spent in a fishing lodge on the McKenzie River. She attended the next council meeting, and arriving early, engaged the members, all local business men, in such enjoyable conversation about fishing that she, a hill resident, easily persuaded them where we had failed. It was a lesson in practical politics.

Every public library has readers whose daily schedule includes a visit to the library. Frequently they come at a particular time to read a daily newspaper and are greatly disturbed if it is already in other hands or if a favorite chair is occupied. We had a friendly elderly man, always nicely dressed in a business suit, who arrived each morning, picked up the *San Francisco Chronicle* or *Examiner* (then a morning paper), and settled himself in an arm chair in the middle bay window overlooking Richardson's Bay. Eventually he stopped coming, and we worried about him. Finally someone told us he was so poor he had been forced to go to the county farm.

Among those who liked to talk about the books they were reading was a housewife named Hattie Little (Mrs. Roy Little), who had no children and a considerable amount of leisure time. One day she offered to write notes about our new books for the *Sausalito News*. These began to appear in 1939, replacing the sterile and hastily put together book lists that were all I had time for.

On an otherwise uneventful evening a man who looked like a derelict came into the library, selected a magazine, spread it out on a table, knelt on a chair, and leaning his elbows on the table achieved a kind of four-footed position. A little later he came to the desk to borrow a book, signed his reader's application with the name Hilaire Belloc, and looked at me to see how I'd take it. Without comment, I charged the book wondering if it would ever come back. Next morning, I learned that he was a well-known Sausalito resident, son of the famous author, and a remittance man, paid by his family to stay out of England.

We always felt safe in the library, indeed in all of Sausalito. Once or twice in the evening a racket emanated from the city hall downstairs when the police brought a noisy drunk into the usually empty jail in the back of the building.

Normally I closed the library promptly at 9 o'clock and raced across the street to catch the train to Mill Valley, once losing my hat irretrievably in a dark, windy rainstorm. Sometimes my school friend Eleanor Bates would stop to see me, and after I moved to Sausalito, we would often walk the hilly streets enjoying the view of the lights in San Francisco and occasionally worrying about the increasing threat of war.

We both lived in the Laneside Apartments, an old shingled house on Bulkley Avenue at Excelsior Lane, alongside the Alta Mira Hotel. The owners of the apartments were an elderly couple who had spent years at Stanford during Mr. Quelle's tenure as university printer. But it was Mrs. Quelle who managed the apartments, each of which contained at least one attractive piece of furniture or decorative object. Mine was a roomsize Oriental rug, which for some unexplained reason had to be kept upside down. I also had a fireplace and a bay window from which I could see the Alta Mira tennis court and the upper part of Richardson's Bay.

The favored tenants occupying the best and most expensive

apartment were a Dutch couple named Gratama, who had a splendid view of San Francisco and the Bay, and Mr. Ramsey, an elderly bachelor whose smaller apartment opened on the garden and also looked toward the city. My friend Eleanor, an art student who later married Alexander Streloff, was invited to move, at no increase in rent, from a back apartment into one directly over Mr. Ramsey because she was quiet and could be counted on not to clump around in heavy or high-heeled shoes.

Almost daily I walked down Water Street (later re-named Bridgeway Boulevard) past the bar that had been a prohibition speakeasy and the Chinese vegetable shop to a Victorian house called the Sea Spray Inn, whose owner, Mrs. Goodale, served excellent meals every day of the week. It was very pleasant sitting there and looking across the Bay to Angel Island, sometimes at Templeton Crocker's yacht, the *Zaca*, anchored offshore. Often at lunch, I would be almost the only customer; dinners, however, were always popular, especially on Sundays, when people drove in from other Marin towns, and after the Bridge opened, from San Francisco. Mrs. Goodale offered a monthly rate that permitted the subscriber to make up for missed meals by bringing guests at any time—no advance notice required. Her daughter, an amateur horsewoman who had a daytime job in the city, was always hostess in the evening. I can still see her eating her interrupted dinners at a small table in the back corner of the two rooms that made the dining area.

