Oral History Project
Cedar Rapids Public Library

Margaret Elaine Bradow, 63, of 1636 34th Street NE, was interviewed in her home on February 11, 1996 by Laura Derr. She was born in Stanwood, Iowa, in 1932 and has lived in Cedar Rapids since 1957. In that year, she began working at the Cedar Rapids Library as a readers' assistant. She later worked in circulation and magazines before completing her Masters Degree in Library Science at The University of Illinois in 1963. At that time, she began working as a reference librarian and later became head of extension.

Laura Derr (LD): Margaret, I'd like for you to give me some general biographical information. Where were you born and how long have you lived in Linn County?

Margaret Bradow (MB): I was born in Stanwood, Iowa, which is in Cedar County. I came to Cedar Rapids in 1957. I lived in Iowa City for some time before that.

LD: What are your parent's names and when were you born?

MB: I was born in 1932. My parents were August and Eva Ament. I grew up on a farm and lived in Cedar County. I went to school in Stanwood and spent two years at Coe College before finishing up at The University of Iowa.

LD: Margaret, if you would kind of just go through the years you worked at the library, the inclusive years, and the various positions that you held, I'd appreciate that.

MB: I started in 1957, and the position at that time was called "readers' assistant." It was a non-professional position. Usually you had to have a couple years of college, they preferred that. Then, after 1963, when I graduated from the University of Illinois library school, I came back to a position in the reference department. However, you still worked in all the different areas. Then, in 1972, I took the position as head of the branch department, which included the two branches and the bookmobile and eventually the Friendsmobile and for a brief period of time also included the children's library.

LD: You didn't get your library degree chronologically, so to speak. You went back after you had started your family, right?

MB: Right. When I came to Cedar Rapids and started at the library in 1957 in the fall, later on I married. My husband had two children at the time. In 1962, I was doing a lot of enjoyable work at the library. They said, "You're doing all these things. You could just as well be doing a little bit more and be a professional librarian," have all the benefits of that, and do some of these things that looked very interesting and I was intrigued by. So, at that time, you couldn't get a degree in Iowa, so you had to go to Illinois or Michigan or Wisconsin. We tried for Illinois and were very lucky to

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get a nice scholarship. My husband said, "Go ahead and go." He had taken care of himself and the kids by himself before. He encouraged me. I was gone a full year. I had to take a course or two during the summer, during the summer of 1963. Then I came back to the library, which had given me a leave of absence from the job, so I had a job waiting when I came back.

LD: They encouraged you. Who were your mentors at that time?

MB: Miss Grover, Thelma Grover, she was the lady who hired me originally. She was the one who said I should go to school. She encouraged me to go to school and helped me get permission to leave the job and go about getting applications and the scholarship that enabled me to go. So she was the big moving factor. I was probably more of a person who would just roll with the flow and I probably wouldn't have gotten around to getting it done. She kind of pushed it up.

LD: Her confidence gave you the confidence to go.

MB: It had been eight years since I'd been in college, and I kind of wondered about whether I could go back to school again.

LD: You probably discovered that you were a lot more focused than some who were there.

MB: It was a very interesting group in the library school. When I went, I discovered I wasn't that usual after all. There was a lady there who was probably in her fifties. Her husband was head of a department at another school, and she had come there for the purpose of getting her library degree and to help the library in his department. There were a lot of adult people who had been out of school for ten, fifteen years. Then, of course, there were those who came directly from undergraduate school. It was quite a varied group, so I felt quite at home after I got there.

LD: I don't think that's unusual in the library field, because it is a masters degree. A lot of times people come to it kind of circuitously. Tell me about the positions you worked in. I know you went through that very quickly. You had various roles at the library. For instance, what is extension services and what did you do in that position?

MB: I might start back a little farther. When I first started as readers' assistant, it was in the adult department. What we did there was, we had a desk opposite where people came in the door. We were the first person they would see. We helped them use the card catalog. We put microfilms on the reader. We helped them to find materials inside a particular volume, not just send them to a shelf. We helped them make copies after we had copy machines. We helped them figure out how to get

magazines. We showed them what types of things we had, not just how to use them once they got there. Later on, we had student assistants. At that time, they were called "pages." These were high school boys. They were the people who did all the shelving and all the running for magazines and all the work of that nature. Eventually I was the one who was in charge of those folks, hiring them, firing them, training them, supervising their work, making sure they were doing their schedules and had everything done. Later on, I was able to go over to the circulation desk, help out over there. We had to give breaks to each desk. In doing that, you had to learn what went on at the other desks. I also gave breaks at reference. This kind of helped me toward the idea that maybe this would be a nice place to work more than fifteen minutes at a time. I also filed things that came in reference, things that came in periodically. Every two weeks you had a group of updated sheets for a particular volume. When I came back from library school, we continued to do all those things. Just because you had a higher grade didn't mean that sometimes you might not have to do a job which you had done before. Whatever needed to be done had to be done; whoever was there had to do it.

LD: It was very team oriented.

MB: Yes, it was. It wasn't like "I'm a reference librarian so I won't go over and work at the circulation desk." You didn't think that. If the job was needed and someone was sick and there was no one else to do it, you were there. You really felt like you could do almost any job in the area, and I think everybody could. At any time, anyone was able to any of those jobs quite confidently. Then, as time went by, the head of branch libraries retired and that job was open. I applied for that and was lucky enough to get it. At that time, we had just the Kenwood Branch and the bookmobile. As time went by, the bookmobile was getting old and wearing out, and we thought, "What do we need now?" We decided that we needed a branch over on the west side. So the Edgewood Branch was opened. That stayed there for quite a number of years until it was moved out to the Westdale Mall. In the meantime, the remaining bookmobile finally turned up its wheels and went to an auction. In the meantime, we had been taking that bookmobile out to summer playgrounds, so there was something that we felt still needed to be done. So the friends came up with a little vehicle, actually a little pick-up truck. The back was all equipped with shelves. You could flip up the sides and there were the books. There were boxes, and you could set them out on the floor or table, whatever it might be. So we had to decide how best to use this little Friendsmobile, as we called it. So we hired a driver for it, and it was a part-time person. We looked over the various ideas that had been put forth as to how to use this. We decided that what would be best, we thought, was to use it where people were unserved or not as well served as other parts of the population. We came up with the elderly, particularly those who lived in places like Hawthorne Hills where they didn't probably a lot of times have cars or they weren't able to get around very well, and also preschools, of which there were many. They were just tickled to death

to have us bring our Friendsmobile out every so often. We went out on a regular schedule, so they knew when we were coming. They were tickled to death to have our books. Then we also used it at summer playgrounds. So those three areas were ones that we felt were best used with the Friendsmobile. Of course, it did make public appearances at parades, things like that.

LD: And that is no longer working.

MB: I think it wore out also. Other things have taken priority to replace it.

LD: What do you think was the decision factor in deciding, for instance, not to purchase more bookmobiles?

MB: One thing was the high cost of them. It was very expensive to purchase a new one. Then, of course, your new building, are you going to plan a big garage for a bookmobile if you're planning a new building? So the decision had to be made in coordination with that. If you were going to have to have that kind of service, if you put in a big garage, that means that you're tied into continuing with the service. If you have no garage, which it doesn't have, it means you've decided you're not going to do that type of service. It had to be linked together.

LD: It's interesting. From what I've heard, when the bookmobile was started, the thought was that it would be less expensive than renting branches or spaces for branches all around town. But over the years that obviously changed.

MB: I think another thing was the people themselves became much more mobile.

LD: Right.

MB: Originally, when the bookmobile started, everybody probably didn't have two cars. When I first came in '57, we only had one car; and I rode the bus to work or he picked me up or something. Mostly I rode the bus. I think that's the way it was with a lot of families in those days. You felt that something that comes to your neighborhood--hey, I can get to this! For me to get downtown to the main library, I had to get on the bus, carry all these books on the bus, and I'm not going to get very many back and forth. It was a godsend. Here they're bringing it out to me. Then came a period where everyone was getting two cars, sometimes three. We're mobile; we can go anyplace we want to now. We don't have to depend on someone bringing it to us.

LD: That's an excellent point. I hadn't even thought of that. Evidently, the bookmobile served its time well, but today people are much more comfortable coming in.

MB: That's right. People think no more about running downtown, running clear across

town to get something. If it's their time, they love to have you send it from one agency, which is handy for them. But if they want something really bad, they have to run and get it themselves.

LD: They'll come and get it.

MB: Instead of waiting three weeks until you come out the next time, they'll come down here and get it.

LD: That makes a lot of sense. So the extension services were both branches and the bookmobile.

MB: Right, and then the friendsmobile. For a time, there was a time when the children's room was included in it. That was in the late eighties, up until the time shortly after the library moved into the new building; then the children's library was made a separate department. It's kind of interesting. The children's room was kind of rolling along on its merry way, and we decided we wanted to beef it up. When I first took over, when you have something new handed to you, you want to see what you can do with it. We read in a magazine that Mickey Mouse was having a birthday. So we thought, "What better thing to celebrate for children than to have Mickey Mouse's birthday party?" So we did. We were wall-to-wall kids.

LD: You were far more successful than you thought.

MB: Much more successful than we ever dreamed. You couldn't even walk through the little hall that went from the children's room down to the room downstairs that we used as a party area. There just was not room to move, there were so many children. We went on after that. We decided that had worked really great; we must do this again! We had a Winnie the Pooh, oh, different ones. The branches did some of that, too. Halloween was a big time. We would have so many children in there, again, you couldn't move. At Kenwood Branch, they would be from the office there, clear over to the check-out desk, which was like the widest area that there was that there wasn't shelves in. We tried to have them parade around in their costumes, but there wasn't hardly room for them to move. They had a great time. The children came and came and came. Of course, the summer reading program was another thing that had been started. We wanted to keep that going and do even better. About the time we were in charge of it, we didn't have anybody left who would do the drawing for the folder that they always used--I think the person retired who had done it. So we had Nat Hull, who has been around Cedar Rapids for years and who a lot of people knew from construction and the recreation department. He did it for several years, and he came up with a lot of interesting ideas and pictures and folders. We even did a tee shirt with a big lion, the Cedar Rapids Lion.

LD: He created that miniature circus.

MB: He would bring some of things that he had over to our big display case. He could put them in there. We even had buttons. We got a button-maker, and we made buttons for all kinds of things. You could make them yourself. We had a tee shirt. The children, one of their awards, was this iron-on, that you put on your tee shirt. That was just kind of a new idea that we had. Not like nowadays, when they sell them by the ten-thousands!

LD: When you say "way back when," when would that have been?

MB: Back in the early seventies. I took over in '72, so it would have been '72, 3, 4, 5, 6--in through there.

LD: A lot of these things were pretty new.

MB: Right. At that time, it was a new idea. The downtown library was getting more and more crowded at that time. So the people were coming out to the branches, thinking it was easy to park and not so crowded and they could find things. We were just going great guns. Our circulation was astronomical in those years, higher and higher.

LD: The branches were actually full-service operations.

MB: They were at that time, particularly Kenwood, because it was a building that the library owned. It had always had a couple of nice counters with reference materials that were kept pretty well up to date. We did as much as we could to keep those up to date. We had a nice collection. We were the ones that started in with the plastic bag that had the children's book and cassette. That was one of the things we saw and brought in. We had fourteen of those to begin with. You can imagine there was never one on the shelf. Of course, it's commonplace now. Then we had phonograph records. We had some of everything. We prided ourselves on that we could do a great deal with just our basic reference work. Eventually as funds naturally shrink and books went higher and higher, we were not able to keep up with the reference things we had. Again, also, the policies of what the administration wanted the branches to do changed, as these things do. Different people came in and said, "We would like to focus more on the main library," put our main emphasis here and have the branch be more of a place to get current things. If you need reference materials, come to the main library, unless you need an encyclopedia or a dictionary or things like that. The idea changed, and our reference materials became fewer and fewer and more back-dated. It was a different change in priorities there. Of course, nowadays, after they moved the branches to the malls, it became more of a current, popular collection. It serves that purpose, with the computers serving the purpose of finding out what's

downtown, bringing it out here.

LD: Computers would make it a lot easier to do research at the branches.

MB: They can bring out things the next day.

LD: Let's talk about that just a little bit. You mentioned evolving technology over the years--how everything changed from a manual, hands-on, labor-intensive process...

MB: Very labor intensive.

LD: What were some of the areas where technology came in?

MB: First you think of the *Readers' Guide*, you think of those huge, heavy tomes that you lifted and carried around. You usually had to buy two sets of them. We had hundreds and hundreds of magazines. Of course, in the old library, we didn't have room for them upstairs beyond five years, so all of the rest of the magazines went to the basement. You'd usually have two pages, or student assistants as they later were called, run back and forth, up and down stairs, mostly evenings and Saturdays. They used to carry hundreds of those up and down, up and down.

LD: It was a good job for physical activity.

MB: Yes, a good job for physical activity. Of course, in the new library, they were able to put all the magazines on floor level; people could walk in and pick up the one they wanted. Also, they have the magazines on line. I'm not sure exactly of the exact title of it, but it's a microserv, computer type of screen.

LD: I think they just call it the magazine index.

MB: Maybe it is just called the magazine index. Anyway, it isn't heavy books that you lift up. They probably still have *Readers' Guide*, I don't know. I'll have to check that out. That was quite a change. Then the copy machines. It's kind of interesting, we're all so accustomed to seeing them in every grocery store for a dime, copy machines. Back years and years ago, people wanted to know if we had a copy machine. Well, we really didn't have one for the public, but we would copy something for them. We'd take their piece of paper, whatever it was. We had special pieces of paper that we had to put in this machine. I think it came out with kind of a pink, crinkley copy, but it was a copy. Later on, we had a machine that they could operate themselves. I can remember a lot of times standing on my tiptoes, leaning clear into this machine, either trying to get something loose that was stuck or getting paper in or out. I can remember practically standing on my head trying to get it to go.

