RUTH BLEY

It is April 11, 1978. We have present Mrs. Ruth Bley, Associate Librarian emeritus, who is here on campus to talk to us and tell us a few things we're going to ask her.

SMJ: Mrs. Bley could you tell us a little bit about your educational background or your experience before you came to the college.

RB: I took my BA from Hartwick college in 1934. I was a member of the third graduating class. It was a brand new college, and we had very excellent professors because they had to do that to get it started. I was an English major trained for secondary teaching. I taught one year in a rural school but they closed the school, so I began my library courses at Albany that summer, in 1935. I wasn’t able to get a job, as this was depression time.

SMJ: What led you to the library?

RB: Mostly because I was an English major. At this particular time in New York State, high school English jobs were tied to doing all of the library work for a whole school, or a city school, or a rural school, I worked in rural schools mostly. It was really primarily to help me get a job teaching English, but I was interested in library work although I had done nothing with it. I had to learn everything from scratch. I borrowed some money and went on and got my library degree in 1936. This was probably one of the very best investments I ever made in my whole life. I taught for four years in high schools and did all the library work in two different schools which was very interesting. Of course one’s never finished. I was married just before I quit teaching, (a year before I quit) World War II came along, and this sort of threw me into a whole new life as I lived in various parts of the United States. I lived in Louisiana and California.

SMJ: You went with your husband then at the bases?

RB: Part of the time. For almost a year, I stayed here in Buffalo and worked at National Aniline. During that period no jobs which had anything to do libraries were available; however, I found later on that my experiences with people and knowing that I could do an entirely different kind of work really gave me a lot of self-confidence and oftentimes some information that came in useful. You can never know too much when you’re a librarian. After the war, my husband and I were at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, and I took some subjects that were of interest to me. I earned 12 credits hours in the time that we were there which included two summer sessions of German definitely slanted toward my someday doing something more with my library work. Later on, I worked part time in the Schenectady County Public Library. I substituted for a variety of people. I got experience in the branch libraries, and this was very interesting and very challenging to me. It was during this period that I made up my mind that should I ever have the opportunity, I would go into reference work. I didn’t get into it right away. I kept in touch with the field of education through my husband who was a music
teacher, and later on, a guidance counselor. I also did a lot of volunteering in libraries so I sort of kept my hand in the field.

SMJ: You were always attracted to the Readers Services area of the library more than the technical services.

RB: Yes. Cataloging is the one phase of librarianship to which I really wasn't attracted, so I steered clear of that area.

SMJ: You had to do it, though, when you were in the schools, didn't you?

RB: Yes, on a minimum basis. There were always so many things to do that you always put that off until last. I also did some tutoring of individual students when we were living in Eden.

SMJ: What brought you here?

RB: We had moved from Eden to Kenmore, and I had applied for a job here in 1962. In just a few weeks, I was called and asked to come in on a Friday to take over the Laboratory of Instructional Material because Mrs. Fowler was going to be off for a period of time. She gave me two hours of orientation, and I came in Monday morning and took over. Now, in those days the lab was oriented primarily for the student teachers and secondarily to the children's literature which wasn't a required course at that time. Hertha Ganey was the only professor who was teaching children's literature at that time. There was a great variety of material in the laboratory of instructional material and they all circulated.

SMJ: That was the old building then?

RB: Yes. This was the building that immediately preceded this present one. We had books, kits, filmstrips, picture files and just a whole variety of activities. The games hadn't come in to being. We had a "thing", for example, it was called THINGS OF SCIENCE and it was not a game and which was almost never used. It was fascinating to little kids. There was a variety of the things. We did have the filmstrips which were very useful except they were very expensive and very easily lost or stolen. Little by little these things got dropped out and later we became non-circulating.

SMJ: What was the library like when you came?

RB: There were eight librarians at that time. Lenore Kemp, Monica Gensbittel and Helen Rabin handled acquisitions and cataloging; Marion Cramer was the reference department and Carol Kramer was circulation librarian. No relation at all. At the time that I came, there was an opening in reserve and it wasn't covered at that time. They had a librarian there.