In 1937 or 1938, the librarians of the various Marin County public libraries started to meet for dinner occasionally in order to become acquainted. It must have been in 1938 that Mabel and I went farther afield, to Asilomar for the Portola District meeting of the California Library Association. We arrived in time for lunch, which was served in the beautiful building designed by Julia Morgan. I remember attractive yellow place-mats, although the details of the program have long since faded from my mind. I do remember the social hour after the evening dinner when the assistant state librarian, Eleanor Hitt (later Mrs. Morgan), sought me out for some conversation. This was characteristic of her and also of the state librarian Mabel Gillis. They made it their business to meet new members of the profession serving in public libraries.

In October of that year, Mr. and Mrs. Sayers and Mabel and I attended another small California Library Association meeting, also involving an overnight stay, this one at Lokoya Lodge in Napa County. After dinner, Mrs. Sayers, who had great dramatic flair and a beautiful speaking voice, told some of the most famous stories in her repertoire; and Dr. Evelyn Steel Little, the recently appointed head of the Mills College Library, spoke at some length, thoroughly frightening me with her statement that librarians should have insomnia in order to complete all the necessary reading. Even in my wildest dreams, I could never have imagined that years later I would succeed her at Mills.

It seemed to me that everybody else in the profession knew much more about libraries and books than I. In library school, class discussions had been dominated by a few vocal students who had had practical experience. Having none at all, I had to imagine everything. And then, too, the assumption behind the academic curriculum was that we would go out to work in established libraries where we would absorb the nitty-gritty from well-educated, properly trained staff. Mr. Mitchell often said that we would not be worth very much until we had at least one, and preferably two, years of experience. I was still trying to make up for my shortcoming by visiting other libraries to observe their procedures.

Early in December 1938, I arrived home from my evening stint in Sausalito (I had moved back to the family home after my father died during the Thanksgiving holiday) to be met by my mother with the astonishing news that the Mill Valley librarian had been dismissed. This created the vacancy for which I applied some months later. In that time of few opportunities, I was lucky enough to be the successful applicant, and so I resigned the Sausalito position in April 1939.

Sausalito had given me experience in a variety of tasks, and the opportunity to develop skill and tact in working not only with an interesting public, but in serving as co-librarian and participating fully in all board meetings. The divided responsibility had turned out so well that my successor, Ruth Burt, was engaged on the same terms.

Moreover the late 1930's were exciting years in San Francisco. Pierre Monteux was conducting the symphony, which, along with the opera, was in full flower. Dublin's Abbey Players had come to

town, and I had seen some of their performances, as well as most, if not all, of the other fine plays that appeared in the city, often with New York casts.

Somehow my modest salary had covered a three-week first class train trip in 1938 to Victoria, Vancouver, Lake Louise, and Banff, with stays at the best hotels, Banff Springs, Chateau Lake Louise, and the Empress. And in 1939 it enabled me to spend the month of May in New York, where the World's Fair was a magnet, drawing visitors from all over the world. Katherine Cornell, Judith Anderson, and Katherine Hepburn were starring on Broadway, and the Metropolitan was offering a special series of Wagner operas with Kirsten Flagstad, Lauritz Melchior, and all the singers in their famous Wagnerian wing.

⁂ *Mill Valley* ⁂

WHEN THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES of the Mill Valley Public Library dismissed the head librarian late in 1938, they set off an uproar that resulted in public meetings reported even in San Francisco newspapers that usually paid no attention to the small suburb and its roughly 4000 residents. The librarian was Sybil Nye, a Scotswoman who for twenty-two years had operated her own private school for young children in the mornings and devoted her afternoons and evenings to the public library.

