

MEDICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

INTERVIEW

WITH

**LUCRETIA W. MCCLURE,  
AHIP, FMLA**

Interview conducted by Julia F. Sollenberger,  
AHIP, FMLA

November 10, 2015

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April 2016

Published 2016

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Consent Form for Oral History Interview (2002 version)

This confirms my understanding and agreement with the Medical Library Association (MLA) concerning my participation in an oral history interview as a part of MLA's Oral History Program.

1. I agree to be interviewed by Julia F. Sollenberger on November 10, 2015. I understand that my interview will be recorded and that a transcript and edited version of my interview will later be created.

I understand that I will be given an opportunity to review and edit the edited transcript before its release.

2. I hereby grant and assign all right, title, and interest to any and all recordings and transcripts of my interview including copyright [and all rights subsumed thereunder] to MLA. I will be given a copy of the edited transcript for my personal use. I understand that the transfer of these rights to MLA confers no obligations on MLA to promote, market, or otherwise make publicly available copies of the interview.

3. One or more edited and/or condensed versions of the interview, approved by me, may be disseminated by MLA, as it deems appropriate.

4. I understand that the original, unedited recording of my interview and the original unedited transcript will be maintained in the MLA archives at the National Library of Medicine, or at such other place as MLA may reasonably designate, and may be made available to researchers who have demonstrated that they have appropriate qualifications. I further understand that the original unedited recording and/or the original unedited transcript will be made available with the following restrictions (Check one):

☒ No restrictions

☐ The following specified portions of the interview will not be made available to anyone until \_\_\_\_\_.

Lucretia W. McClure  
Name of Interviewee

Lucretia McClure  
Signature

Date 11/10/15

Accepted by: [Signature]  
MLA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julia F. Sollenberger  
Name of MLA Interviewer(s)

Julia F. Sollenberger  
Signature

Date 11/10/15

Date 2/26/16





## Biographical Statement

With this interview, conducted in 2015, Lucretia W. McClure, AHIP, FMLA, is the first person to be interviewed twice for the MLA Oral History Project. Her first interview in 1998 followed her retirement from the University of Rochester. Since then, she had a second career at Harvard University and has continued her numerous professional contributions and her influence on multiple generations of medical librarians. The new interview focuses on her activities since 1998 and her perspective on the changes and continuity in health sciences librarianship.

McClure earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri in 1945 and her master's in library science from the University of Denver in 1964. She began her career at the Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester Medical Center, as a cataloger, followed by a succession of positions before directing the library from 1979-1993. She was president of the Medical Library Association in 1990/91, Janet Doe lecturer in 1985, and received the Marcia C. Noyes Award in 1996. She served on the Board of Directors in 1980-1983 and chaired six MLA committees, two sections, and the Upstate New York and Ontario Chapter. She was president of the Association of Academic Health Sciences Library Directors in 1985/86. The Noyes presentation noted her wide-ranging expertise in copyright, reference, acquisitions, preservation, information systems, medical history, international librarianship, and education.

After her first retirement in 1993, she commuted to Boston as special assistant to the director of the Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard Medical School during 1996-2011, working on collection and other projects. She was a member of the National Library of Medicine's Literature Selection Technical Review Committee (LSTRC), chairing it in 2005/06. She chaired the New York State Regents Advisory Council on Libraries in 2005-2008 and was president of the Rochester Regional Library Council. She continued her active schedule of publication, teaching, and presentation and her involvement in MLA. She chaired the MLA Ethics Task Force and served as MLA parliamentarian, copyright referent, and convener of the Fellows. The Lucretia W. McClure Excellence in Education Award was established by MLA in her honor, and the initial award was presented to her in 1999. She contributed a chapter on history sources to the 2004 edition of *Introduction to Reference Sources in the Health Sciences*. She maintains contact with colleagues, writes a column in *MLA News*, and meets with new MLA members at annual meetings. In recognition of her unique role in the association, a day of the 2013 Annual Meeting in Boston was designated "Lucretia McClure Day MLA '13."