LD: So being a mechanic was part of your job.

MB: Oh yes. I had to be a mechanic, or try to be a mechanic. I was never that good a mechanic, but you did what you could, particularly in the evening when there was nobody else there anyway, and all you could do was to try. We were finally so tickled when we got a Xerox. Xerox was *the* copier. It became the word for copier. Later on, we got a more sophisticated Xerox. Of course, then, it was much easier. People could do a lot of the copying themselves. Most of the time, you didn't have to do much but fill it up with paper. Each morning, you had to pour the toner in, make sure it had plenty of toner. That was a lot easier. Even the branch had a copy machine. We were tickled to death. Another thing that changed a lot was inter-library loan. This was, of course, a very nice feature that the library used to promote. If we didn't have the book, we'd get it for them some-place else.

LD: That goes way back.

MB: That goes way back, and sometimes you might have to pay for it, the postage. You had someone assigned each day to take the inter-library loan forms out, which were multiple forms, written out by hand. You'd have to go to the card catalog, see if you had the materials, go to the shelves, do something however they checked them out, package them up in bags, get them ready for postage and all stapled up. It would take them probably an hour to do five or six of these. This was very, again, labor intensive. Contrast this with the way they do it with the computer now. It is much faster. Your world is unlimited as far as what you can do. You don't have to have the item; you can just have copies of it sent. It's so much quicker. I'm sure it still takes a lot of time, because they probably do a lot more of it.

LD: That's the thing about computers. You think they're time savers, but they just get you into a lot more trouble.

MB: You just have to do more work.

LD: They make you more able to accomplish things.

MB: The other thing we had were microfilm viewers. These weren't prone to break down that much, but you just had to run up there and get the film out. Once in a while, somebody would roll one backwards, and you had to figure that out. Then you had machines that let you copy from the microfilm. I notice now that they have rows upon rows of microfilm readers and several copiers, I'm sure. One thing that was given to the library was not so great a technology, but it was very helpful for anyone who could not read small print. It was a large magnifying reader. It was lighted. You could just sit it on a table. It would help if you were reading a news-paper and your eyes weren't the best. That was nice. The other thing that changed

an awful lot--at the time we were doing what we thought was the height of technology. A lot of people were checking books out with a couple of cards. You'd write down the number and you'd stamp it. You'd put one in a box and you'd put one in someplace else. We got past that. What we were using was a little recording machine. We had a microphone with a blue plastic record on it, which was about six or seven inches around. When you would check out the book, you would start out with numbered cards. Each card was all punched on the side, so you could sort them with a needle and they would come out in exact order. Nobody could quite figure out why they would come out exactly, but they did. It was actually fun to sort all these cards out. People got a big bang out of doing it. You'd start out with your cards. Your cards were in order, so they'd be in order on the machine. On your little plastic record it would say transaction number 2045 was the beginning number and that transaction number 3022 was the ending number. So you knew where the particular group of transactions when it came time to listen to those and write down those that were missing, which was another very labor intensive job. You would check out your book and you'd say, "Transaction number 12345, book number "C" as in Charlie 4638, charged to Mary, "M" as in Mary ary, Cordoba, "C" as in Charlie ordoba, 12345 Kencrest, "K" as in King encrest Drive, SE.

LD: And you called that each time you checked a book out!

MB: You could run a whole group of books with the person's name at the bottom. You didn't have to say it [every time]. But it was a lot of fun. There were some folks in town whose name was, and the best I can do is "Dutzadakis" and I had a great time trying to pronounce that. It was kind of a challenge to see if you could pronounce these names. I took great pride in that a lot of them I got right.

LD: So you got to know your clientele that way, didn't you?

MB: You did. That was one thing that was nice, knowing your clientele. They would have, of course, just paper library cards at the time that they presented to you, just an ordinary, hand-written card.

LD: Just for a frame of reference, were you doing that when you came in?

MB: Yes.

LD: So that started back in the late fifties, or even before that?

MB: Before that--before that sometime.

LD: And when did you change from that?

MB: When we moved to the new library then, of course, books were being put on computer, so we changed over right around that time. I don't know if those were used at all in the new library. I can't remember exactly, but that's the time. The computer came in with the new library, so that's the time we changed over.

LD: I would think it was a real time consuming process, listening to the record.

MB: You'd have probably, in the wintertime, probably 3000 cards to sort out each week. You kept a record of which cards were used at which time, so you knew when they were ready for overdue. So you would pull out the cards--they were coming in all the time. You'd give them two weeks beyond the due date. Otherwise, you'd have such a long list of books that were not returned yet.

LD: You were easier in those days.

MB: Well, they didn't get it for free--they still had to pay the fines. But you didn't get a notice for a few weeks afterward, which some people didn't like really well. Say you had a range of 3000 numbers that were due from the week of February 1 through February 7. Here they were, they're all two weeks overdue, so you'd take all these mixed up cards out, take your long needle, and you had a certain way to look through these punched holes in the cards. They'd come out in exact order, and you'd go through and write down the missing numbers on a big tablet.

LD: When you say they came out in exact order, they came out in the order...

MB: In numerical order.

LD: The same as the order on the record.

MB: That would be, because you had recorded them in order. Then you had to take the missing numbers and they played the record back. They'd listen for those missing numbers, write down all the information on there. But, then again, all you had was the book number. From there they had to go to the technical service, where they had all their accession records. You'd look for book number C4689, and here's the "C" book, and they were in numerical order. 4689 and here's the book, "Animals of the World" by so-and-so, publisher, and there's the price and the call number. You'd write down the information that you needed, which was probably just the title of it and the price of it--you didn't need any of the rest of it for the overdue. Then they had to be typed up and mailed out. Then you had, as those overdue books came in, you would pull the slips that you still had, because they had been done in triplicate. They got a first notice. In a couple weeks, if they didn't bring them back, those that were left were sent out as repeat notices. Then you had a third notice. After that, you'd get on the telephone, "Hello, Mrs. Smith. I see that you haven't brought Animals of the World back yet. Has the book been lost? Do

you think you could get it in tomorrow?" Hopefully, she could. Some they never did.

LD: There was a certain point, then, that you didn't have much recourse.

MB: We did get involved with the credit bureau. We had a deal where we could stamp, "credit bureau," so they knew that these accounts went over the credit bureau and would go against their record. Not that the credit bureau ever "dunned" them or anything, but that was one method that we tried to do to try to get these large accounts--maybe it would be one book worth $50.00 or 10 books for $5.00 each.

LD: Do you have a feel for how great your loss was in terms of books that never came back?

MB: It wasn't any worse than advertising--maybe one to two percent.

LD: So most people were very responsible.

MB: Yes. Sometimes you were surprised at who wasn't responsible and vice versa.

LD: Might have been some very public people!

MB: Sometimes it was. It was a very labor intensive job.

LD: A lot of tedious work involved. You'd have to be a detail person in this job.

MB: Oh, definitely. Much detail, because everyone would say, "I never checked that book out," and "That's not the book I had," so you had to go through and make sure. Once in a while your record would get a little blurry and you'd have a hard time hearing it. That was always hard. Obviously the book isn't back because the card number isn't here, but you can't quite hear that number--is it "L" or is it "M" or is it "2" or "3" or what number was it? Something happened; it got blurry, and you couldn't hear it. They weren't perfect.

LD: You, obviously, were involved in doing this. That would mean that circulation was a part of extension as well?

MB: Yes. At extension, we took care of our own overdues and did our own cards, made up our own list. What we did do was send them down to the main library to be typed up and mailed out. We had our own set of cards which had a different number, and they had a "K" in front of them on the top of the card.

LD: For Kenwood.

MB: Yes. Childrens had red cards, and theirs had a "C" on it. Ours had a K and were blue cards. Bookmobile I think was green and had a "B," if I remember right. Downtown was black; it didn't have anything on it. That way anybody who picked up a book and looked at it, even without looking for a stamp on the book, would see that's from Kenwood. It may be that the book was transferred out for someone and did not originally belong to Kenwood, but it had been checked out at that location.

LD: That's tremendous. So the branch libraries were microcosms of the large library and you did everything there, except for sending them back for the actual printing.

MB: Yes. They did the typing for us for us and the identification and that sort of thing. Getting back to student assistants as we called them later, we had to hire our own crew--each location had their own crew, and they never intermixed--as opposed to nowaways when they have one group that could work at any location and do. That came in shortly after we had been in the new library. I'm not sure whether Pat [Schabo] or myself or both of us came up with the idea that maybe it would be handy sometimes when you have a lot of people sick or something. Maybe I could borrow one a page from the adult department or maybe the adult could borrow one from the children's room or Kenwood could borrow an Edgewood one. They were all hired at one location after that time, and they all were trained to work in all the locations. While they might stay pretty much in one area, they could go back and forth. Also, another reason that came to be was the fact that they started opening on Sunday. It was more fair to have all of the students work than only the students who happened to be at the location that was open. That way they could all work.

LD: I want to talk more about the pages and the employees. Before we get to that, we're still kind of in the area of job descriptions. One of the things you were involved in, and I'm not sure if it was because of extension or what part of your position, was the book selection committee.

MB: Yes.

LD: Could you talk about how that worked and how it has changed? I think it's not quite the same as it used to be in terms of book selection.

MB: Right. From the time I first worked at the library, I didn't have anything to do with book selection at that time, but I knew that there were book selection meetings every Friday I think it was. You'd see the department heads disappear with a big armload of materials, and they were off to book selection. That was always kind of intriguing. Even as readers' assistants we would get, for example, *Publishers Weekly* and read these little reviews and think, "That would be an interesting book. I wonder if they would buy that." Our people would request different things and maybe we'd look up something for them or maybe they'd send us a card and have us look something up that they were considering and find the publisher's name or something. So

after I had been to library school, I was able to be on the book selection committee, gradually worked into that. What they did is--each person in reference had a particular area, perhaps they might do it by subjects, which were designated by numbers. Maybe this person had the 600's; someone else had the 900's--meaning one person had history; another had music, another had maybe travel in their area. They would read various reviewing mediums that we assigned to them. Maybe one person was assigned to read the *Chicago Tribune* and somebody else was supposed to read the *New York Times*. All these recommendations would come in and they'd be recorded on a card representing that particular title. When you had two or three particular recommendations, it didn't matter what they were, good, bad or indifferent, it would pop that title up for a suggestion as to looking it over. Do we want to buy this? We've got three reviews on it now. Two of them are real good and the other one is not too bad. Each week, they would get together, and those titles with several reviews that were enough to trigger them to be looked at, they would go through those and make up their book order. The next week, they went on to the next thing.

LD: That was a rather powerful position. That would be kind of fun.

MB: It was fun to go to those meetings and be in on that. Of course, you're human and you're interested in particular things. Any collection is bound to be colored by that, but they bent over backwards not to go too far this way or that way. They tried to avoid that. Then there would be different times that maybe you would get a grant or you'd have this particular money that was to be spent on a particular purpose. They had various different ones--they had one on business, I would see ones listed from a particular fund related to business. Maybe one person or two people might be assigned to locate particular books that would be good for this particular grant. Maybe we've got a book on geneology, and we want to beef up our geneology section. Or, here's a donation--I think you should have more books on this topic and then you'd spent the money for that topic. That was always interesting, too, because you could go a little beyond maybe what you had the funds to do.

LD: The budget allowed.

MB: The other tricky part of book selection is the idea that you were kind of on a roller coaster--one year you might have more or less a normal year, in which a certain amount was doled out to each particular area. You had your budget for each department, and it was up to the department head to figure out how much they were going to spend in different areas. Next year, maybe there was a big cutback, so you didn't have very much to spend at all. Maybe the next year you got a big total--here's $10,000, you're supposed to spend it in three months or two months or one month or whatever. You were kind of on this up and down roller coaster.

LD: Kind of like you'd win the lottery sometimes and other times it would be like you

lost.

MB: I remember one particular year, in fact, when we had nothing at all to spend. That was the year we laid people off. We had one real bad year when we didn't have hardly anything.

LD: Was that because the city had funding issues or do you know why?

MB: It probably was, because I know we had to lay some people off, so it probably went back to the city, which kind of brings me back to one thing I might mention. When I first was hired, back in 1957, if you would have asked me who I worked for I would have said that I worked for the library. If you said, "Don't you work for the city?" I would have said no, I worked for the library. I must have had that feeling for a couple of years, because I felt like I worked for the library and the library was run by the board. I didn't feel like I worked for the city. I knew that they got money from the city, but they were separate, a separate organization.

LD: It didn't impinge on your life there at all.

MB: I didn't really feel like a city employee. In the early years, we did everything internally. Our checks came out of the library. Everything was done there. We had one person who took care of all the library's bookkeeping all by herself, without a computer. As those years passed, though, the connection became closer, as the city took over various functions, I think more or less starting with things like paychecks. Then came paying bills. And you noticed more things about the budget that came from the budget--things like equal opportunity. The city began to have rules about how the people were to be hired and what could be looked at. Of course, that affected the library at that time and became closer and closer and closer.

LD: So you were required to follow the policies of the larger organization rather than internal.

MB: Right. You didn't make up your own policy about that. Then the city began to have things like safety, I think this was with the bookmobile drivers. The city would have something like a safety day training, and our bookmobile drivers always went. Gradually, they trained us all for CPR. Then we had rules on driving. We would spend the day on training for safe driving, because we were driving for the city.

LD: City vehicles, right?

MB: Even your own vehicle doing city business, on city business, going back and forth between branches.

LD: Probably liability issues.

MB: Probably liability issues came into it. More and more of that type of thing. You came to feel more like an agent of the city. Of course, when you got into computers and in the little margin it tells you about checks coming down every two weeks instead of twice a month. Originally, we were paid once a month. You had to plan your money.

LD: You sure did!