Two years earlier the trustees had engaged Anna Gertrude Hall to survey the library. A graduate of the New York State Library School (later absorbed by Columbia University), she was the author of both the standard work on the library trustee and a highly praised biography of the explorer Nansen. In her report, which was printed for general distribution, she said the book collection was in poor condition, too small, and growing too slowly. She also found the card catalog totally inadequate and the general level of financial support too low.

The board proceeded to employ a member of the staff of the Marin County Free Library, Mrs. Zoe Bintley, to start cataloging the collection in proper form. Much later, and in their words, "after long consideration", they came to the unanimous conclusion that radical change was necessary and they asked Miss Nye to resign. She was outraged, for she had bought many good books, and in her own eyes, given faithful, regular service, and nothing more was needed. She and her brother, an attorney, organized a vigorous protest, including public hearings. But the library board remained unanimous, and after the city attorney ruled their decision final, she was given a terminal payment of $330, three times her monthly salary.

Early in 1939 the position was advertised, and I became one of a number of applicants. My principal reference, Frances Clarke Sayers, was kind enough to come to the Sausalito library one evening when I was on duty to meet the president of the Mill Valley board. I saw immediately that he was charmed by her. Later she told me that although I was not quite ready to head the library, she had said that I could do it with the help of Anna Belle Travis, the wise little woman who had been the assistant librarian for several years.

The upshot was that I signed a contract for one year at a salary of $120 per month, with an annual vacation of one month. I was to serve the board as executive officer, keep the minutes and financial records, recommend the adoption of policies, and the engaging and dismissing of employees. I was also responsible for the daily operation of the library under policies adopted by the board. This entailed supervising employees, selecting and ordering books and periodicals, cataloging books, helping readers, and assisting in planning any alterations to the building.

On June 1, 1939, I went to work in the red brick building on Lovell Avenue. An Andrew Carnegie gift, it was on a hill only two blocks from Lytton Square, the center of town; yet the approach must have daunted many an older person. First, there was the climb up Madrone or another, possibly steeper, street; then a further climb up one of two double sets of curving, concrete steps from sidewalk to front entrance; and finally, just inside the doors a flight of perhaps ten or twelve stairs led to the reading room level. (I soon learned that the board, terrified that someone would fall and sue the

library, carried heavy insurance. So far as I know there was never a serious accident on library property.)

The reading room had none of the charm of the Sausalito library. True, tall windows ringing the building looked in the front toward a beautiful wooded hillside; in the immediate foreground, however, a corporation yard, a garage, a funeral home, and other nondescript buildings stood out. The central feature of the interior was an imposing circulation desk that faced the main entrance and was flanked by columns and waist-high gates, all of dark wood. Behind the desk and perpendicular to it, wooden stacks housed most of the book collection. On the west wall was an unused fireplace, and toward the back, in a shabby children's section, French doors gave on a bit of lawn. The northeast corner held a small office and stairs to the basement, where a meeting room had been paneled in light plywood and there were lavatories, a furnace room and a large, closed off unfinished area.

The reading room was furnished with plain dark tables and matching chairs, and the floor was covered in brown battleship linoleum that provided a soft, quiet walking surface. The total effect, dull and dismal, desperately needed brightening; so I began to raid my family garden for large flower and plant arrangements that could be placed on the circulation desk. I remember one patron gazing at an arrangement of blue lilies of the Nile and demanding, "Who let you pick those?"

The president of the board of trustees was Oren E. Lovett, an accountant employed in the offices of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. He had reared his family in Mill Valley and become known as a deliberate and totally honest participant in local affairs. In the Boy Scouts he had served with the library board's treasurer, Allan J. Penfield, who had also reared his family in Mill Valley and built a reputation for great probity. But there similarities ended, for Mr. Penfield was the quiet, tactful gentleman who had had many more advantages than the rougher-hewn Mr. Lovett. They respected each other, however, worked well together, and usually led the group. The third man on the board was Roy Huffman, local school superintendent, a newer and younger resident, very different in background and personality from the other two. Often he supported opinions and suggestions put forth by the board's quintessential

maiden lady, Miss Winona Douglas. Once the publisher with her widowed sister-in-law of the *Mill Valley Record*, she was sweet in manner until opposed, when her chin would quiver and she would lash out in surprisingly angry words. The fifth board member was Shirley Moretti (Mrs. Louis Moretti), an attractive housewife and mother of young children. She had grown up in Marin and was friendly, although not at all close, to the others.