SMJ: Who was the director?
RB: The director was Dr. T. J. Niemi. When I came the first time to apply, I remember entering the circulation area and coming up to Carol Kramer to say I wanted to see somebody, and I was not too sure what his name was. I tried to get it by telephone. Is it "meenie". She looked at me, laughed, and said "No, it's Niemi". It was interesting too, that the campus school librarian was a member of our staff in those days. She was Helen Thielky. She didn’t do anything in our library, and naturally, we didn’t do anything in hers. She had plenty to do in to keep her library going, but she did come to attend some of our staff meetings.

SMJ: Had they moved over to the new building?

RB: No, they were still in Bacon Hall. In the early 1960s there were around 260 faculty members and around 4,000 students. The college was still primarily education. The Art Department was considered one of the very best in the country. There were four dorms: Bishop, Cassaty, Perry and Neumann which was brand new at that time and, of course, there were many commuters to campus. I liked it because it was small enough so that you really got to know people I find that professors who were here during that period have a sense of family that’s missing today.

SMJ: Was Dr. Bulger the President?

RB: He came later. I can’t remember exactly who was, we had an acting head, Dr. Walter Greenwood. I believe that when I came, Houston Robison was the acting head and then came Dr. Bulger. The library building itself was very functional, very cheerful with lots of windows. We had clocks everywhere, and it’s something that I miss in the new building. The only problem was that, after awhile, the clocks didn’t agree with one another. When Dr. Bulger was here, I believe it was under his regime, they did install a master system that finally did get the clocks working. You couldn’t look anywhere without seeing a clock.

SMJ: The outside of the library is quite different. Wasn’t there a runway between here and the student union?

RB: Yes, there was a street that ran past there. The south side was really a wing. There was a projection where the present periodicals room is and was the general location of the reserve room which had high windows. Again, it was a nice, airy, pleasant room and fairly large.

SMJ: It was a very attractive library, I Understand.

RB: The only room that looked at all as it did in those days as it does now is the reference room. We had large windows at the end, as there are now. We had a balcony but we had two stairways to the balcony and not one. When Mrs. Fowler came back after six weeks, I was put in charge of reserve on probation. Most of the librarians were, under civil service at that time, and we were regarded by most of the faculty as clerks.
SMJ: You weren't faculty then.

RB: No. Mrs. Fowler told me something very interesting after I retired. She said that because of her, the civil service test was changed to an oral taped interview rather than written test and the reason was that she had flunked the written test. So, someone came out from Albany to see why a recent graduate from a library school, I believe she graduated from Geneseo, and who had very good marks couldn't pass the test. One day he talked to her about it and he realized that she was a perfectly capable librarian. I suppose they took a new long look at the test. I never saw the test, but I had heard from librarians who had taken it, that it was packed with all kinds of esoteric questions which had nothing to do with running a library, and for this reason it was very easy to flunk it. I was glad, because after being out of library school all those years and never having worked at a college library before, I was happy to get by with a taped interview.

SMJ: Did they ask you questions?

RB: Someone came from Albany. I remember that someone from the administration on campus came also. There were three people. You could request someone from the library. I had requested Dr. Niemi to come. They asked questions, and you answered them right off the top of your head. You had no idea what they were going to ask.

SMJ: Did you find it difficult or embarrassing?

RB: No I didn't. I was full of self-confidence at that particular point. I had gotten into it by this time. I probably would change some of my answers today in the light of my later experience.

SMJ: Where is that tape?

RB: Supposedly it's somewhere on file in Albany.

SMJ: That's how you got your position--through a taped interview?

RB: That's how I got on the Civil Service list. There were very few librarians available at that time and accounts for my being able to just step into a job. A few years, later it would not have been possible.

SMJ: Does that lead on to the next question?

RB: I would like to talk a little about the reserve collection if you would like to hear it. It was very different in many ways from present reserve collection. It was very heavy on sociology readings. The teaching faculty had gotten away from depending on textbooks. The thing to do at that particular time was to use a variety of readings so that we had 20, 30, 40, 50 copies of a single book which, during the time that the professors were making assignments, the students would come in. This was a real physical burden on the staff of the reserve room. Every hour you would hand out perhaps 100 of
these books, and you had to put them all away, then maybe the next hour get them all out again. You were always flipping books. One of the changes I initiated was to create an area where these books were out on an open shelf and accessible to the students who just wanted to come in and spend an hour and not borrow the book. They could help themselves and put it back.