MB: As I said about the city's computer or whatever they were using at the time worked better every two weeks, and we changed to that. Then it became even more closely entwined. The last thing, that made the biggest impact, was the fact that instead of people walking into the library like I did and being interviewed, if there was a job opening, it was posted for internal people to see. It also had to be advertised in a certain number of places a certain amount of time for anyone to apply at the city's personnel office. You didn't even see the people. They would go through the applications, and they would let you know that your applications for this job are ready for you to look at. You might have a hundred of them. You couldn't interview a hundred people, so you'd read their applications, choose those who fit your job description (the job descriptions were all laid out and posted). Then you would interview those people and go on from there. It was more closely tied to the city.

LD: It became much more of a public entity and probably, that just goes along with the times, doesn't it? Especially that period in the seventies and eighties when there was so much more affirmative action and the laws changed to make sure people were not in any way discriminated against.

MB: If you had hired someone, and the equal opportunity department head looked over what you did, if he felt, "Maybe someone should inquire--why didn't they hire this person? Was there some reason that person was passed over?" they might decide to come out and sit down with you in your office and talk to you about it. I had that happen one time. I had hired someone for a particular position and they said, "Well you had in your group this certain person here. Is there some reason that person was not hired?" So I explained what it was about the person that I felt this other person was much more qualified for the position over this other person. Everything was fine. But, you see, you wouldn't have had that twenty years before; you were on your own then.

LD: It was much more of an autonomous organization when you first began there. You should talk about the pages and how the hiring of pages changed.

MB: It certainly did. First of all, the pages themselves changed. When I first started, people would walk in and ask if they could get a job shelving and someone would take their applications. When we had an opening, we'd go through the applications

and call them back. We took them as young as fourteen, fifteen was the ideal age. They were so enthusiastic. They hadn't had a job before. They were good workers. You'd have them fill the application out and they'd put down their grades, where they went to school, put some references down, and you'd talk to them. You'd look them over to see what type of presentation they made of themselves, how they looked, how they acted, how they spoke. You checked with their references. If you were sufficiently impressed and you had an opening, you would hire them, no problem. Then gradually, state law said you could only hire someone who could work after seven o'clock if they were sixteen. This cut down our pool of applicants a little bit, because we were open until nine o'clock. We thought this was too much of a hassle, to have some who could work only so long and others who could work later. So we just started with sixteen then. It cut down our pool, because by that time, they had gotten higher paying jobs, because, at the beginning, we were only paying sixty-five cents an hour with nickel raises. They had to earn those raises; they did not get them just because they had to stay on the job for so long, for six months. They might get it sooner, or they might get it later, depending on what quality of work they were doing and how they impressed their boss. There was nobody to say when you got the raise; it was up to the supervisor as to when they'd earned it.

LD: According to merit.

MB: Merit, very strictly merit. But we had the top, the cream of the crop. The library had the reputation--they don't pay very much but you could get done early in the evening and it's a nice place to work. We had the top students. Usually they had lots of activities besides that worked well with that sort of thing. We always had kids with very good grades. One kind of unique thing, when you think about looking back at it but we didn't think about it because it had always been done that way, is that girls worked in the children's room and branches. The boys worked in the adult area. I always thought that part of it was these heavy, and I mean heavy, magazines that had to be carried up and downstairs. That was probably a big part of it. It was kind of an unusual thing. Nowadays, girls carry things as heavy as boys.

LD: Oh, sure. But it kind of fit into expectations.

MB: Yes, it was one of those things. After we had the Library Employees Association and then there was a union, whether they were part time or not, they were still eligible for that. Wages began to be set by negotiation instead of the library board just sat down and figured them out before. I don't know how that worked. They got minimum wage; I think they still do. Wage increases come at set times. If you don't get an increase, you probably aren't on the job anymore, because you are either worth an increase or you're not going to be kept on anymore. That changed that way. But later on, after we were hiring them for all one location, we

had to devise, there weren't any tests for pages, for student assistants. We had to make one up. We had little cards. Cards had authors' names and they had Dewey numbers on them, two sets. The ones who would come in and apply, we said, "You sit down and fill out the application. Then we'll give you the test." So their test was to put these things in order in a certain length of time. Each application would have the record of on this test they did three minutes and two errors, and on this alphabetizing test they had no errors in one minute. That was one of the things you very heavily relied on, because that was an equalizer. It didn't make any difference if a student was from this side of town, whether they were dressed poorly, whether you thought that person wasn't much interested in whether they get this job or not. Sometimes, you wondered why they were there, because probably their mother said they had to go in and get a job. Otherwise, they're just gung ho--"Gee, I've been waiting since I was twelve to get a library job!" We know that person is interested.

LD: So your intuition didn't always (tape changes sides)

MB: I think one of the things that happened later on in the old library was that we seldom ever had a colored person apply for a job. We had never had a colored boy apply for a page job, and one day a colored boy did apply. He had a very nice appearance and good grades, a good recommendation, so we hired him. He was making some mistakes, and he seemed to make the same kind of mistake every time we would check his shelving. So we showed it to him. I can't remember his name now, but we said, "You seem to be making the same type of mistake. Are you seeing it wrong?" You know, a lot of time they would say, "I'll just try harder," but he took it to heart. He came in a few days later, and he had had his eyes tested, and sure enough, he did need glasses. That solved his problem. He went on to stay there and be a student assistant until he graduated, which is what most of the kids did.

LD: He was lucky to have you for his supervisor.

MB: It was not that unusual to just kind of offhandly say, "Are you seeing this right?" because why would he keep doing the same thing over again all the time? It just happened. It was an unusual thing. We didn't have very many colored people on the staff. There were two ladies who were there when I came that did janitorial work. They were there until they retired, which was about the same time in the years the library was going into the new building. I think one worked in the new building, because they were of the age that they probably had already retired. I don't remember. They didn't retire the same year, but very close to the same year. There was one other person who was a children's room librarian who was a colored person, but that's about the only people that I remember through the years.

LD: Was that person a professional?

MB: Yes, in the children's room it was a professional.

LD: That's good because only now are people emerging in the professions who have come out of a minority background.

MB: That would be back in the sixties, late sixties, when the page was hired, which was kind of unusual back that far. Of course, colored ladies as janitorial was probably not unusual; that was expected. The colored librarian would have been in the early seventies.

LD: I think that leads into some questions I had about--where there any differences in the way different groups of people, staff members, were treated in terms of pay? For instance, in early years, coming back before the city really got involved in it. For instance, men vs. women, were you ever aware of any differences in salary or wages.

MB: There really weren't, because I never knew what anybody made. The first time I started, I know what they offered me, but I had no idea what anybody was paid.

LD: You didn't talk about it.

MB: You didn't talk about it. You didn't say, "What are you making in this job" or "If I move up to your job, what will I make?" You didn't talk about it, didn't ask anybody. We usually had at least one man on the staff somewhere, and usually the director was a man, but the rest were mostly women. Very seldom was there more than one man, other than the bookmobile driver. The bookmobile drivers were both men. Other than that, as far as in the adult department, circulation, anything there, it was usually in reference, the readers' assistant in reference is where the man would be. Once in a while there was a certain person, but most of the time it was reference or readers' assistant where there was a man. Of course, when it came to affirmative action, it's not "Can we find a woman?" it's "Can we find a man?"

LD: To take the job.

MB: Right. As far as talking about the amount people were paid, it wasn't until they had job descriptions that you had access to. In other words, when the job became vacant and it was posted, then you knew what the job paid. Then, of course, you had your employee's association, which turned later into a union. This meant that the department head or anyone else who supervised anybody else, such as the supervisor of the student assistants, who was not a department head, they would not be in the union. Everybody else, including the student assistants, was in the union. So then there were bargaining agreements being negotiated. Then everybody knew what everybody made. Sometimes it made for hard feelings, because you'd have someone who felt that they were doing as much or a harder type of work, that this particular grade over here should be equal or that both of them should be raised.

LD: How did they make those decisions? Was that through the city that grades were assigned?

MB: They would have classification studies. Companies would come in from outside, and they would do a big study and recommend titles. One time they recommended huge title changes. Some of them were pretty outlandish. That's where the word "librarian" disappeared. I can remember two particular times. They would come in and interview people, "What do you do?" "What does your job consist of?" They would go through and make these big studies. That's where they got the basis and then, of course, they would have to fine tune them. We got quite a laugh out of some of those titles they came up with. As I said, it was a shame the word "librarian" disappeared.

LD: In some cases, "library" itself has disappeared. Kirkwood doesn't have a "library." They have a "learning resource center." They replaced one word with three words.

MB: That's what happened this particular time. A single word was replaced with a whole string of things--some of them I can hardly remember, they were so long. "What are you?" "I'm a so-and-so and so-and-so."

LD: When did that change? Was that in the seventies? First of all, when did you develop the association?

MB: That had to be before the seventies, because I'm picturing that we had the first meeting up in the magazine room, and we were in the old building yet. I was not in the branch department, so it must be before '72, but I can't give you an exact date of when it started. Then, I can't remember, the state had just made it legal for public employees to have labor unions. It was just before that that they had an association. Of course, it wasn't very long and it became a union after that. That was before we moved to the new building. It must have been in the seventies when all of this came about. I can remember, Miss Richardson was the assistant director. She was the lucky one who got to be the negotiator for the library, along with a couple of other people from the city. I don't think anybody from the board was on that. It was her and the person from the city and, of course, the library union would have their people. First, they were by themselves. Then they joined with a larger union, something to do with communications workers. They became part of a bigger union, in order to have the help with negotiations because they didn't have the experience. They needed some help.

LD: They often don't know what was comparable anywhere else.

MB: And, of course, the city would have hired people. They had been through these things before and, of course, I imagine the person they had would either be trained in law or some more background than just the librarian here. Most librarians have

not had training in labor economics. It was asking a lot for them to just jump into that.

LD: I notice when reading through the history that is going to be published that everybody who was on the staff of the library over the years, as you had mentioned earlier, did everything. It was just expected that you were there to make this facility work; that was your goal.

MB: You were part of a big team, and it didn't make any difference whether I came back with a library degree. If work needed to be done at the circulation desk and there was nobody there to do it, the public had to be served. They didn't care who was at that desk--they just wanted their service, and they wanted it now. So you'd get a warm body over there.

LD: Did you think that it changed the atmosphere when suddenly we had both labor and management? Was there a break there?

MB: It was just a little more separation. You felt the separation, I think. Now everybody knows what everyone is making, and it made for a little hard feelings now and then, when someone felt, "That job is the very same thing as we're doing. Why is that job graded this and the job I have is graded lower?" They couldn't see the difference.

LD: Well, then they could bring a grievance.

MB: That's right. They could bring a grievance, and I think they did have grievances. It became a little more like other business places, when you had that break. Before, you felt more like you were all together. You give up one thing for another.

LD: You mentioned something kind of interesting. The supervisors were sort of neither fish nor fowl. They were not labor, and they were not management.

MB: That's right. They were in between.

LD: That would be an interesting position to be in.

MB: You get it from the top, and you get it from the bottom.

LD: I certainly don't want to cut off anything you have to say in that area, but I think we have some other areas to cover as well.

MB: I might mention one thing about the directors. The early directors, I really didn't feel that I knew them very well. I might see the person, Mr. Marvin, come walking in, and he'd say hello and go off to his office and leave out the side door. Maybe

that's all I'd see him that day. He was busy with trying to get a certain library bill, maybe pushing for that in the Iowa legislature, along with various other things that he might be doing. I had no idea what he was doing up there, except that it was behind closed doors. Later on, I think Tom Carney and Mr. Armitage, occasionally they would come down and take a turn at the desk to see what was going on on the floor, make contact with the public. A little more walking through, stopping to visit with people, so you knew what was going on at this desk and that desk. It was a different atmosphere.

LD: I would think you would like that.

MB: Yes, you felt that you knew them a little better than you did the other folks. It was kind of interesting--some of these people, Tom Carney was one of the folks that were bookmobile driver at one time. Then he had a position that existed for a while called "Community Services Librarian." Then he was director. He worked himself up. When I first started, I don't know if I mentioned it, they had various organizational structures. When I first started, there was a reference department, of which Miss Richardson was the head. Then there was the circulation department, which was headed by Anna Hunt, who I worked under. Then there was a children's department. Agnes Hibbs was the head of the cataloging department, which was on the second floor of the library. Originally, about half of the second floor of the old library was used for an art gallery. As the library grew, we needed more space and more space. The art gallery, we really needed that space, so they moved out.

LD: You launched a museum!

MB: Right, we pushed hard enough that they had to get busy and get a museum going. Technical services was the whole end of the building there. They used a couple little small rooms as part of their rooms to keep their accession records so they did use half of that room that was on the second floor. Agnes Hibbs was head of that for many, many years. Of course, everything was done very manually--all the repairs of the books, the jacketing, the marking, everything was done up there. So then later on, still in the old building, Miss Richardson was made head of what they called "Adult Services," and the reference department and circulation, those headings weren't used anymore, so it was all one. A little bit later, in the new building, it was "Adult Services," and "Circulation" became a separate department taken out of it. Reference and readers' assistant was all in it. As I mentioned before, the children's room was part of branch services for a short time. Later on, it became separate again. It has been separate for longer than it has ever been with other things. Circulation, I'm not sure where it is right now--if it's in Adult Services or separate. That just shows that, as different ideas, and sometimes it was in response to people, if they had people who could handle this particular position. I noticed back in the early years, a lot of times there wouldn't be a particular position. All of a sudden you'd have somebody doing--it was just

like a job was carved out because we had this person who could do these certain things at the time. That was just carved out and made into a particular job, like Community Services Librarian. That was not there when I first came. It was something that was developed and, of course, it isn't there now either.

LD: Was that kind of like extension work?

MB: It was kind of like public promotion.

LD: Public relations.

MB: These kind of things just came and went sometimes.

LD: So the jobs were often reflective of the talents they had at that time. Maybe it was those consultants that came in.