My one assistant, Anna Belle Travis, was a delight. Sixty-ish, with blue eyes set in a wrinkled, worn face, white hair pulled severely back into a knot at the nape of her neck, she still had a trim little figure. Having no car, she always walked to the library from her home on upper Throckmorton Avenue, a distance of more than a mile, and spent most of every day on her feet. From her family, the Lallins—they had a certain prominence in San Francisco—she had inherited great Irish charm and humor. As a young woman she worked as a reference assistant in the San Francisco Public Library; after she married William Travis, an architect, she did not work again until she came to the Mill Valley library during the depression. She and her husband had lost their home and all their belongings in the great Mill Valley fire of 1929. Although they rebuilt as simply and inexpensively as possible, their resources began to dwindle as the depression took effect and there was less and less work for an aging architect. Their only child, a bright boy who should have gone to college, went instead to CCC camp. (There he learned the rudiments of surveying and eventually became a very successful highway engineer.)

Mrs. Travis—we always addressed older people formally—was an excellent assistant, and soon became my very good friend. She never tried to upstage the librarian, which she could easily have done, and she always made a great effort, usually successfully, to break the reserve of shy or difficult readers. Children who failed to say "please" or "thank you", were pleasantly corrected, "Please, Mrs. Travis" or "Thank you, Mrs. Travis." A lifelong, omnivorous reader, she discussed books with ease, and was skilled at finding information without the standard reference works that were almost totally lacking until we began to buy them.

During June 1939, my first month in Mill Valley, the American Library Association held its annual conference in San Francisco,

and of course I attended, feeling young and very inexperienced. It was a splendid opportunity to visit and compare notes with classmates and to renew my college friendship with Rachel Dent (who four years later married Edwin Castagna, another classmate). I remember us sitting in full evening dress in the orchestra of the Opera House and voting, at the behest of ALA President Milton Ferguson, to protest Roosevelt's nominating Archibald MacLeish to head the Library of Congress. Later, in conversation, Mrs. Sayers suggested to us that the appointment might be an excellent one.

I remember, too, the banquet, perhaps preceding the Opera House vote, at which the portly white-haired head of one of the local libraries, greatly feared by her staff, was moved to rise and do a solo spring dance among the tables. There were whispered comments that wine had moved her in similar ways on other occasions.

A few days earlier, I had attended, along with Rachel and Ruth Burt, my successor in Sausalito, the three-day Institute on Library Work with Children, presented at International House, Berkeley, by the U.C. School of Librarianship under the leadership of Mrs. Sayers. Among the speakers were prominent children's authors Howard Pease and Conrad Buff, the Irish storyteller Ella Young, and on the illustration and exhibition of children's books, Karl Kup and René d'Harnoncourt.

Back in the Mill Valley library, the first need was more adequate work space. The small office, pleasant enough and well-lighted, held only a sink, a wall of shelving, a narrow, high built-in table, and not much else, possibly a chair or two. I was immediately authorized to buy a large office desk with typewriter pedestal.

Before we did much work in the office, however, we faced a huge mess in the unfinished part of the basement, where years of outdated magazines were stored, out of sight, unrecorded, very dusty, and in no discernible order. Because Miss Nye had subscribed for years to the complete edition of *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, it was obvious that a good cleaning, sorting, and recording campaign would immediately enlarge our subject and reference sources. The task was grim, but with specially hired student help, we did it in a few days; the surprised board was so pleased that they rewarded me with a long holiday over Labor Day, and so I took the train up to Lake Tahoe to visit friends.