In the interview, McClure emphasizes the function of the librarian and her perspective on how it has evolved in the era of technology. To improve the skills of future librarians, she urges MLA to partner with educators to influence preparation for a future difficult to envision. She advises MLA to transform the structure of meetings to collaborate with other professions in order to open doors for librarians. For her own part, she loves the profession, both the way it was and how it is changing.

## Medical Library Association Interview with Lucretia W. McClure

*[Wave sound recording file\_1]*

JULIA SOLLENBERGER: This is an oral history interview with Lucretia W. McClure. Today is Tuesday, November 10, 2015, and the interviewer is Julia Sollenberger. Lucretia and I are in my office in the Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester Medical Center. First, I want to thank Lucretia for doing this interview. Lucretia has been a great influence on our profession for decades and I know that her insights and remarks will be valuable for generations to come.

This is a different kind of an interview. You had a previous oral history interview in 1998, five years after your retirement, as the director of the Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester Medical Center. Now it's almost twenty years later and we realize that you've practically had another whole career. And things have changed so dramatically that we'd like you to share your thoughts once again. I really believe you are the only person that the MLA Oral History Program has deemed important enough to interview twice. And, this year, in 2015, you will have been an MLA member for fifty years, another good reason for an interview.

First, to provide some context, I'll read from a little talk that I was asked to give at the annual meeting of the Upstate New York and Ontario Chapter of MLA in 2011. We were honoring you, the only founding member of the chapter who was in attendance.

*Lucretia McClure stands as one of the great medical librarians of our time. She has served in leadership positions in library professional associations at the local, regional, and national levels. She has been MLA president, board member, committee or task force chair, appointed official, teacher, editor, author, and scholar. She has received the highest honors and awards that can be bestowed upon members of the MLA. And she has presented to audiences worldwide, always bringing to light that which is the essence of our profession, and I quote, "an understanding of literature, how knowledge is organized, and the history and bibliography of medicine."*

*But has been my good fortune to have known Lucretia in a very personal way. She was my supervisor for thirteen years, and a colleague and friend for many more, and has influenced me in more ways than I can count. She has supported me, taught me, cared about me and my family, listened to me when I needed her, helped me to gain insight into human nature, made me laugh, confided in me, and help me put things into perspective. She served as a personal and professional mentor, and for that I am grateful.*

So, I am honored to be the one to conduct this second interview with Lucretia McClure.

So, Lucretia, let's talk for just a moment about your first interview. One of the most striking things for me was your emphasis on the librarian, the professional, as the most important element in a library rather than the resources or the physical space. You said that, and again I quote, "the best thing in the library is the thinking librarian." Could you

talk a bit more about this, especially in light of all the changes that have happened in libraries in this century?

LUCRETIA W. MCCLURE: Thank you, Julie. Well, I'll give you an example or two. One day when we were teaching a MEDLINE class at the library, a fourth-year medical student told me that she had it all figured out, and the way she searched was, her topic was cancer, and she searched women and cancer. And she said with great joy, "I got 3,000 results!" And I said, "But what kind of cancer were you interested in?" I said, "There are six pages of neoplasm subject headings for this database, and you could zero in on a specific cancer; you could zero in on a specific treatment; you could zero in on female or an age group." I said, "Why are you missing all these extras that you can have?" And she said, "Well, I think this is good enough." I thought, that's why you need a librarian. I will never know what she did after she was graduated and went on, but it seemed to me so sad that this is what happens in a library, or any kind of institution, if you don't have any connection to some person.

In another instance, a young man came and said to me, he had searched all over; he couldn't find anything about the early days of psychiatry. And I thought of all those volumes that we have on the history of Freud and everybody since. I said to him, "Why don't you start with this book? It's called *One Hundred Years of Psychiatry*, and it will take you through those first years and give you the names of all the people you need to study and read about."

I thought, these people have all gone to very good universities; they've all studied their chemistry and their biology and their physics and their math; and they can't find a simple history of psychiatry. So I feel that the librarian sets a tone in the library for what is important. And what's important is the relationship of the people in the library to all of the people who come in. That means even the scruffiest young person that you ever saw, and it means the oldest person who can hardly read anymore with their poor eyesight. It means that the library is a place where everybody can get some kind of assistance. I think the librarian has to set that concept up in the library. So that's why I think the thinking librarian can make a big difference.