MB: They made it into a little more. Like I said, they came up with descriptions. Then it became more codified. Of course, now it is very much. I'm sure if they wanted to create a new job, now I don't think they can. You can't create a new job without going back to the city and saying, "We need a certain position." Then you'd have to describe what that position is. Maybe they're not having any new hires this year. So, you see, you're not free like you were years ago. There was one young man that started out as a student assistant, and he worked all through college. He could do anything in the library, from driving the bookmobile to checking out books to cataloging. He was just multi-talented. I think he majored in science, chemistry or something. I'd have him do one thing these several months, and next summer he was doing some sort of special project. It was something that needed to be done, and here was a person who knew how to do it. I don't know what job title he had after he was out of college.

LD: Do you even have student page positions down there anymore?

MB: Oh, yes.

LD: They're still down there.

MB: But they don't have to be students.

LD: Just a certain job level.

MB: Right, it's a job level. You could be an adult and hired for that job. Before, if an adult had applied for the job, we kind of looked a little bit crooked at him, "Why do you want this job?" Because it was a student job.

LD: It was only a wonderful position because they were young people. It was kind of an honor to do it.

MB: It was an honor and it was their first job.

LD: You got a lot of benefits out of it.

MB: And they could go to college and they were all trained. They could try to get a job at the college, and many of them did get a job at the library in college. Here was their application. Of course, we had to give references for them. We were glad to do that.

LD: So that was kind of a little cultural thing within the community that was lost. As times changed, it simply became a job description at a certain minimum pay.

MB: Minimum pay, and you had to be able to work certain hours. I presume most of them are still students, but not necessarily.

LD: You had mentioned that the mix between full-time and part-time positions seems to have changed a little.

MB: Right. Years ago, when I first started, there were some part-time people, but not a great many. Most of the time, you hired part-time people in the summer. That soon stopped. Part of that was budget. It used to be, "What summer jobs are we going to have this summer?" We couldn't have summer jobs. You worked straight through. When someone was on vacation, you just had to make do. And then they tried to schedule the vacations so they didn't have too many people gone at one time. As years went by, it got to the point where you'd bid for vacations. January first, you'd put your requests in, and only one person could be gone at a time, which didn't go over too well. We only had so many people; we couldn't afford to have more than one person gone. We could not hire extra people. That soon went down the tubes. That was one thing that changed. As years went by, you had more and more part-time people. Now it's gotten to the point, I think, where there are more part-time people, at least in what used to be the extension service. I think there are only two full-time people left. So it's all gone to part-time people. Of course, that's a nationwide trend. Part-time people didn't get any benefits until the union came in. When that came in, they got part-time benefits if they worked half-time. Now you have a lot of part-time people who work under twenty hours, no benefits. That's the same as all the businesses are doing, too.

LD: There's also the advantage that, if they have insurance coverage through a spouse, you're not involved in any coverage. Lots of those things have been done.

MB: At the time we were in Kenwood, we hated to see that coming because we always

felt, even downtown years ago, that the part-time people couldn't keep up as well with what was going on in the library. They weren't there all the time to know what was going on and be able to help people. I think something was lost in that. Times are what they are.

LD: Someone else that I was talking to said that there had been a kind of change. At one time, the whole purpose of every staff person there was to help the public.

MB: That's right. When I first came, that's what you did. You didn't do anything--they always gave you busy work to do, some cards that needed to be put in order, something that needed to be done, a list for something. But if anybody was there, you had to be right there. When that person came in, you'd get to that person and see what they needed. You'd stay with them until you'd find what they want, show them what they want, answered their question, whatever it was. That was your purpose. You were the readers' assistant, and that was your job. Nothing else came first. Of course, those of us who grew up with that were trained for that for years and years carried that right on through. Then, as years went by, it got to the point where you stayed at a desk and you'd tell them where this is, where I was trained that you take them there and make sure they find it. Half the time you'd take them to the shelf and maybe they still wouldn't find a book. They wouldn't think to look at the index and find what they wanted. It was a hard transition to make to stop doing that. Of course, now you have the computer. The instructions are there. They say, "If you have trouble, come back." It changed a lot. At the branch, as we became more restricted as to the amount of time we could spend with people, I'd hear various members of the staff say, "Well, that's what I like about being out here, being able to help the people." Now, they don't want us to do that. They just want us to just check the books out and tell the people where to go. Tell them this, but not actually go and help them find it. That's what I enjoyed about the job. That was the satisfaction of the job.

LD: They were probably looking for productivity more.

MB: We had people tell us that would come into the branch that that's why they came there. They liked that service, that philosophy. But something had to give.

LD: You cannot continue to do more with less. I wondered if you would talk about also issues that occurred with city limits and library cards. That changed over the years.

MB: When I first started, every year we got a brand-new city directory, and we'd get several copies. The first thing they had to do was to do through the street directory part and cross out the streets that were out of the city limits. If you were outside the city limits, it didn't make any difference if you were across the street or the house next to you was inside and you were outside, you couldn't have library service. You had to pay for it. At that time, I believe it was $15.00 for a family card. As the

years went by, I think the last time I knew in the new building, it was $60.00 for us for a family card per year. In early times, it was a pretty good bargain. Anybody could buy one--you could be from outside the city or outside or anyplace, and you could buy a card. You didn't dare be one house outside the city limits. That was very hard to explain to people. Their kids went to the Cedar Rapids schools, they used the buses, they were right across the street--"Joe Blow across the street gets service. I'm right across the street. Why can't I have a card? I'm in Cedar Rapids." Well, you're in the Cedar Rapids school district, but you're not in the Cedar Rapids city limits. A particularly difficult place, I remember we had a lot of problems with it was a mobile home court on the southwest side. It had street names, South Street, East Street, North Street, and it had the "southwest" on it. It sounded just like a city street. This was completely surrounded by the city, so it was a pocket. We had quite a time; people always thought that they should have service. Of course, "I'm sorry, you're outside the city limits."

LD: That must have made for a very difficult job.

MB: It did. You felt bad about it. It is a shame when you live right there. As time went by, various things changed, and we were really glad to see them. It took a lot of pressure off you saying, "Sorry, you can't check the books out without buying this card. It's $30.00 now." I think one of the early things was a county contract, which helped, because that solved the problem of the city limits part.

LD: So the county government paid for the service.

MB: Paid the library service, and that was based on cost per user, the average cost of a user in Cedar Rapids. Then they paid that, so anybody in the unincorporated part of the county could have service. I think how that originally started was, well anyway, there were certain formalities they went through to get that done. But it got done. As time went by, they just simply walked in and we had to get a certain county card. Then certain towns outside the city limits, over the years different ones, would want service, depending on the city council at the time. There were some who had service for years earlier, decided many, many years ago that they wanted service. They would buy a contract; the people in that town would get a card, and their town paid for it.

LD: It would be beyond the limits of Linn County?

MB: No, most of the time they would be in Linn County, because the county contract did not cover the incorporated towns, just the unincorporated, I think Toddville, Whittier, and I can't think of the other one.

LD: It is beginning to make sense, because it was related to taxation.

MB: That was how we always tried to explain it, but sometimes that didn't work. They did pay school taxes, that's why they couldn't understand it. We're supported by taxes, and outside the city limits you do not pay taxes to support us. That covered a lot of people. In time, you got the county, and that covered a lot of things. But then, you see, you had a lot of people who live in Hiawatha and Marion. They had libraries, good libraries, not real big libraries. Then there was a problem there. They couldn't use Cedar Rapids and neither could our people if they happened to live--some people lived much closer to the Marion library than they did to the Cedar Rapids library. So reciprocal borrowing came in. That was another good thing. It saved a lot of problems. They did have to take the books back where they got them, because we didn't have a way to get them back and forth. Nobody seemed to mind that that much.

LD: If you had a Marion library card, you could come in and check out a book from Cedar Rapids.

MB: And Marion to Hiawatha, Hiawatha to--all that, round robin. They always say that they were working toward eventually having a card that could be used anywhere in the state. I don't know how close they've gotten to that.

LD: That would be a remarkable thing. But, of course, with internet and with computer services available now, many people have access to libraries all over the world.

MB: Inter-library loan started that way, but it's so much more simple now. You don't to write to the library. Before, you had to guess at which library might have it. You didn't have catalogs like you do now. You know, you don't have to guess who has it. That was one of the nice things when it went on computer. We had Marion's catalog. We knew what Marion had, with their catalog.

LD: You could just check it right there.

MB: That's one of the nice things that saves lots of time. It's nice if someone would happen to be in another town and, "Here's a book I'd really like!" where they're visiting. Maybe they're staying in Davenport for a week with a relative or something and they'd like to use the library. It would be nice to have that. I think they're closer to that than I know about.

LD: I'm not sure either. I know that the college libraries you still have to certainly be involved as a staff person or a student. I think the others are becoming more and more. These changes, did they all occur after you came in as a member of the staff?

MB: Yes. I don't know what there was much before that.

LD: From the late fifties through the eighties, then.

MB: There were changes in restrictive borrowing.

LD: Much more outreach and opening out.

MB: Much broader.

LD: And, again, if you have other things to add in those areas, please go ahead. I was going to move on to another area then.

MB: In a way, kind of related to the policy of borrowing or some of these other things that have come in that have shown the differences in just the way the library operates--when we got the new library and its very attractive children's room, we decided we needed a policy on children who were left unattended. People had decided, "This is very nice. I'll bring the youngster up here, drop them off, pick them up in two or three hours." We had a few instances where they came back after the library was closed. Somebody had to wait with the youngster at the door. And, of course, you'd get the disruptive youngster. A whole policy, about a page long, was written up and posted and made widely known that children are not to be left unattended under a certain age and the library will not be responsible for them. Of course, you had to keep your eyes open. If somebody was trying to do that, you had to try to catch them, "I'm sorry, madam, children under a certain age have to have an adult here with them." Because people take advantage of something like that.

LD: They sure would. I know that was an issue in the new library with media services as well, because the parents would--it was like free movies.

MB: They'd let them sit and watch a movie all day.

LD: Except that they don't do that.

MB: They watch them all, and then they're off to who-knows-where. Another thing was that the library has always upheld the "freedom to read" doctrine. Eventually, of course, the ALA [American Library Association] had a doctrine written. The library had to have a specific policy and forms to fill out and routines that you were to go through. If there was a complaint, the first person to get it was the department head. Let's say someone walked into the children's room and they found a book on the shelf that, "I don't think this is suitable for this age child or these children." So, if you were there that day, right away the staff person would try to find you and get you in there to talk to that person about it. If you could satisfy them, fine. If they still felt, when you were done talking to them, that, "I still think I would like to take this further. I don't believe that book should be in

the library or in this part of the library." "OK, here's your form. Please fill it out and we'll give it to our committee, and they will meet to discuss this, and they'll get back to you with their decision." And there were a number of times that this did go all the way through. I was on the committee a couple of times when there happened to be, I think it was adult books at the time, when it was taken all the way to the end. Of course, naturally, nine times out of ten you're going to, when you're standing up for your freedom to read, you're probably going to rule that yes, the book is OK for the library. But, as far as a parent, a parent is the person who decides what a child should read. They're the ones to monitor that, not the library. We can't monitor several thousand children, what they should read--their reading level, their background, what they're capable of understanding. For an adult, again, they have the right to put the book back. Very seldom we might have changed a book from the children's room up to the adult area if it was borderline. There was not much of that type of thing.

LD: You never actually pulled a book off the shelves. I think that's something that people take for granted, access to books that have been printed, and yet I don't think many people appreciate the role libraries have played.

MB: The same books keep coming up and coming up. Every once in a while, I'll read something in the paper complaining about *Huckleberry Finn* or...

LD: *Catcher in the Rye*, that was the one in my generation. You know, it's interesting that you should say that, Margaret. The library can't make the decision for every child. That same issue is now emerging in terms of television, whether or not the whole society makes decisions or whether the parents should make that decision.

MB: They've always got that dial or the button to push to turn it off.

LD: You have to take responsibility.

MB: They have to be there to know what it is.

LD: Of course, many parents are not.

MB: Once you start that, there's no end to where it will stop.

LD: No, there really isn't.

MB: Because somebody else decides, "I'm going to muzzle this Bible, and children should not be able to read this," out it goes, if you're going to take it to the utmost extreme.

LD: Sure, there's no logic to it.

MB: There's no place to stop. It's got to be defended as--let the individual choose what's suitable for them.

LD: I think that that's the standard. Without libraries and that policy of an enlightened attitude, we could have lost a lot over the years.

MB: The thing is, though, that it never stops. There never stops being the assault on that; it continues. I think in these last few years I have seen it getting stronger in a lot of areas.

LD: I think religious minorities are really being much more aggressive about censorship.

MB: I think if we aren't vigilant, we could lose some of this freedom to read.

LD: We shouldn't take it for granted.

MB: No, it should never be taken for granted.

LD: I wanted to ask you about ways that the library had been kind of a seedbed for other organizations that have emerged in the community. We mentioned briefly the museum, that you had both galleries' space originally. From what I have read, the library had a policy where you actually had prints and pictures that were available for check-out over the years.

MB: Evelyn Zerzanek had made a lot of close friends, at least Christmastime friends, with many of the children's illustrators and writers. Over the years, she collected hundreds and hundreds; I'm trying to think how far the numbers went.

LD: I think she had over a thousand.

MB: I was going to say, it had to be over a thousand, of all different kinds of prints, some of them beautiful, some of them sketches, just rough sketches. As time went on, those people became very well known, and it came to be a valuable collection. In the old library, there was no place to display them, even if you had them nicely... a lot of them were in little wooden frames, but a lot of them weren't framed at all. I think it was probably a Friends project. Shortly before we moved to the new library, they chose a number of those to be framed nicely, and nice little labels on them in brass I believe it was. As several years went by, they got a better list of what there was. That took several years to get that evolved so everybody knew where it was, what it was, what number it was.