SMJ: Did you lose any?

RB: No.

SMJ: Did you have a check-out?

RB: We had a circulation check-out, but we also had a door from our room. We didn't have a check-out at our door, but there was a general check-out. Students were allowed only two books at a time. Once in awhile, some student would absent-mindedly or purposely walk out. I can remember doing a few sprints and grabbing them before they got to the front door.

SMJ: I imagine that eased the burden.

RB: Oh, considerably. In addition, we had the course of study and this was another headache. There were many that were very small, and it seemed as though whenever we got under great pressure, someone would come in and ask us for one that might be three slots out of place and spend 10 minutes sweating and looking for it. I fought long and hard and talked Florence Fowler into taking those into the Laboratory of Instruction Materials which was logical. Of course, she wasn't terribly happy to get them, but I was very happy to get rid of them.

SMJ: Did you have a special reserve section?

RB: Yes. The room was roughly where the present current periodicals is and was separate from the reference books.

SMJ: Sometimes some libraries have reserve books behind the circulation desk, but this was not so here.

RB: This was not true in our library. It was not true at the university of Buffalo either. Other colleges at that time (almost 100%) had a few reserve books, most of them usually just filed by the professors name. I don't really know why we had so many. I know part of the reason was that there were certain bound periodicals we kept on reserve at that time. This tended to grow and increase until finally, it reached the point where we could no longer do this. Then, we had an art history professor to come on campus, Dr. Samuel Hevenwrech. He did a wonderful job with the students and he had a lot of art books on reserve and students would come in and ask for these books and take them out. They were large and heavy, and we had special shelving put in near our work area, so we didn't have to run quite as much. The students would come in, get two books, sit around one table usually, and discuss what they were studying. This annoyed the other students so that we had to keep
shushing them from time to time. At the end of period, they would get up and walk out and we would have to go over and unload that whole table.

SMJ: How long did that go on?

RB: For two or three years. It was really great for the students, and they learned a great deal.

SMJ: The system lasted two or three years until the beginning of the construction of the new building?

RB: That went on into the construction. We had a fire exit built at one end of the reserve room during the building years. It was almost never used because, in the later construction period, if you went out through that fire exit, you couldn't get out. You were walled in.

SMJ: I didn't give you the question, but I wondered if it might be appropriate right now. Do you have any comments to make on those years?

RB: On the building years?

SMJ: Yes.

RB: Well yes. I made just a few notes on this because I didn't want to get carried away, because we suffered a lot during those years.

SMJ: Am I jumping ahead?

RB: It doesn't matter. It's okay to fit it in here. We had a lot of colds down in the 50s a lot of the time. People got sick.

SMJ: What month? Was it the whole year?

RB: Actually it started in the summer. They came and took most of the walls down and put up boards between us and the outside. (Around 65 or 64 temp.) Then, they took out the furnace. October arrived and it began to get cold. We went through the whole winter without adequate heat. We went out and bought heaters but after awhile "they" said no more heaters because there wasn't enough electricity to support it. We had mud outside, and it came inside. We had all kinds of dust. We had all kinds of noises. We had leaks all the time. We had very close calls/accidents. A beam came through some windows one time, jammed into the floor, and knocked one of the heavy wooden library tables over. Eleanor Merritt and another gal had just been standing there moments before. Vivian Baron got up from her typewriter and a big piece of plaster fell down exactly where she had been sitting, so that we were in danger not only from the fumes and the dust and all of that, but other things also. The first thing that they did was to bring in the pile of drivers. Before that, because we had so many windows and we were very conscious of the fact that our windows were terrible dirty, the administration decided that they would hire window washers. They came and washed all our windows inside
and out. Within a matter of weeks, the pile drivers came and as they worked their way around the building, the top part of the pile driver would squirt oil on all our windows. That was rather hard to take. It wasn't so hard to take as the drilling the concrete that was right under us or the walls that were part of the building. As work progressed the cataloging department went down to a basement room. This was very bad because it was very hot down there and very dusty. Some of the staff were really frightened for their lives for if anything happened could they get out. Nothing happened except the heat, dust and noise. All of this was very upsetting to the staff. I think the staff survived beautifully, but there were times at the end of the week when there had been almost continually drilling in the structure that we found we were getting pretty short tempered with people. Also, as I said before, people did get sick over and over again.