The book collection, of course, could not be made fully usable so quickly. Many books had been cataloged by Mrs. Bintley of the Marin County Free Library, but a large number had not been touched or were in bad physical condition. Our general plan of attack has long since faded from my mind, although I do remember Mrs. Bintley's coming to call, unexpectedly, after we had taken an inventory and stacked the office with problem books.

As a whole the collection was very spotty. Many titles were excellent, some had been widely advertised or prominently reviewed; standard works, even classics, however, were often not present. Nonfiction was particularly weak; reference, except for the *Reader's Guide*, consisted chiefly of *The Encyclopedia Britannica* and the children's *Book of Knowledge*.

The budget was now generous enough to cover the purchase of virtually all new books of general interest and at the same time start a program of retrospective buying. I spent many hours poring over standard book selection aids and searching the shelves in Holmes and other second-hand bookstores in San Francisco and Oakland. Fortunately there was little demand for trash fiction, and none for westerns, then very popular in many libraries. Mysteries were wanted, and after the collection had been considerably improved, we began to buy them on a regular basis through an arrangement with a local private rental library.

For subjects too specialized for us, we depended on the excellent interlibrary borrowing service offered by the state library. Loans always arrived promptly in wrappings that could be reversed for the return trip to Sacramento, but several times our sharp-eyed board president, Mr. Lovett, visiting the library, spotted cancelled stamps he wanted for his own collection and without a word helped himself. Days later Mrs. Travis would be reduced to helpless fury by neat little holes cut in her carefully saved wrappings.

By November 1939 we were able to celebrate Book Week with an exhibition of children's books chosen from those we were buying to replace the dirty and torn books in the children's section. We also presented an afternoon program with a speaker, Hazel Francisco, an experienced children's librarian who lived in Mill Valley and was then working in the Gelber-Lilienthal Book Shop in San Francisco. At the insistence of our trustee Shirley Moretti, I

supplied myself with a basket of candies to distribute to departing children.

In December Walter Falch, an architect who lived in Mill Valley, was engaged by the board to direct the removal of a rusted cornice on the exterior of the building and supervise the installation of concrete facing. The total cost of $350 was met from the current budget with no disruption of service.

Around that time we began accepting incoming telephone calls. At least one shut-in whom I never met worked out an arrangement with a taxicab driver to deliver books chosen in telephone conversations with us. Reading for other shut-ins must have been supplied by their families or friends. Perhaps the generally hilly terrain of the town made living alone too difficult for handicapped people to attempt.

On July 1, 1940, I was able to report that 1000 books had been added to the collection and that the library had been completely reorganized by Mrs. Travis and me with the help of teen-age clericals working under the National Youth Administration. In the main, they were excellent workers; the chief problem was that most of them lived in towns north of Mt. Tamalpais and understandably wanted to reduce commute time and expense by coming in a car pool and working longer periods than might be desirable from a staffing point of view. (Although Mill Valley was not a rich man's suburb, it seemed to have few impoverished residents. Mrs. Travis did remember a family who, in the early years of the depression, spent every evening in the library in order to reduce their heating and lighting costs.)

After the NYA program was discontinued during the war, we selected part-time assistants from our clientele. It seemed a good way to find people who might like the work; the possibility of there being anything unfair in not advertising openings never occurred to us. We did upset a well-known San Francisco minister who rushed in to vent his anger, not at our hiring practices (although he served a congregation that could not be called privileged) but because we had dared to offer part-time work to his wife.

Two assistants stand out in my memory: Doris Allison (Mrs.Ward Allison) whom I lost track of during the war; and Lillian Twigg, who went on to work in Newbegin's fine bookstore on Union Square in

San Francisco and later in the library at Tamalpais High School. After she became Lillian Pohlman, she wrote several successful children's books.