LD: You had to do your own library work.

MB: Right. Once we had those framed, there was a long time that we would loan

collections out, for example, to Mercy Hospital to display in the halls of their children's area. That was one thing that they displayed. Then we displayed them in the children's room itself, and changed them every once in a while. That was nice, to get them reframed, because a lot of the matting was getting brittle in just the little wood frames. They were getting in bad shape, and some of the glass was broken. Some of the frames were broken.

LD: You needed to do some museum matting.

MB: Yes, so they did some really nice framing of this collection. Once we were in the new library, and they had that small gallery there, they could put some of them up there part of the time. I'm sure they probably put some up in the children's area, too. I'm not sure where the rest are stored exactly. I don't know which room they used.

LD: It really was kind of the earliest organization in the community that supported and nurtured art and the public's awareness of art. Then, of course, eventually the Art Center evolved, and from there, the museum.

MB: One of my memories of the art gallery at the library was the fact that it was hard to find when it was open. People would want to know where the art gallery was. Well, it was upstairs at the end of the hall. So much of the time it wasn't open.

LD: And that's still an issue, I understand, with the new one [the Little Gallery in the library.]

MB: Right. It wasn't open all the time.

LD: That required staff, right?

MB: I remember one time when they had "The Woman with the Plant."

LD: Yes, I was going to ask you about your Grant Wood.

MB: Oh, yes, the Grant Wood. I have both good and bad memories of that one. They hung it and, of course, it was wired and everything. I don't think anybody could have gotten it off of there; they would have had to work at it. They had it on this big bulletin board behind the readers' assistant desk because nobody had a place to put it. There was no art gallery, and the gallery itself was dismantled. So I said, "Why don't we just display the picture so people can see it?" This was fine. We had the "Lady" right behind us all the time. One time I remember one of the ladies came in. She was a lady who had volunteered to do a lot of the evaluation of the collection because we were getting so crowded. She was going to go through, she was not a librarian particularly, but she was really educated

and was going to do this evaluation and get rid of some things that were outdated. I think I was helping somebody. I think it was a noon hour, so there wasn't a second person at the desk. "The Lady with the Plant" was unattended.

LD: That was part of your job description.

MB: Apparently, that was part of my job description. I felt my job was to serve the people. I thought this "Lady with the Plant" was tied down. She's not going anywhere. She was very put out with me, that I left that "Lady" unattended. I felt real bad about it.

LD: I suppose time has borne out her concerns in terms of value of that piece. Is that still here in Cedar Rapids or is that in Chicago?

MB: I'm not sure right now where it is.

LD: I know that it...

MB: Is one of the well-known ones.

LD: Did the library actually own that painting, then?

MB: No, it belonged to the art gallery, but they had no place to put it. They thought we might as well display it. It would be in the library, and it would be attended. There would be somebody there. It just happened, I suppose noon hour, but most of the time we had two people at the readers' assistant desk. I know it was the noon hour, and I probably went off to help somebody. Here was the "Lady" with nobody in front of her.

LD: But you were just as glad when the "Lady" went away!

MB: I was. I was glad she found a permanent home.

LD: You also were involved in some rather unusual collections that were loaned out. I think you said at one time there were actually cameras that were loaned out from the library.

MB: Yes. We were talking about technology. At one time, the Polaroid Company gave us some cameras. I think there were two or three for each branch and the same number for the downtown library. That was fairly recently; that was in the late seventies. So we checked those out to people. I even borrowed it myself. It would come in handy if you had company coming for a weekend and you wanted to take pictures of them and have them right away. We used them until they wore out. I guess that was the end of them.

LD: Makes some sense for Polaroid--to get people interested in using them.

MB: Then, of course, we mentioned about some of the other technology, but originally we had little 8 mm. films that people borrowed. They used regular film movie machines. I think mostly we had 8 mm; I don't think we ever had 16 that I recall. That was soon supplanted by videos.

LD: Then you had the Beta/VHS controversy.

MB: Yes, we didn't know whether to buy eight-track or the little cassettes. So we compromised by buying some of each. Eventually, the cassettes won out, and they discontinued the eight-tracks. Then we had the big long-play records. We had a huge collection of phonograph records. They were very popular. They would get scratched. That was a big problem. I was the one that bought a lot of those later on. Eventually, of course, CD's [compact disks] came in. I was out of it by that time. I remember Mr. Carney showing them to us and saying, "You don't scratch these like you do the others."

LD: They're much stronger.

MB: We thought that was a great idea. They were much smaller, but then it was easier to steal them, too.

LD: You always had to deal with deterioration of the collection.

MB: Oh, yes, we always did.

LD: But that's sort of the good news--that it was being used.

MB: I remember when I first went to work in the library, when you first came in the main entrance to the old library was the check-out desk. Beyond that was low, three-shelf-high counters. That's the highest they were. Then, eventually, we got more full; and the shelves got more crowded. It seemed like always we were moving something. I don't know how many thousands of books we must have moved. But anyway, big, tall shelves came into that area; and the big, tall shelves went into what used to be the biography room, and everything was shifted. The biographies went up to the magazine area. The fiction went into the biography room. Eight hundreds and detectives and I forget what all else, seven hundreds, went out into the other area. It was tall shelves, just like canyons, all the way around. The shelves were just full. Of course, there were thousands of books in the basement, too, particularly fiction. You were always running downstairs. You had a little card file of what was in the basement, running back and forth to get books out of the basement.

LD: It's incredible to me how you had to use that space as years went by.

MB: It's amazing how we got as much stuff in there as we did get in there.

LD: Also, when the library did move out of the old Carnegie Building and it became part of the new museum, how much you appreciate the space interior of that old Carnegie Building when it wasn't full to the rafters with books. I didn't even know there was a mantel in there.

MB: A lot of people didn't know there was a fireplace.

LD: Yes, in that main room.

MB: It was all covered up. The reference desk took that entire square formed by those four pillars. Of course, they had five shelves all around them as they continued adding more reference things to use. Yes, you could hardly see that little fireplace in there. Of course, originally, before I came, they had just done some remodeling adding that balcony in there. The children's room was an add-on at some time earlier than that, and the balcony--I don't know if they were added at the same time or not. That whole children's room was a new section.

LD: Yes, there was a good deal of remodeling that went on.

MB: Before that, in the early fifties.

LD: I think you got as much mileage out of that building as anybody could have.

MB: Yes, I don't think they could have gone any farther with it. The worst part of it was all the different heating systems--that was part of the problem, so many different systems with it.

LD: That you were dealing with, because of the additions.

MB: The additions had their own systems, and the old library had a different system.

LD: I would just guess, in terms of productivity, people had to go in such circuitous routes to get things, to get access to things.

MB: I don't know how many miles you put on running up and down steps. It was all steps. The elevator really didn't help the people as far as using the library itself. We didn't do anything on the second floor because of cataloging, so you brought your new books down and that sort of thing. As far as the public using them, the elevator, unless they were going to the business office or down to the children's room and they had come in through the other entrance, it didn't do them

much good.

LD: Do you have an opinion about why this community resisted a new building for so long?

MB: I think one of the big problems that I recall right now--I think every time we thought we were going to get it, and we'd come so close. One of the big blocks that came up, I don't know if it came up the first time or the second time, was the idea that they loved that old building; they didn't want to leave it. Then Mr. Armstrong brought up the idea of remodeling the old building and had consultants do a job, a feasibility study. I think it reinforced the idea that if they tried hard enough, they could make that old building work, and they could use that old building. I think there was a lot of sentimental...the location was a good location, central to downtown and everything, even though there wasn't the parking. I think that that's the only thing I can think of, other than the fact that you did have your sixty percent rule, and they came so close to it every time.

LD: Yes, it's not a simple majority to pass a bond issue.

MB: No, you had to have the sixty percent. I can't remember the different economic circumstances with all the different bond issues. I don't think it was so much that as the possibility that, if they could hold out long enough, they would use the old building, remodel that, and build onto it.

LD: So there was just a lot of resistance to a different building.

MB: I think so, yes. That's the only thing I can think of, other than just the...one time they were just absolutely sure we were going to win it, and they had even a party already at one of the board member's houses, I think it was the president's, and didn't quite make it. We had done so many buttons and flyers and all kinds of promotions and just felt sure we were going to make it this time. I don't know if some people were too sure and didn't vote. Sometimes, that might have been a problem.

LD: That was the problem right after I moved here. We came here in 1980. Then there was the final offer of the Hall Foundation, too.

MB: Unless somebody felt that if they held out long enough, somebody would do that. I don't know about that.

LD: It did happen. It's kind of interesting, ironic to this local library history, in both cases it seemed to be the efforts of women that finally made the difference.

MB: Because you had your women voters get behind it, add their support to it, groups

like that.

LD: Right, and the Junior League was involved. And, of course, Nancy McHugh was a great promoter, and the Friends.

MB: The Friends group was growing stronger all that time, too. I can't remember the year that started.

LD: The late seventies, I know.

MB: It started with just a few members; and each year it would get stronger and stronger.

LD: '71, according to this information. I would guess that was mostly a group of women, the Friends.

MB: I can't say for sure. There were some men in it, I know.

LD: I shouldn't say that. I better check my information.

MB: I can't say, but I imagine a combination of the groups.

(beginning of Tape Number 2)

LD: As we were saying before, the impact of volunteers and the impact of women, I think, for the library being born in the first place and then certainly to thrive over the years, was great. Can you talk about how volunteers figured in the early years when you were there versus how that changed over the years at the library?

MB: In the early years, I don't really remember having many volunteers around. It was something you didn't notice at all, hardly. As years went by, occasionally someone would walk in and want to do some volunteering. It was a case of, "They want to volunteer. What should we do with them?" Then, it reminded me of a group of boy scouts came in, and they wanted to earn a badge. What could we have them do? What can they do? They can't shelve books. We can't teach them to do that in two hours. We could have them dust. It was that kind of thing. There wasn't an awful lot that a volunteer could do without being trained. Because it was labor intensive; everything was numerical, alphabetically, some way it was arranged. It wasn't just, "Put these in this box," or anything like that. I think the thing we noticed more were children coming and wanting to volunteer. Like I say, we'd have them straighten things up or dust or something like that. As years went by, it got to be more and more people wanting to do things, volunteers, or we were shorter and shorter of help and needed more help. We couldn't hire more, so we could use volunteers. Well, how would we train them? How will we have them here when we need them? That was a problem that wasn't solved until

the new library, went they got a volunteer coordinator. A volunteer isn't much good to you if you can't depend on them. So, they were having them check in returned books or put magazines in order. We had volunteers that went with the Friendsmobile; we had some volunteers who went with her. You had to have things that were scheduled, so the coordinator worked up things where the volunteer would say, "Yes, I'll volunteer and I promise that I will help you for three months," or six months or whatever, during this time period. They knew that it worked in places like hospitals, so they knew it could work. It had to be more structured. I think they did, and probably still do, use people to check books in, where they use the computer and they use the wand or whatever it is to check the books in. They still have to know a little bit; they still have to have a little training to do that sort of thing. You just don't walk in and, "OK, I'll help you for a couple of hours and then I'm gone."

LD: Who started the Friends? Do you know how that evolved?

MB: I would imagine Nancy McHugh probably had something to do with that. I don't know who all the other people were that actually began the unit. I'm thinking of another thing that came up, too. For a while, we were getting kids who had been in trouble, and they had to do community service. Someone said they could help at the library. So, again, they had so many hours that they could do. But usually it was so many hours that you could train them to do something with regards to shelving. They could certainly alphabetize and put the books in order, that sort of thing. Or maybe they could mend books, simple things, something of that nature. You could find something for them to do. So that was another type of volunteer. Actually, they weren't freely volunteering their time; it was assigned to them.

LD: Did it generally work out pretty well?

MB: We didn't do an awful lot of it. I don't think it worked out as well as it could have. It could have worked better than it did. We didn't have an awful lot of them, but there were enough of them that you knew it.

LD: I know in other organizations they have been vital, but they do a lot of maintenace-type work, not what you're talking about.

MB: This is, again, where they have to have training. Once you get them trained, then they're gone. So that didn't really help that much. Like I said, after we got a volunteer coordinator, then it worked a lot better. You knew that you were going to have some group of people that you could call on, and they knew how to do the things they were supposed to be doing. It worked a lot better that way.

LD: And that didn't happen until after you moved to the new library.

MB: I think so. I don't think we had a volunteer coordinator before that. I remember that she had an office in the new library.

LD: I notice that now, maybe not so much as when it was brand new, but the volunteers give tours of the library.

MB: And in the children's room, they acted like docents in the art gallery. They would give tours to children. Also, they had people who were literate in computers. Of course, the new children's room had a couple of computers, which were for children to learn little programs on. Sometimes they were like "study-math" things or sometimes different games. There were certain hours that children could sign up and come down, and the person would be there to help them use the computer, to work with them. Yes, that was another way that they were used. I think in that Little Gallery, there were some people who volunteered. We used some of their time there, part of the time, just to have it open.

LD: Right, we talked about that. That was a big issue. We've got to have somebody there because it's sort of outside the current security area.

MB: The tricky part with the volunteers is making it interesting enough. The things that you want them to do are not always the most interesting things to do. The volunteers, and you can't blame them, want to do something interesting.

LD: They want to do a fun job in their spare time for free.

MB: Right, and try to put those two things together--something that you need to have done that is probably more drudge work than something else. They want to do something that is interesting and fun. Trying to get those two things together takes quite a challenge.

LD: It takes a highly motivated volunteer.

MB: It does. There was one man who did checking books in, and he did it for a long time. That would be kind of interesting, because you'd see all the books go past. That wouldn't be like dusting.

LD: The only volunteer group that has been in place since the beginning of the library would be the Board, the Board of Trustees. There was always a Board, wasn't there?

MB: There was always a Board.