SMJ: Hindsight is always better than foresight. You shouldn't stayed here.

RB: No we shouldn't. One of the construction men told me that it would have been cheaper to build a temporary building that would have had heat and air conditioning and rooms for our collections and room to work at some temporary site so that they could go ahead because we hampered them all the time and then, of course, they hampered our work.

SMJ: I wonder what the statistics were.

RB: There were many students who never bothered to come to the library. That lasted four years.

SMJ: The cataloging too.

RB: Yes, it was almost impossible because you were often interrupted. Students were really shortchanged during those years because we couldn't give the service. We tried everything that we could, and we did everything that we could during those years, but it was impossible, and many students just stayed away. We tried to keep up our teaching and orientation type of thing and we finally just had to give up. There was no room to sit a class down and I remember the last class we taught they stood holding their books for about 10 minutes. After 5 minutes, their eyes were glazing over, and I quickly jumped over a few things and said that's it. You were saying that you had just made a tape with Dr. Richard Brown. One of the funny things that happened with him was that he came into the library through the front door one day, and went about his business. When he got ready to leave, they had in the meantime blocked off the front door, and we found him wandering around. So we had to show him the new opening. This was another thing. Without warning, the entrance and exits were changed from the north side of the building facing Caudell to the south side of the building facing the old gym. Just within one day, suddenly, they came to us and said, "we're closing off this one and now you're using this entrance".
SMJ: Would you like to go on the next question. You spoke about your position as reserve librarian. When did you change to another position?

RB: In 1965, we were beginning to add staff considerably, and I was able to transfer to the reference staff. The transition was made rather gradually in order to keep things running as smoothly as possible. They were hiring a lot of new people right out of library school, and I didn't want to wind up with the fact that there were no more openings when I was right here on the scene. I got busy and was transferred.

SMJ: Were you here before Mr. Nowicki?

RB: Yes. I came in 1962, and he came in December of 1964. Marion Cramer, when I came, was the whole reference department. It was rather interesting in those days. Everyone took part in the nights. I had mentioned that there were only eight staff members and this included Dr. Niemi. We were in teams. Monica and I were a team so every other week you would work one night.

SMJ: Even the technical services people?

RB: Yes. Everyone including Dr. Niemi. That was very interesting but didn't last too long. That's the way it was in the beginning and then as we added more it changed especially after Dr. Niemi left. Every other week we would work till 10:00.

SMJ: Under what director did you work?

RB: Dr. John Niemi was the first one. After he left, Morris Shirts, who was the head of Cataloging became Acting Head and I'm not just positive about the order. I think when Morris left, Lenore became Acting Head, then Gene Steffan served a period as Acting Head. Dr. Donald Yelton was here during the early part of the building years. As I recall, the utter confusion and frustration that he had in trying to get certain things done or not done. Once a group of men came in and insisted that his office was the only spot that could hold a rather large case which recorded all of the fire calls on campus. He kept telling them that they were crazy, but they just came in, took right over, pushed him right out of his office, and installed the thing. Within a year or so they had to take it out because that part of the library was torn down. Some rather strange things did happen. Dr. Palmieri then came and he was here for the major portion of the building. He had special expertise in that. When he left, Lenore Kemp acted as liaison. I think Dr. Russell Macaluso at one time was our contact for the administration, and then, lastly, we had Dr. Walch.

SMJ: Under these director's, which changes did you see along the library scene through the years?