Each morning either Mrs. Travis or I, whoever was not scheduled for evening duty (we both worked a five and one-half day week that included three evenings), arrived at 9 A.M., counted the previous day's circulation, checked through the mail, placed the morning newspapers on reading poles, and opened the library at 10 A.M. The janitor had cleaned the building earlier and raised the flag on the pole on the front lawn. But one of us brought in the flag when we closed for dinner at 5 P.M., unless a rain came up earlier. Then somebody dashed down the steps to get the flag, an interruption we found vastly annoying.

For a time the person unlocking the front door at 10 A.M. risked being knocked down by a slight, shabbily dressed Englishman in a hurry to get his hands on one of the morning papers. After a few months he stopped coming and we learned from an obituary that, like Hilaire Belloc in Sausalito, he was a remittance man, in this case a member of a titled family.

Mill Valley was often called the newspaperman's bedroom, and we had a number of newspaper people among our readers. I knew Evelyn Hannay, the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s fashion writer, particularly well, and also Milla Logan, who free-lanced and later published a book or two. (Her husband, Tom, was the *Chronicle*'s front-page editor.)

I probably owed my generous ($20 per month) salary increase to another well-known newspaper couple, the Redfern Masons, who happened to visit the library the evening my contract came up for its first renewal. Apparently they said complimentary things to various members of the board. It may have been that year that Mr. Mason, long a music critic for the *San Francisco Examiner*, and a power in the music world, was kind enough to substitute on a few hours' notice the night a sudden, severe storm kept away the speaker I had engaged for a local dinner meeting of Marin County librarians.

Many readers talked at length about the books they were returning. I soon became skillful, I hope, in dealing with those who wanted to recount a plot, but I was never able to discourage

the woman who usually arrived in the busy late afternoon primed to discuss an article she had read in the *Nation* or another journal of opinion. Unperturbed by borrowers presenting books to be charged or discharged, she would stand at the desk and address me, but really the room, in a carrying, ostentatiously cultivated voice. And some evenings, almost on the stroke of 9 P.M., our closing hour, Merry Christmas, a nice person whose first names stick in my mind, would come breathlessly pounding up the stairs with important things to say about the book she was returning.

A few people were so hard to help that I almost hated to see them: high school students whose teacher regularly required a speech on an abstract subject like perseverance, love, or friendship. For them we hung onto a small dog-eared collection of 19th century writings that were quickly snatched up, and then the librarian really had to work. Elementary school children, too, were sometimes a problem because many of their teachers persisted in selecting topics for "research" reports without considering whether suitable sources existed. And then there was the middle-aged Russian with whom one always had to tour the stack in search of "something interesting." I came to realize that he really wanted to be at least faintly titillated. Eventually he would settle for a book about a woman of the theatre or the arts whose virtue seemed uncertain.

Complaints were rare. The most memorable came from a hitherto agreeable woman who announced in ringing tones that Dorothea Lange's now famous collection of photographs of migrant workers called *An American Exodus* had no place in the public library. As we discussed the book, I explained that the library did not take sides, that in fact the book was stating a problem, not posing a solution. She kept smiling and I had the illusion that I was making my point. But she ended by throwing the book on the desk and storming down the stairs and out the door, never to return. Immediately everyone in the room rushed to the desk only to find the cause of the explosion very disappointing.

The few additional incidents that even suggested censorship came after we entered World War II from a women reputed to be a parlor pink. Whenever she came upon a book that offered any criticism of the Soviet Union, she would object saying plaintively, "But they are doing such a good job for us."

Among those who specially liked to discuss books with Mrs. Travis was the wife of the second-hand furniture dealer whose shop was nearby. She read widely and well, and often brought us bouquets of flowers. Suddenly her visits stopped. Her teenage son remained a patron, but we were never able to learn the cause of her defection. Did she feel cheated? Had we somehow made a mistake with a book she had reserved? We never knew, and could only hope when we saw her sitting idly in a rocking chair on the porch of her husband's dreary store that somehow she would find another source of good books.