LD: And that was always a volunteer group.

MB: Of course, now they're appointed by the mayor. Before that, I don't know how they got on the Board--whether people volunteered to be on the Board or if whether from the beginning they were always appointed by part of the city, the mayor or somebody like that.

LD: In the record that I was reading, even when the first board was established, Ada Van Vechten and a number of the people who were on it were appointed.

MB: They still were appointed.

LD: It came out of the original group that really supported it. The other areas where volunteers have become more and more significant is in terms of fundraising for the library. Did that primarily begin after the Friends group organized itself and then began to have projects to raise money for the library?

MB: That's probably where it gained its greatest impetus to become more organized. I know that, different times, the Junior League would have a project. One year, it might be maybe the RIF [Reading is Fundamental] books that people supplied. I think that that has been supplied by different groups over the years. I'm not sure who started it first, where you'd give out free books to children a couple of times a year. They would usually do it at a story hour, so they'd get more children in. Different times that would be taken care of by different community groups. I think of the Junior League in regards to that, but there may have been other groups that did that. I think of the Lions group; I think they were the ones that gave that magnifying reader.

LD: Sure, with their interest in vision.

MB: And different things like that, on more of a one-time, non-recurring basis. I'm trying to think what else there might have been in the way of a volunteer-type thing. I guess the Junior League is the one I think of the most, because they're a little more visible. They have, at different times...I remember one time they took on a children's project for a year.

LD: They are very children oriented.

MB: Children oriented and, of course, they might have worked with story hours. They might have funded a particular type of addition to the collection, tried to work for a grant for the collection, to build the collection. I think that they did that before the Friends were started. They were a group that I remember having done something like that.

LD: Yes, they've had an ongoing interest in children.

MB: They would choose a project each year. Sometimes, depending what the project was, if the library fit into that project, like a children's show, then something would happen. Either they would fund a special program or fund a special collection or bring in an author.

LD: I guess it was the book sale that really began to raise money.

MB: Yes, as far as actual funds. That's when fundraising, I think, really came in.

LD: Yes, that's become a tremendous money-maker.

MB: Before that, you'd get occasional gifts. I can't remember whether it was Nancy McHugh that started this idea of giving, when somebody would pass away, we had memorials for the library. There's a card. When you came in, you'd say, "My friend or my neighbor or my relative passed away. They were a great user of the library or they liked a certain kind of books. I'd like to give so much and can you find a book?" One of the reference people would take that request, and they would pick out a group of books. Usually, then, the person would come in and choose the one they wanted to have for that memorial. A plaque would be placed in that book, a little paper one. That was one of the early types of donation-type things. That was going pretty well, because you'd kind of make it better known all the time. Then, once in a while, a whole amount of money would be left and the interest from it. There was one, and I can't remember the name now. Maybe you got a hundred dollars a year from money that was left by this person.

LD: And you could depend on that.

MB: Yes, you'd take that money. Maybe it was to be spent on a certain kind of book or maybe it was just optional, whatever you wanted. There were quite a number of things they had like that, that they knew the interest from this amount of money would serve to buy so much each year.

LD: So that it was actually the foundation, my information says that was developed in '72, that probably institutionalized this, so that you would actually endow.

MB: Endow, and you could handle larger amounts. You could find out about larger amounts and work with people who were thinking about designating money for city purposes, and what were they interested in. They told estate lawyers and people who were working with people who were doing that kind of thing, and they let it be known that the library was interested in this kind of thing. Of course, they did get a lot more.

LD: It is a tremendous resource.

MB: They got a lot more things after that. People didn't think about it before, didn't realize they could do it.

LD: That's a real far-sighted approach, or long-range approach.

MB: I know Miss Grover had a lot to do with that, getting that going and keeping that going, pushing that. I remember her talking about that.

LD: I'm sure, if she had been subject to the vagrancies of the city's funding for new books each year.

MB: That was part of it.

LD: Always looking for new ways.

MB: To fund things, because you never knew for sure. She was very good at making new friends for the library. Of course, your city council members would change over the years. Maybe they could care less about the library. "It was down there, fine, for the kids." "We never used it, but it's fine for kids." "Of course, they've got a lot of books. They don't need any more." "It's full right now, why do you need more?" She was a great educator in that way. She could turn a lukewarm person or someone totally disinterested into a library supporter. I've seen her and heard her tell about it. This person came on the board, and they didn't care about the library that much. Come rise or fall, they wouldn't miss it.

LD: You have to have enlightened people.

MB: She made it her point to do that. I think there was one man who was actually against the library; he just didn't want to have anything to do with it. She turned him around; I don't know how she did it.

LD: It would have been wonderful to have seen her in action. She, I know, was such an important figure to a lot of people. We talked about this briefly off-tape. The kind of social culture of the library and the ways in which relationships went beyond just staff relationships.

MB: We were like a big family. You felt like you were part of a close-knit group. She did a lot to make people feel that way. Again, when she would hire people--again, it was like when we first started hiring pages. You took a typing test, but beyond that it was more the impression you made and the application you wrote up and how she felt that you'd fit into the job you were being considered for. I think people fit in pretty well. I'm sure there were probably people who didn't get along, but you kept it under control. You had a lot of people coming and going all that time. A lot of the jobs were, as I said, part time, so you did have a lot of people coming

and going. A lot of them were beginning positions. There were only so many department heads, so you couldn't move up too fast, too far. So people did move around. In fact, when I got out of library school, one of the things that librarians liked to do was move around to different parts of the country. At that time, jobs were plentiful. This was a great thing. If you wanted to work at this place for a while, then go someplace else, to another part of the country. I think it was one of the advantages of being a librarian. You could work here, there. There was always a job, and you didn't worry about how long you stayed. You didn't necessarily want to stay for too long. Maybe you'd like to work in San Francisco and then go up to Seattle, and maybe down here to Atlanta, go down where it's warm for a while. That was one of the great advantages of being able to move around.

LD: I don't know if that still holds or not.

MB: No. I think it's more that you want to get a job and hang onto it as long as you can.

LD: Has that generally been the case, that if you were hired as a full-time person and obviously met the criteria and did your job, that you could depend on that job?

MB: Yes, I think so.

LD: Over the years, they didn't particularly cut staff.

MB: There was one year that we laid people off, but that's the only year I remember like that. Often, so many of them were women. A lot of times their husband and family would come here, and they would work, the husband would be employed somewhere and the wife would come and get a job at the library. They had had some college, probably. She liked to have somebody who said they at least had a couple of years of college. All of a sudden, he would get transferred; and the person was gone. That accounted for a lot of turnover. But you did have people who stayed a long time. I remember Marcela Muehl had been in the library for a long time. You had people who came to work part time who had been retired from other positions, particularly teaching. Winifred Robbie was a lady that I knew when I was a little girl; she was a teacher. When I came up to work in the library, here was Winifred Robbie, retired and now working part time for the bookmobile. Then we had some part-time people who stayed many years, off and on. I can think of one, Mary Stiles, who worked for the library before I even came there, but always part time. She was on the schedule and off and on and off all the way up until the eighties. Her husband had had a heart attack, and she retired for good then. But I can remember Miss Grover telling me that Mary had, and of course she knew her by her maiden name at the time, worked for the library for many years, off and on,

in all kinds of capacities.

LD: In and out as it worked with her other responsibilities. That would be an advantage, certainly. I would guess there aren't that many positions before the fifties, even before the sixties and seventies, that women could come in and out of jobs, positions, freely.

MB: You remember at that time they were hiring part-time people in the summertime, too. They had more jobs coming and going in that way.

LD: How did you handle things in terms of--I know there was an internal newsletter that you showed me, *The Margin*. How, for instance, if there were deaths or marriages or all kinds of things, births, was that just through the grapevine?

MB: Mostly grapevine. There was one lady, I can't remember her name now. She was expecting. She worked right until the very night, and the next morning she had the baby. That was kind of interesting.

LD: That was dutiful.

MB: Then there was a sad experience. We had people who lived out of town, a lot of people who lived out of town, that worked at the library. This one girl worked in the business office, but she also did work for the technical services. She did this overdue thing that I had told you about. She got killed in a car accident one night going home from work, right down where the two highways cross in Amana. I know that everybody was shaken by this. Miss Grover had felt so bad. She had worked with her in the office there. She was pretty upset about it. There were things like that.

LD: How many people, typically, were on the staff?

MB: I think it ran from seventy or eighty, approximately.

LD: It was a fairly large culture. Did you have events where you regularly got together socially?

MB: About once a year, we would have a Christmas party. They would have it at different locations--like it might be at Bishops one year; it might be at another restaurant another year. One time we had a potluck and had it in a--some of the folks lived in a trailer court, like out at Kirkwood. They had a community building. We decided that year that we would have a potluck and everybody would bring something, and they would do it that way. So it just varied from year to year. But one thing that was usually the same was that we had to sing, "The Library's Twelve Days of Christmas." It was, of course, something that somebody had written up.

LD: I don't suppose you'd be willing to sing it for us, would you?

MB: I don't remember all the words. I wish I had a copy of the words. It was six overdue books, five telephone calls, and three reference questions, and one irate patron.

LD: You kind of laughed at the things that were irritations.

MB: Yes, that's what it was. We had all these things that everybody knew about. They always brought a lot of laughs.

LD: This is not quite on the same issue. Did you have a break room during the day at the old building so that you'd get regular breaks?

MB: Right, you did. You had a break room. It was nothing like what big places have now. It had a few chairs; and it had a sink, I believe. That was it. You could eat your lunch there. It was right next to the restroom. Right at the bottom of the stairs, right where you'd go out to the garage. There was no refrigerator.

LD: So you couldn't store anything.

MB: No. They all had lockers, much like the school kids had lockers, with locks on them--a whole row of lockers down there. You had about a ten-, fifteen-minute break in the morning and the afternoon; and you always had to exchange with people so your desk was always covered. You always had to get somebody to cover for you. In the new building, they had a much larger room. There is a refrigerator, a sink, I believe, a microwave, and a lot of chairs and tables. There are windows, but they're way up high.

LD: You can't really look outside.

MB: You can't look out. That was kind of interesting, too, when they first decided to get ideas for building the new building. Everybody, of course, was all gung-ho. We were going to get our ideas in. We were going to do it right. I don't know if we did it in meetings or wrote it down and gave it to someone. Anyway, everybody's input was supposed to be considered. As sometimes happens, when they got the new building, it was a lovely new building, but a lot of that staff input didn't seem to go anywhere. For one thing, they all wanted windows. As far as the staff offices, there isn't one window in there. Even the staff room, like I said, you can't see out the window.

LD: There are lots of windows, but they're on the public side.

MB: Right, there are big windows in the public area, and they're set back. The overhang

was supposed to mean that you would never have to put up any curtains or blinds. It wasn't very many months before they could see that they needed some. They changed that real fast.

LD: I remember how hot it was in the summer. Sometimes the difference between the visionary and the reality, right?

MB: Between the architect and the librarians. It was kind of interesting how that turned out.

LD: I suppose one advantage is it does all seem to be laid out on a level, at least now.

MB: It all seemed to work out.

LD: It sure is a beautiful facility in terms of the staircase.

MB: That was very unusual. They designed it and then they showed it to the contractor. Then the contractor had to figure out how to do it. When they did get it all done, it made it into, I don't remember which magazine, one of these architecture construction magazines, it made an article about it. It was unusual, and you don't find many things like that.

LD: I remember someone saying that they had to create the mold. It was nowhere. There was nothing to use.

MB: They had to come up with how to do it. It was quite an achievement. And, of course, they had those assisted doors, for wheelchairs and everything. Now we have doors that open by themselves. That was one of the things we had said initially. That was one of the things the staff wanted that did come true. I'm sure that was something we all said.

LD: But not immediately.

MB: Not immediately. They had the assisted door, which I never thought did much help.

LD: It never worked that well. I used to push the button just to see. I couldn't see the difference.

MB: I tried it, too. I couldn't see that it did much. We always said that the other thing we should have had were carts--people have to carry all these books, they gather all these books up that they want, and they have to carry them around. Why not give them like a grocery cart. Do you notice now that they have little baskets?

LD: Yes, they do.

MB: It took a number of years, but they do have the baskets to carry around.

LD: You were there before the move, during the move, and after the move, so I'm sure that you felt the brunt of the stresses and the demands that were made on the staff at that time.

MB: They had committees that were supposed to arrange for different things in respect to hiring trucks or whatever, packing up things, and taking care of that. I was not personally in on too much of that, because I don't have very memories of that. I think I was out at the branches most of the time. We were the ones that were open. I was mostly in that. The people who were downtown were doing that actual work, because I know I was not on the committees. The only memory I have of it is being up in the office area and kind of sorting things out. Somebody would say, "That thing can go into the wastebasket, and this we'll keep," and carry some things down. That was about the only thing I have of the move itself. I think I must have been pretty much involved in keeping the branches open, because we were the ones who were taking care of the people while they were doing the moving.

LD: Surely that was one of the busiest times for branches, because of the difficulties in using the main library. I was pretty amazed at how quickly they were able to get things on the shelves again.

MB: It didn't take long, because they did have it well planned. You took things off the shelves the way you were going to put them back on the shelves. You didn't have big problems that way. I think they put things on carts, rolled the carts into trucks, and rolled them right up to the shelves.

LD: Did you have to deal with the psychological stress that I'm sure the public felt in coming into the new library and there was no card catalog; there's nothing but that computer and you may have had no experience on computers? Of course, you were at the branch more.

MB: We kept our catalog a lot longer out there, so that we had both for a long time.

LD: Which always made sense to me. But, at some point, you had to make a decision.

MB: They threw it out right away, because--why move it if you weren't going to keep it anyway? We mentioned volunteers. They did have some people helping out there, showing people how to use the computer. That was one way they could use some of the volunteers. It did take a while. People were upset. The kids learned a lot faster.