RB: I think the status of librarians was one of the important changes. I had already mentioned that we were clerks. As the new librarians were being
hired, and the whole campus was expanding in the number of students and number of buildings that were being built, this coincided with the push for faculty status. Most of the contacts state-wide were probably made through the University of Buffalo. I was the liaison for awhile feeding them information from our library staff. It did help to develop a sense of professionalism. Before this, we had been an integrated family. There was no real line of demarcation between clerks and the professional librarians. We had the titles. I came in as an Assistant Librarian. But as we grew and the whole thing had to become more oriented toward a specific organization, we pulled away from this. Administratively, the college librarian was directly under the college president and a member of the College Council so that when there were monies to be distributed he was there when the pie was cut. Later on, and I think it must have happened the time the College Senate came on the scene, the organization chart changed. We were then under the Vice President for Academic Affairs and sometimes even under a subordinate or assistant in that area. Now, I am happy that Dr. Walch has been awarded the Dean status and we are back where we need to be. This is really an important thing. Of course, there were many physical changes principally during the building years. We always were in a state of moving. When I came on campus in 1962, the Laboratory of Instructional Material was on the second floor. When we initiated guards to check books, we had to do something about it. We couldn’t leave it on the second floor, so we brought it down. I think it was Jennie Nieszgoda’s suggestion that we put it into a room which had been originally a lounge area in which we had some of the later magazines like LIFE and TIME, etc. and a set of encyclopedias. It was just a recreational reading room which was a nice idea, but we thought it was more important to have the Lab collection under protection. During this time, too, the AV department moved in with us on the second floor. We had a lot of surprises always in these years. No one was ever told what day moving would take place. Departments had their things packed and their boxes marked, but because the movers came before they got on the scene, movers put the boxes for the second floor usually in the basement and vice versa. They came into our staff room and told us to get out. We wanted to wait until after lunch as we needed the refrigerator. I remember Jennie and I went into the other room, and it was Jenny, again, who came through and told them where the things should go. We had plenty of that.

SMJ: You also saw a change in the number of the staff.

RB: Yes. I didn’t make any lists of those things, but we did. From the middle sixties on, we began hiring more and more librarians in all areas, Technical Services as well as Readers Services.

SMJ: You came in 1962 and said there were 8 librarians. Now, in 1978, there are 26.

RB: For one thing, the Reference Department has grown considerably. There were times we had two people in the Laboratory of Instructional Materials. Of course, we increased the staff in Technical Services as we had a terrific backlog of books for years and years. I believe when I came, we
had about 2 years backlog which went on for some time. There was another area I would like to talk about changes and that has to do with the development of the staff involvement in participative management. We were taken off Civil Service and given faculty status rather gradually. As new librarians came in, they were given faculty status and I believe I was one of the last ones to be converted from Civil Service to faculty status, but I don’t remember exactly what year. It was probably in the sixties. Now the first thing that we did was to form a State University College at Buffalo Library Association and we made bylaws which were adopted April 16, 1969. Bruce Andrews, Charles Underhill and I drew up these bylaws. I remember we were working on them before we moved into the library as a whole, and in order to get some time together uninterrupted, we used to drag three chairs out onto the balcony which was an off-limits area at that time. The door was locked so we would sit out there on the balcony and without a table to work on the by-laws. After the College Senate was formed, we drew up a new set of by-laws for the E. H. Butler Library faculty and worked on that in 1972. They were adopted January 31, 1973. The committee members were Bruce Andrew, Sophia Drzewieniecki, Marilyn Kihl, Heidi Mahoney, and I chaired the committee. After Mrs. Drewieniecki retired, Joyce Herceg became a member. This was a big step forward in which we were encouraged all the way through by Gene Brunelle who had some very good ideas in this area. Let me say, very briefly, that 1969 was really quite a year of accomplishment. In August of 1969 we completed our move into the whole building. In that year I was appointed Assistant Head of Reference, and we began to develop a program of lectures on library resources. From 1965 to 1972 we were working for the most part with freshmen English and SEEK classes. SEEK was new in these days. We gave up herding people through the library after many years of observation and decided that this was a non-productive thing to do. From 1972 to 1976, we expanded our contacts and our service, and we actively sought and found librarians who were capable of teaching. We included other librarians, other than those who were in Readers Services. I was carrying a great deal of the load, but my records from 1972 to 1976 might be of interest. I worked with 51 professors, in 29 subject areas. I gave 194 class sessions, that was 321 class hours and the number of students involved in these classes was 3,625. We were making great progress in this area. I can say that this is one of the more important functions that librarians perform and it still is increasing, expanding, changing and being improved as we go along.