Then there was the retired federal judge who divided his time between the mountains near Ashville, North Carolina and Mill Valley. He told us his wife had died and he cooked for himself, following a peculiar diet emphasizing eggs. About four o'clock he would go home, Mrs. Travis said, "For a shot of eggs." Whenever he left for North Carolina, he would say goodbye and leave us a large box of candy. After Pearl Harbor, we never saw him again. I suppose it changed his life, as it did almost everyone's; certainly it made transcontinental travel difficult.

A year-round patron was the local author Stanton Coblentz, who lived nearby in the redwoods with his wife and faithful dog. He espoused "sanity in poetry" and was always telling me how much he appreciated the library. When I would reply with some politely deprecating remark, he would insist, and the ensuing series of Alphonse-Gaston exchanges ended only as he opened the front door.

A stage whisper permeating the entire library usually signaled the arrival of the Marion Blanchards, friends from my high school and college days with their daughter Barbara. Often they brought news of her progress as a young professor of zoology. Always, regardless of the topic of conversation, her father would come forth with an appropriate quotation from Shakespeare, delivered, like all his remarks, in a whisper that may not have disturbed readers, but certainly reached them.

A handsome and interesting young man, employed in Marinship after we entered the war, brought me his serious poetry to read. Although he never said so directly, I thought he felt guilty not being in the service, and he soon went off to join the ski troops. Since his

name, an unusual one, has never caught my eye in published books or periodicals, I wonder whether he died on some Alpine slope.

On the opposite side of our spectrum was the gentle white-haired minister who came in one day with his academic robe over one arm. "I've just conducted a nice little funeral," he said with some satisfaction. He was retired and lived with his ailing wife in a little shingled house with a bay window where I would see them sitting as I walked home from the library. One of his daughters was a superb piano accompanist; a second had been murdered in China by her rickshaw driver for the modest jewelry she was wearing; and a third I had known slightly at International House in Berkeley when she was studying for a Master's degree in English. Before long she was telling me about sorting nails (or was it some other hardware item?) in a defense job. Her father became a special friend and often talked about his youth in Pennsylvania and his years at Princeton. I still have the recipe he brought me along with a serving of the Philadelphia scrapple he had prepared.

Another regular was Robert H. Elliott, an accountant recently retired from a firm in San Francisco, and not expected to live long, his friends said. A bachelor, he bought season tickets to the San Francisco Opera, studied the piano, and spent much time sketching and painting. In 1942 his water-colors were shown in the Mill Valley Bookshop (established artists like Mallette Dean were often exhibited there). He gave both Mrs. Travis and me a water-color of our choice from his show, extracting from each of us a promise to hang the painting at home and not store it away. He didn't mind, he said, if it wound up in a second-hand store. Mine still hangs in my home, enjoyable in its own right and a reminder of an interesting man who made the most of his last years.

Some readers talked at length about the war in Europe and the "Bundles to Britain" they were sending to relatives and friends. In the main, however, our lives were not greatly affected, and in 1941 we proceeded with plans to install new and more capacious book stacks and to move circulation from its drafty position in front of the main doors to a smaller desk at the side of the entrance stairwell. To accomplish these major changes, which involved shifting virtually the entire book stock of 8900 volumes, we closed the library on a Friday and Saturday in the relatively quiet month of August.

In November we celebrated Book Week as usual. Over 100 people came to the library to hear Marjorie Roberts talk about her novel *Webs in the Sky*, which centered on the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge, then four years old. She acknowledged her indebtedness to Wallace B. Curtis, an engineer and Mill Valley resident, for help with technical matters like the spinning of the cables. It was through the Curtises that I engaged Mrs. Roberts for her evening appearance.