LD: I think one of the things in my memory I found difficult was, am I correct about this, that the first computer card catalog that had, you had actually taken from another

library? You purged things that were not in your system. Initially, something might show up, and you thought it was here, but it wasn't. It was in Pittsburgh or someplace.

MB: There probably was some of that. Another thing, when you started cataloging, you first used to do pretty much original cataloging. Then you used Library of Congress cards, where you're buying this set of cards. Of course, you're buying this set, and here's the book you ordered, you don't have to do much except add or subtract headings that you don't want to use. You kept a record of what you used and what you didn't use. If there were too many detail things you didn't use, you just crossed them off on the card and you didn't file them in your catalog. Now you come to the computer. Again, you've taken it one step farther. It's all cataloged. Are you going to go into the computer and deduct all these headings that maybe you don't use but the Library of Congress does use this heading? You're not going to. Probably some of the headings you've been using, they don't use. So you drop those. Or maybe you have them in there but you're not adding anything more to it. It takes a little getting used to. If you're used to looking up something and knowing it's under this heading, "I can't find it; I know it's in here but I can't find it!"

LD: I'm sure, over the long term, it will be to the benefit of the consumer, because everything will become more universal.

MB: They will walk into the library in some other city and they're taking them off the same source. They can go in there and use their catalog just as easily as they can yours. It made it a little different that way.

LD: This is a technical question--did the Library of Congress cataloging replace the Dewey Decimal System?

MB: No.

LD: It simply enhances it, I guess.

MB: What I meant by Library of Congress cataloging, I don't mean the Library of Congress system of call numbers, like they use a different set of call numbers. What I'm referring to is the body of the card. The headings, author, title, and subject headings is what I'm referring to. They'd come with a suggested number, and they could either use that or not. A lot of times, again, as they were cataloging over the years, they would put all of the things about a certain topic under one number. Later, as things developed, that got to be so large that it needed to be broken down. So you'd break it into two numbers. There was a choice--it could go this way or it could go this way. You choose this. Maybe you'd walk into Waterloo and they had chosen a different direction. What I'm referring to more is the subject headings, the suggested subject headings. For example, a card might come for a fiction book

with a subject heading on it. Normally, we didn't put subject headings on fiction. We just had an author and title card. In some libraries, maybe they did use that suggested heading of English Romance or something.

LD: Gothic romance I think it is.

MB: Gothic romance. But, in our catalog, they never did put fiction under subject. There are a few cases in the old card catalog where there would be a fiction book listed with a subject heading. So, at some time earlier, somebody had done that. You'd see different catalogers with different ideas.

LD: Well, obviously, classification is not a science, totally. There are some subjective decisions that have to be made. I don't hear any complaints anymore.

MB: They are getting used to it.

LD: Let's face it, it has been ten years! Everything that was once considered avant garde is now taken for granted.

MB: There was somebody in there when I walked through that was teaching, again, that probably was a volunteer, something new with the computer. Probably it was how to reserve your own books or something along that line. I heard they were checking their own books out. There was something set up. I walked through it in a hurry, so I didn't look very closely. I think they were teaching that, eventually, you can check out your own books, which seems logical. All you have to do is wand the thing across.

LD: Well, who knows where it will lead in the future? As you said, it's gone from a very manual operation to a much more technologically seamless kind of process.

MB: Years ago, people would call us on the phone, and we renewed books. They discontinued that, because people were waiting for books. It was such a hard thing to try to do this over the telephone. It just made it so cumbersome. So they discontinued that. Now you can do it again.

LD: It's back again. And I wonder if, maybe, that will be an advantage to the system in the future--librarians will be free, perhaps, to do more things with the public again.

MB: That might be, that they'd get rid of some of that work, and you could spend more time helping people.

LD: That would be great.

MB: I can remember years ago--you can show someone, "You're looking for Paul

Revere's ride. Well, here's the section on American Revolutionary history." Sometimes, unless the book says "Paul Revere's Ride," they'd say, "I can't find anything." They don't always know how to use the book, even when they've got it in front of them. You wonder how many people walk out. Maybe they're a whole lot more well trained than they were years ago, I don't know.

LD: I think that the skill of classification and seeing how certain things relate to each other is, I don't believe a lot of people understand that intuitively. It has to be taught. If you haven't been taught it, then that's where the librarian comes in.

MB: A lot of times you'd have twenty-five children coming in there with the same subject. OK, you've got certain books on that. Those books are gone. Now what's left for the other children? Then you'd go to the index of books related and you'd say, "Here's a chapter on what you're looking for." "Here's ten pages on it in this book." "Here's twenty-five pages in this book." Would that person have found that if you hadn't been there to help them?

LD: Especially when they're young and they just are starting.

MB: And, you know, high school kids either. "It takes too much time. I have to get this done by yesterday."

LD: I know it. They wait until the last minute to come in.

MB: "Do you have a book on this? If you don't have it, I don't have time to look."

LD: Unfortunately, I think that is one of the things that has happened as a result of this new technology. We think we can get everything instantly.

MB: That used to be the way with reference questions. We used to get, and I'm sure they still do, such interesting reference questions. It was so much fun, the challenge of finding the answers to some of those things. Of course, I think that the library was so good at it that people were upset if you didn't have it within a couple of minutes. Maybe it would sound like a real simple question. Some of those are the hardest. What sounded like a hard question was just the opposite. I can remember some elderly man, "Can't you find this? You've been looking for quite a while. You've been looking for at least three or four minutes!"

LD: There's just no awareness of the different sources you might have to go to.

MB: What may seem so simple, you look at it and it was much more difficult than they think it is.

LD: You were at the library for thirty-one years. How would you sum up the value

of that kind of career? You came into it almost as a non-professional and became a professional. If you had it to do all over again, would you, and what is the value of the library and of libraries? The library has been so seminal in the history of Cedar Rapids. I think we have taken it for granted for many, many years. And yet the library and the access it has given the populace has probably made a difference, a lot more than we know.

MB: I don't know if people have taken it for granted or not. The reason I say that is the circulation of materials. I think, from the time I started there to the point where we had over a million circulation, it has just been phenomenal for a city this size, when you read about other cities. I don't know if they have taken the building for granted, but they've always made use of the library. That's one of the things about this city--they've always used the library. It's always been all ages. I can remember different people who are older and prominent people now, I can remember them coming in as high school kids and helping them find different things. It goes back quite aways that way. I do believe, as far as myself, I don't think I'd want to do anything different. I went to college, and as I mentioned in that article there, I took a lot of different courses--geology, for example; music; labor economics for the business major--but the one thing I would have recommended to someone at the time that was thinking about library was, get a well-rounded course of study behind you. As far as helping people, if you can just pinpoint the language of the topic they're talking about, it gets you started. That was so interesting. If someone walked up, you never knew what they were going to ask. "Can I find out the molecular compound of pyrites?" or "How do I address a letter to the President" or "My daughter is having a birthday party, and I want to make a party favor that looks like something. I saw it in a magazine, and you've got the magazine. Help me find it." That came up a lot of times, too.

LD: "I can see the book, but I can't remember the title."

MB: "I want to make a della robbia wreath, and I know you've got it. I made it last year, and the book has a red cover on it and it's about so thick." Or, "I just mixed up this recipe, and I can't figure out what the third ingredient is. Can you find it? What does this mean?" "Can you convert this European measurement to American?" The reference questions were just amazing. Sometimes you'd get something from out of town. Someone would write to you for something about Cedar Rapids' history.

LD: There's a joy in that.

MB: Yes. Every day when you went to work, it wasn't going to be the same all the time. It was something new all the time. You had a lot of stress with your budgets going up and down, different things like that. Building space was getting tight. Also, when you're a department head you had to worry about "Do I have enough warm

bodies today? Everybody's out with the flu?" That was always a worry. Every department, whether it's the library or not, still has that same thing. But with the library, you never knew who was coming in and what question they were bringing. Another thing under new technology, what new thing is the director going to come down and say, "We're going to do this now." "We're going to have computers now." Or, "Our phone system is all changed." It changed two or three times while I was there.

LD: Kind of an element of surprise and discovery.

MB: Of course, when you got into book selection, that was fun. What's new that's coming out.

LD: You're kind of on the cutting edge of knowledge and information, and I would think that was very satisfying.

MB: That was.

Dad Takes Over Dustpan So Mom Can Get Degree

By Nancy McHugh
Written for The Gazette

AFTER five years on the staff of the Cedar Rapids public library, 31-year-old Margaret Bradow had reached a thoughtful conclusion: It was time for a long look at her job and her future.

One thing was clear: She wasn't ready to embrace the bridge table or the coffee klatch as a way of life.

The library job suited her just fine . . . plenty of variety, a minimum of dull deskside routine, a chance to be with people, and freedom to use her own resources in helping them find answers to their problems. The job had many satisfactions, but her own chances for advancement were limited.

The answer, if she wanted to stay in the field, was to go back to school for a master's degree in library science.

It wasn't that simple, of course. The Bradows have two daughters, Gloria, then 12, and Nadean, 9. Leaving them meant that someone else would have to look after things at home. There would be a good deal of extra expense for the year away at school, not to mention the loss of income during that time.

Helped By Husband

Margaret's husband, George, helped her to a final decision.

"If you LIKE library work well enough to stay with it," he told her, "you might as well do it right—and be a librarian." An operating engineer for the Kutchera Construction Co., he had never been to college, but was well aware of the values of higher education. And he was willing to take over the running of the household while she was away.

As it turned out, everything was in her favor. She qualified for library school and a generous tuition scholarship, and was given leaves of absence by both family and library. Thus fortified, she entered the graduate school of library science at the University of Illinois at Urbana one year ago.

Last month Margaret returned to Cedar Rapids and her job at the public library, this time with a master's degree and membership on the library's 14-member professional staff. She is well satisfied that the Iowa legislature dropped the graduate library school at the University of Iowa in the budget two years ago, but didn't try this year. Consequently libraries throughout the state are at a disadvantage in recruiting professional people for their staffs.

Her re-entry into academic life last year was not without some misgivings, Margaret admits. "After all, it had been eight years since I was in school, and I was leery of going back.

"The thing that impresses me the most," Margaret said, "is the number of times I was reminded of the high caliber of library service we have in Cedar Rapids. It seemed that everything that was recommended to us in school as the newest, or most efficient, most modern, or best, was already a part of the established routine here. Ours is really an exceptional system . . . and I appreciate it even more now!"

Variety of Duties

For Margaret Bradow, the return to the library and the adult department staff was an easy one. Her job involves much of the cherished variety and interest which led her into the profession in the first place. Now, however, she is able to assume increasing responsibilities that go along with professional training.

A typical day might find her on duty for a time at the adult circulation desk; spending a couple of hours as reader's assistant, perhaps more time in the reference department, handling patrons' telephone requests for information. She will do too, just because I wanted to!"

Like so many of her classmates, Margaret had a job waiting for her when she finished her training.

Jobs are plentiful everywhere for library school graduates. According to the American Library Assn., an estimated 80,000 librarians will be needed by 1970, if positions in the nation's 13,000 public, college and special libraries and 20,000 school libraries are to be filled. Salary prospects are brighter, too. Average starting salary in 1962 was $5,661.

For people like Margaret Bradow, professional librarianship has many compensations.

MARGARET BRADOW

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G. A. Hess' To Note Golden Anniversary

KEOTA—Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Hess will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary next Sunday at the Christian church from 2 to 5.

Erma Beeney and Mr. Hess were married Oct. 8, 1913, in Iowa City. The couple farmed in Johnson and Washington counties until moving here in 1945.

YWCA Notes

Sub Deb program for girls 8 to 12 begins Saturday. They will meet from 9:30 to 11:30 for eight weeks. For information call the Y. A new plunge time for mothers and daughters or girls will be offered Thursday from 4 to 5.

Cedar Hills YW Wives Tuesday at 7:30 at the Cedar Hills Community church. Miss Joan Cox will speak on interior decorating for the average family. Mmes. Richard McIntosh and Ralph French are hostesses.

Y Sugar Belles Tuesday at 7:30. Mrs. John Trimble will give the program.

Teen age committee Thursday at 9:15.

Solo parents "Get Acquainted Evening" Friday at 8, especially for new and prospective members.

Top Notch club Saturday at 8:30 to go bowling.

* * *

Tuesday the Franklin ninth grade Y Teens will meet at 3:15.

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Turn storage goods into

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They Managed Well

George and the girls had managed well during her 12-month sabbatical.

"They got through the year without colds or flu," she said, "and managed the housekeeping better than they would care to have me know!" They learned a few skills which, Margaret confides with a wry smile, "I don't plan to let them forget!"

Margaret's background and training prepared her well for professional librarianship.

She grew up on a farm near Olin, where her parents, the August Amends, still live. She attended Stanwood school, Coe college for two years, and was graduated from the University of Iowa college of commerce in 1954. With characteristic modesty she admits to "a few stars" on her sleeve, which means she was graduated with high distinction.

Must Leave State

Unfortunately, you can't study to become a librarian in Iowa. Iowans aspiring to librarianship as a career must, of necessity, leave the state for training. The board of regents made one attempt to include funds for a graduate

For Margaret Bradow, the return to the library and the adult department staff was an easy one. Her job involves much of the cherished variety and interest which led her into the profession in the first place. Now, however, she is able to assume increasing responsibilities that go along with professional training.

A typical day might find her on duty for a time at the adult circulation desk; spending a couple of hours as reader's assistant, perhaps more time in the reference department, handling patrons' telephone requests for information. She will do some newspaper indexing, and later, work into book selection and evaluation.

What advice would she give to students interested in librarianship as a career?

"Take as many courses in as many different areas as you possibly can," she says. "Get acquainted with the terminology in different fields; study two foreign languages, one of them German, if possible."

Had Job Waiting

Her own undergraduate course of study is a good example. She studied subjects like sociology, music, psychology, economics, geology, religion, humanities, and a number of business and commercial subjects.