SMJ: That certainly is some of the highlights of the library activities. Would this be the time when you would mention some of the outstanding persons?

RB: Just one thing that I wanted to get in was my reaction to the building which was in many ways was a disaster for all of us, yet drew us together in many ways also. One day, in order to relieve my inward rage against the whole bad scene, I wrote that the new enlarged Butler Library is outwardly impressive, structurally clever, architecturally interesting, and functionally frustrating. It still is.

SMJ: By the way, as an aside, I think, at last count, there were 22 leaks.
RB: Well, you know that I am famous for talking to all kinds of people and sticking my nose in places where warranted or not, so when the state roofing inspector came several years ago, I heard about it. I went immediately and looked him up and started engaging him in conversation. I was put in my place when he said, "why do you think you want to be different from all the other campuses in the SUNY system?" So I guess everybody has leaky roofs. One of the outstanding persons with whom I have been privileged to work with is Lenore Kemp. I am going to take this from something that I wrote, because Lenore is so many things and has done so much over the years that this was something that I thought out as I wrote my recommendation for her Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship last fall. "I have never failed to be impressed and inspired by Miss Kemp's knowledge of the whole spectrum of librarianship. Her high level of professional performance, her ability to serve in a variety of administrative posts, her quiet skill and interpersonal relationships, her gracious accessibility and the sure knowledge that any problem, large or small, brought to her, would receive immediate, positive action. Her door is open to all." She had secured many library grants for us over the years and she was our first representative on the senate and was also instrumental in forming the first SUNYLA (librarians association) for the state. She just is a very terrific librarian who has given so much for the library. Now, I am not going to go down and name everybody. Everyone who has worked in our library is special, of course, but I would like to mention Hanna Samuels who is an artist and who was, of course, the clerk in charge of the catalog files. One of the things about Hanna was her terrific sense of humor. When we were in the building years we had indulged in a great variety of graffiti on the staff room walls which were temporary and someone in a moment of jest has drawn a little frame and then an arrow to it and had written on the wall "Hanna Samuels picture" so Hanna, when no one was around, went up after work and measured this space exactly and went home and created a picture (which is today in the library). We came in one day and here was this beautiful picture in that space. We couldn't allow her to leave it there because security was nil. That was one of the great things that she did. Another very interesting member of our staff was Prudencio dePeradoc who was an author and worked in our reference department for a year or two. I think that he helped us to realize some of our scholarly potential. He was just a very interesting person and was extremely oriented toward service. As long as one student wanted to use the library, he said we should keep it open. Now, for years we were able to have librarians in charge of the library during all of the hours it was open. This was something that I think we were trying to restore. It is a good thing; however, it had some drawbacks, because librarians had to open, and had to close. It meant as much as a half hour before and a half hour after the hours in order to get all the lights turned on or off, and everything checked out. Eugene Brunnelle contributed a great deal to Readers Services. He really laid the ground work for our becoming independent. You cannot run a library or any other department by means of committee, but committees represent input, and this is extremely important. I think it adds considerably over the years to have librarians actively concerned with what goes on in the library and helping to make some of the decisions, or at least having input towards those decisions. I would like to mention, also, that the only romance we had that ended in
marriage at any rate was between Sarah Finney who was in the cataloging department and John Kniffin who was in the Reference Department. They met here at the library during the building years. I can still see them standing in the corner of the stairway, holding hands on their lunch hour. They were married and continued to work here afterwards. We had a little romance on the side. We weren’t invited to the wedding. We did have a big party over at Nina Cohen’s to which they were rather late. It was a buffet sort of thing. Everyone brought fabulous dishes and Sarah and John walked in late. They stopped off at the Zoo while we all sat there waiting and waiting until they came. John didn’t like that sort of thing, and we really had to talk Sarah into convincing him to come. Nothing would be complete without mentioning three of the clerks who were here when I arrived. Jenny Niezgoda, Dotty Adams, and Eleanor Merritt who came about the same time I did. I think that they are extremely outstanding for the consistent, superior service with many good ideas that they have shared with us over the years. There is one other aspect of working with libraries that has always been of vital interest to me. That is we never would have survived it all if we didn’t all have a good sense of humor. One of us has an extremely good sense of humor--Marjorie Lord. I had saved a little note that was attached to something that was called the Olivetti progress report and the note says "Reference librarians, please keep this chart as carefully as you would the reference questions tally. It is obvious that the Olivetti has become an integral personality in the successful operation of E. H. Butler Library, that we should be at all times be aware of its ability to function or not to function is a vital essence in our services to the academic community." And it’s signed "HAL". Here is the Olivetti progress report. The date was Thursday the 25th of June 1970, time 3 p.m., complaint - "death, no sign of life whatsoever, recommendation prognosis - emergency squad summoned, outlook is not good, the clone in the foyer is still operating." Friday the 26th of June, 10 a.m. "showed signs of rallying, no output, recommendation same as above, outlook improved." Friday the 26th of June, 3 p.m., "complaint - none, the patient has made a truly remarkable recovery." Friday the 26th of June, 4 p.m., "patient displaying bizarre forms of behavior, x-raying peoples arms and so forth, neurosis is setting in, rest is indicated, perhaps some recovery will occur spontaneously over the weekend." Monday the 29th of June, 5 p.m., "no complaint, all systems go, Eureka." Wednesday the 16th of July, 3 p.m., "no complaint, apparently you put the fear of Hal into it. Thank you for providing us with a third machine." Friday, the 17th of July 2:30 p.m., "operates only by force, refuses food, deep psychological trauma, machine needs love, reassurance". The last entry was July 23rd at 8:00 p.m., "top of machine is unlocked, refuses to cooperate with key, its little dial is accessible to all inquisitive users." Marjorie Lord is the most unusual, the most delightful writer of minutes. She wrote one set of minutes that was a completion type test and she gave all the answers plus a lot of other answers that were very imaginative.