Earlier we had decided to change our circulation procedures by installing a Gaylord charging machine, which mechanically recorded borrowers' card numbers and due-dates and was widely used—in Petaluma, Monterey, Redwood City, San Mateo, and many other cities and towns. Our machine attracted little comment, undoubtedly because it was installed on the scheduled date, which happened to be two days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Everyone was much too concerned about matters of life and death to pay attention to a minor library innovation; commuters to San Francisco, who constituted the majority of Mill Valley's employed residents, went to work in the city on Monday, December 8, wondering whether they would return home in the evening. We all knew that there was nothing to stop the Japanese from dropping bombs on San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, or Marin County.

Immediately we began to have blackouts, and the board quickly decided we could operate the library only during daylight hours. It was simply not possible to procure and hang blackout curtains over all our tall windows, nor could we risk permitting readers to climb the curving entrance steps in the dark.

With the adoption of daylight savings time and the advent of spring, we were able to open the library for an hour in the evening, 7 to 8 P.M. Before that, however, Miss Douglas, our trustee, lost no time in urging her pet project, Sunday hours for the benefit of church-goers. The irony of this was that she attended the Episcopal Church, which at that time had a minuscule congregation. Our staunch patron Mr. Elliott told us that, loving the liturgy since childhood, he had gone to a Sunday service only to have the rector direct the entire sermon to him, "the only possible sinner among a half-dozen elderly ladies."

I was unable to convince the Board that neither Mrs. Travis nor I should be asked to open the library on our one totally free day. So Mrs. Travis joked with all her friends that she would kick them down the stairs if they ventured in on Sunday. And of course no one came; our patrons were too busy and too worried about other things, and we soon discontinued Sunday hours.

One evening when President Roosevelt was to give an important fireside chat, I brought a small radio to the library. Before he spoke the national anthem was played; immediately the little Japanese children, our only patrons at the time, rose and stood at attention. They were a touching sight, members of the eight Japanese families living in Mill Valley, some for as long as forty years. All of them were finally moved out, first to Santa Rosa, then to Merced. Mamoru Kanki, the shoemaker whose picturesque shop was only a block and a half from the library and whose daughter had been in Tamalpais High School with me, was quoted as saying, "We shall come back when we can. Mill Valley is in our blood."

During the spring of 1942, our participation in the National Victory Book Drive netted some good books among unusable items like a long set of the publications of the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers. I reported in the newspaper that 808 volumes had been collected, and thanked Mrs. C. H. Hanson of the *Mill Valley Record* for publicity, our trustee Mr. Penfield, who was also a working member of the draft board, for picking up books at various stations, and Mr. J. B. Rice for repairing about fifty books.

At the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 1942, the library was well organized and we had a loyal clientele, including many of the new residents moving into town. Our book stock was over 10,000 volumes. We were aiming at 14,500 but since increases in funds for the following year were minimal, I was tempted to join the war effort. By 1943, it was clear that the library was in a holding pattern for the duration, and I decided to become a civilian army librarian.

When I submitted my resignation, effective June 18, 1943, Mrs. Travis outraged the board by announcing that she would retire at the same time. She explained that she had always said she would leave when I did. This was true, but nobody had taken her seriously or even paid attention.

I left Mill Valley, as I had left Sausalito, with a feeling of

gratitude, mixed with regret for ties that would, inevitably, be weakened or broken. I had lived in a beautiful area where cultural opportunities abounded. I had acquired valuable experience: a greatly increased ability to organize and carry our masses of work; a broad knowledge of current books, built on the classic and standard authors I had been reading all my life; and, most important, I had served and worked with remarkable people of varied backgrounds. I thought then, and I still think, fifty years later, that it was a marvelous experience to serve two libraries in the county called Marvelous Marin.

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(enlarged and revised edition in preparation);
and with Margaret Lyon,
The Flying Cloud and Her First Passengers,
Mills College Center for the Book, 1992.

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