"I took 'clothing' once,

Restore Sparkling Beauty and Color to Faded, Soiled Fabrics as you Clean

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* * *

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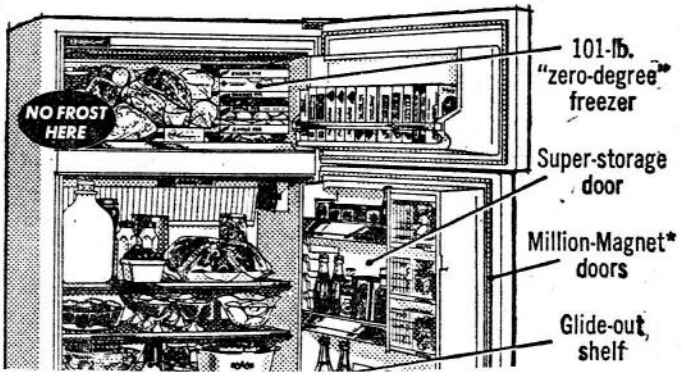

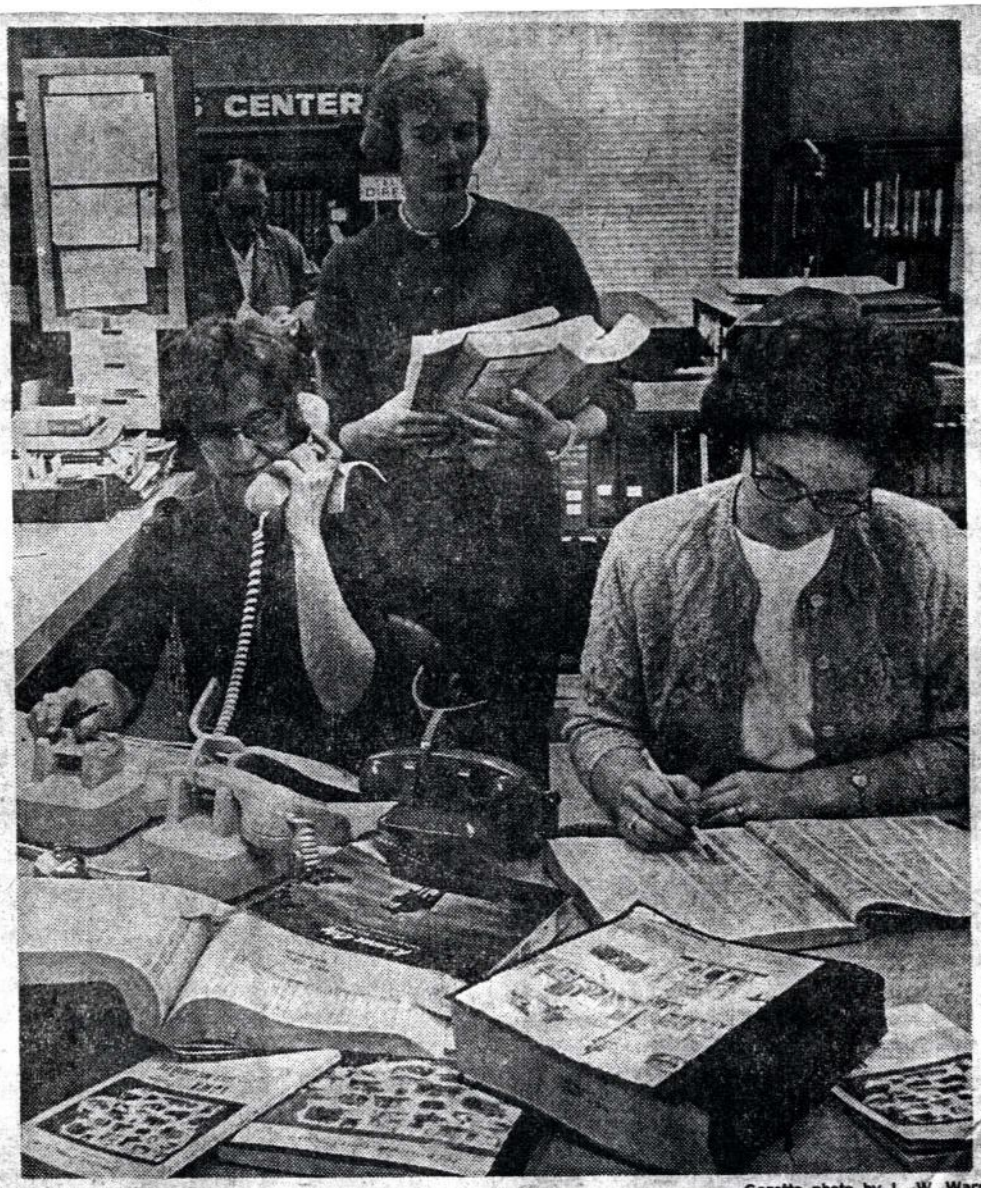

—Gazette photo by L. W. Ward

"Know the Address—Don't Guess" Campaign

The voices you hear when you call the reference service of the Cedar Rapids public library this month belong to these three staff members, Mrs. George Schoenfelder, left, Miss Doris Newell, standing, and Mrs. George Bradow. It's their job to supply information to the hundreds of Cedar Rapids residents who call in during the library's current campaign, "Know the Address — Don't Guess". The library has more than 600 out-of-town telephone directories for almost every city in the U.S. with a population of 25,000 or more. In addition, they have directories for countless suburban communities and a number of foreign cities. Monday was a record-breaking day with 354 information requests coming in. The department has handled 2,400 questions already this month, 20% ahead of last year. Addresses can be checked by coming into the main library or by telephoning the reference service, 366-1561.

THE HISTORY CENTER
LINN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW RELEASE FORM

Margaret Elaine Bradow, consent to a tape recorded interview and to the iption of this interview by the Linn County Historical Society. I understand that this ew will become part of the Oral History collection of the History Center and may be for research and educational purposes. All copyrights will be the property of the ounty Historical Society. The complete interview or excerpts may be published by tory Center.

February 11, 1996
Date of Interview

1636 34 Street NE
Location of Interview Cedar R

ee M. Derr
ure of Interviewer

Margaret Elaine Bradow
Signature of Person Interviewed

THE MARGIN

MONTHLY NEWS OF THE CEDAR RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY AND ITS STA

December 1972

STAFF CHANGES

MARGARET BRADOW has been appointed head of EXTENSION SERVICES, which includes KENWOOD, EDGEWOOD, and the BOOKMOBILES. She replaces DOROTHY THOMAS who retired December 1. MARGARET is a graduate of the University of Iowa and the University of Illinois Library School and has been on the staff of ADULT SERVICES since 1958. She will conduct the affairs of the department from KENWOOD.

JANE HANNA (Mrs. Robert Hanna) is the new library assistant in EXTENSION replacing HELEN ALBAUGH who retired early this month. She is working primarily at KENWOOD.

REMEMBER CHRISTMAS?

The library staff and their families held their annual Christmas party at Bishop's in Lindale Plaza, Sunday, December 10. About fifty attended. Much good visiting and getting acquainted, playing Christmas Bingo, and singing, including the fast-becoming-traditional "Librarian's Twelve Days of Christmas."

NEW PAY PERIOD

Beginning in January, dates for issuing salary checks will be every two weeks instead of twice a month as is now the rule. (Same salary but 26 pay periods a year) Explanation is that the City computer must be scheduled on a regular basis and it is better to program it for "every two weeks" rather than for "twice a month." Quite a little reworking of library payroll routines has been necessary to accommodate the new arrangement, but considering how much time the city computer saves the library and how much information it puts on each check, the machine is probably entitled to be fussy about how often it does its chore. One positive feature is that in June and November we will receive three checks instead of the traditional two.

APPRECIATION

In what is probably a first time ever, the Cedar Rapids Board of Education presented beautifully mounted certificates of award to librarians DOROTHY THOMAS and EVELYN ZERZANEK which read: "Cedar Rapids Board of Education presents this award to ------- ------ in recognition of outstanding service to the youth of Cedar Rapids Community School District." The award was signed by the seven members of the Board and by Craig Currie, superintendent.

MEETINGS

LEE HAYDEN, Community Services librarian, attended a meeting with the Governor's Committee on Drug Abuse in Des Moines, Thursday, December 14.

Item of interest: Organizations on the mailing list of the Governor's Drug Abuse Authority have been notified of the publication "Community Drug Abuse Education Project" published by the Cedar Rapids Special Problems Center and Foundation II. Michael McGarrity and LEE HAYDEN are editors of the 84 page book.

JOYCE PRATT attended an all-day meeting of teletype operators and others involved in the I-LITE (Iowa Library Information Teletype Exchange) It was held in the State Historical Building in Des Moines on December 8. Problems and possibilites of the growing I-LITE operation were discussed.

cont.)

Requests by libraries for recently published books was one problem. The policy as stated is for each library to serve its own patrons before lending to other libraries. Accuracy in taking requests, in verification, and typing were stressed. A committee was appointed to recommend standard charges for photo copying. Recently, new schedules for sending requests around "the loop" have been put into effect in an effort to speed service. I-LITE use has been steadily increasing this year. Those attending the meeting seemed to feel that the possiblities were considerably greater than the problems.

IONAL
BRARY

For after-Christmas, new year professional reading the Professional Library lists a few new titles:

The Dream and the Deal; the Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943, by Jerre Mangione. Little, 1972.

Open Shelves and Open Minds; a History of the Cleveland Public Library, by Clarence H. Cramer. Case Western Reserve University, 1972.

Print, Image and Sound; Essays on Media, ed. by John Gordon Burke. ALA, 1972.

Disadvantaged and Library Effectiveness, by Claire K. Lipsman. ALA, 1972.

Famous American Books, by Robert B. Downs. McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Legislative Process in Iowa, by Charles W. Wiggins. Iowa State University, 1972.

Library Service to the Disadvantaged, by Eleanor F. Brown. Scarecrow, 1971.

Tomorrow's Library; Direct Access and Delivery. Bowker, 1970.

Strategy for Public Library Change; Proposed Public Library Goasl -- Feasibility Study, by ALA. ALA, 1972.

Young Phenomenon; Paperbacks in Our Schools, by John T. Gillespie. ALA, 1972.

Authors and Illustrators of Children's Books, comp. by Miriam Hoffman. Bowker, 1972.

On motion of Mrs. McHugh, seconded by Mrs. Rosser, the Board voted unanimously to encourage the Art Advisory Committee to continue to develop a means to work with the Metropolitan Cedar Rapids Library Foundation in handling art in the new library.

Mr. Elsea updated the Board on the progress of the new building and announced the following Board subcommittees:

1. Logistics and moving to the New Library
   Mr. Shawver
   Mr. Beusch
   Mr. Elsea

2. Time Capsule for the New Library
   Mr. Schimberg

On motion of Mrs. Rosser, seconded by Mrs. Henkel, the Board unanimously voted to establish a nonresident fee of $60.00 per year or $30.00 for a half year to become effective January 1, 1985.

On motion of Mrs. Henkel, seconded by Mrs. McHugh, the Board unanimously voted to approve the following personnel appointments:

Marilyn Cash - Communicator-Typist
New position. Annual salary: $11,585.60
Effective: May 21, 1984.

Donald Troester - Library Materials Processor
Succeeds: Alta Klein. Hourly rate: $5.57
Effective: May 21, 1984.

Anne Southard - Library Aide (Adult Services)
Succeeds: Michael Beason. Hourly rate: $3.35
Effective: May 25, 1984.

On motion of Mr. Wallace, seconded by Mrs. Henkel, the Board unanimously voted to approve the following wage and benefit adjustments for non-bargaining unit staff effective July 1, 1984:

1. All permanent non-bargaining unit employees in steps 4 through 6 of their respective pay range shall receive a 2.0% increase in salary effective July 1, 1984.

2. All permanent non-bargaining unit employees in steps 4 through 6 of their respective pay range shall receive an additional 2.0% increase in salary effective January 1, 1985.

3. Step increases for employees below step 6 shall be continued during FY85 so that they shall advance one step in their pay range on the anniversary of their employment or job change date.

4. A non-bargaining unit employee will be eligible for payment of unused sick leave on the following basis:

   a. An employee with more than a 720 hour balance on June 30,

1984, will have a record established of those excess hours over 720. These hours in excess will be paid to the individual upon his separation from the City at the hourly rate in existence at the time of separation, assuming they have not been charged as detailed in item d. below. An individual who has a minimum of 720 hours as of June 30, 1984, is immediately eligible to participate in item c. below.

b. Those employees having less than 720 hours, will continue to have the hours added to their individual "bank" until they reach 720 hours at which time the individual is eligible to share in the provisions of item c. below.

c. An employee who has a 720-hour sick leave balance will be eligible for an annual payout of 50% of the unused sick leave accumulated but unused that year (i.e., up to 6 days paid); or if he so elects, he can bank this half of the unused sick leave balance and not get an immediate payoff. This election is made on an annual basis. An entry would be made to this individual's "bank" crediting him with half of his annual balance calculated at his current rate of pay. Any balance remaining in this "bank" would be paid upon separation at the respective hourly rates at the time of them being banked. The other half of this unused annual balance would be added to his sick leave bank for sick leave usage and never be eligible for outright payoff.

d. Sick leave will be charged in the following order:

1) Current year's balance.
2) Non-eligible payoff amount.
3) Any previously banked payment eligible amount.
4) The 720-hour base.
5) Finally, the frozen balance would be charged and once charged could not be rebuilt.

Mrs. Settle briefly explained the procedures and schedule for re-registering all of the library's borrowers and issuing them new library cards. This is required due to the new computerized circulation system that will be installed in the new library. She distributed forms to Board members and noted that when they were completed and returned to her attention, she would issue cards for Library Board members and their families.

There being no further business, the Board adjourned.

Thomas L. Carney,
Secretary