SMJ: Is there anything else you would like to add to this?

RB: I think that’s about it.
SMJ: What about conferences and workshops in the library field?

RB: Over the years, I believe we have been fairly lucky. We haven’t always had money to pay our whole way to go to conferences and workshops, but all of our librarians have been willing to go and to pay sometimes their whole expenses and on the other hand have been given permission frequently. I believe that this is an extremely important part of librarian development. It’s always good to get out of your own bailiwick and find out what other people are doing. It gives you new ideas and a new perspective and, often, new appreciation for what you have.

SMJ: What do you feel has been your contribution to the library since you have been here?

RB: It is very difficult for me to say. I did write a training guide for reserve procedures to use with the clerks and student assistants. In 1967, I completed a procedures book primarily for the use in the Reference Department, and this was something that, over the years, we have had to revise many, many times. I reorganized and updated the information file at one time and then passed that pleasure on to other people later. I was in charge of planning the move for all of the reference materials to the newly opened Reference Room in 1969. This took a great deal of planning and it was hard on the back too. I had a hand in revising the library handbook several times. I also worked on the revision of the description of library services in the college catalog. In March of 1970 I supervised library practice work for students from the School of Library Science at the University of Toronto. This was very interesting. Over the years I trained and supervised many student assistants who worked in the Reference Department. I made the first library contract for cooperation with the Empire State College unit on our campus. This is the sort of thing that I get into naturally because when I hear that there is a need, I try to follow-up on it. One time I gave instruction in the uses of ERIC resources to a member of a BOCES service center. I worked one time with Dr. Emmanuel Fried on resources for a new course that he was developing for the English Department, and I worked on many committees. I was chairman of the Personnel Committee in 1972-75 and I chaired a couple of the by-laws committees. I chaired the Professional Development Committee in 1971-72, served on the Senate Library Committee and that was very rewarding. The last years, that I served on a Senate Committee and the Professional Welfare Committee, I was given the honor of being the chairman of a sub-committee on the Evaluation of Vice-Presidents, Deans and Directors which took several years to complete but which was completed with the aid of an extremely cooperative committee. I think I had 12 or 15 people on the committee which was a cross-section of not only the areas of learning on the campus but also a cross-section of administrators, professors and things of that sort and that was very rewarding.