S: So without librarians, we're just a place.

M: That's right.

S: We're a reading room, right?

M: Yes, we're a building.

S: I know that you went back and read your 1998 oral history interview, and I'm wondering if there are other things you'd like to highlight—maybe any additional insights into similarities or differences in libraries and librarians from your early years in the profession to your more recent experience.

*[Wave sound recording file\_2]*

M: Years ago, we used to study all of the reference books that came into the library. We had to make sure we knew what was contained in the sources, because that was the only kind of sourcebook we had for the library. And we studied the literature. Also, the faculty members used to bring their students to the library, and they pointed out the journals and why this journal was better, and what you should be looking for when you read a journal. I don't think they do that anymore, because everybody is expected to be skilled with a computer, and the computer, of course, does have all the answers. You just have to learn how to find them.

So it's a changing world from the world that we used to know in the library. There was so much that we had as librarians to learn in order to help people. Now, gradually, we are becoming an automated world, and in every aspect we have seen the changes that are made. And we as a profession have to do that, too. I think we're a very useful profession, but it's taken us a long time. The changes came right after World War II, when, first of all, we were just drowning in literature and we had no avenue to make it better until the computer came along. Of course, automation is the whole secret of this generation. In the early 1960s, there was talk about a computer. We really didn't know what it meant, had no idea. And then we got a photocopy machine. And I tell you, that was just like a revolution. You could put in a nickel—it was only a nickel—and get a page out of that machine instead of sitting in the library and making notes.

S: Was that in the '60s?

M: Yes. And the first machine was the Xerox 914. It was an absolutely wonderful machine. And fortunately the library had one. We thought it was just the most amazing thing ever. If you did your graduate work in this institution, you could always tell a graduate student, because they carried shoeboxes full of cards, and at every free moment they were sitting down reading, trying to make their bibliography. And it was a tedious job because not only did you have to read everything right here—couldn't take it away from the library—but you had to make notes on it. So it wasn't a matter of carrying out sheets of paper as they do now; it was a matter of reading and containing what you read and making notes on it so you could quote it in your thesis. That totally vanished the day we had a photocopy machine. So that kind of thing told us what was coming. There was help coming. And I must say, I loved that 914. I would give anything to have one today. It was a workhorse.

S: Was it huge?

M: No, it wasn't terribly large. But the very fact that you didn't have to copy pages and pages and pages. If you wanted to retain something, you had to copy it by hand. So that was a major step forward. And then the day came that we had the real revolution—the Biomedical Communication Network that came in 1968. [Editor's note: The State University of New York (SUNY) Biomedical Communication Network (BCN) was the first online information retrieval service for biomedical literature; it operated from 1968-



1977.] Now, before that, I don't think anybody had seen or handled a computer, and there were no books to tell you how to do it; there were no instructions to speak of. But that day we turned it on and it did work. That was the very beginning of what became what we are today. Now, it was created by Irwin Pizer at Upstate Medical Center [SUNY at Syracuse], and there were nine libraries that were in this network. Most of them were in New York because it was created here. It had two years of *Index Medicus*. But to put in a subject and see all this paper come out with all these citations, when beforehand you had pored over these printed indexes, and for hours and hours and hours, to find out what your subject was about.

Of course, it was the best thing that ever happened to librarians. You had to read it. You couldn't say, "Here, Doctor, is your bibliography about this subject," because you couldn't tell if the subject was really the primary focus of an article unless you read it. So when you compiled a bibliography, if you were any good, you had to read the content. That was the best introduction to library work that ever could be. Now, today you don't have to read it. And you don't—partly because of the pressure of time. But in the early days, some libraries even set aside time for the reference people to read, because this was part of their job. And you had only printed indexes which had a subject, not a combination of subjects. If you wanted to look it up and it had two subjects, you had to go to both. You wouldn't know what animals were in there unless you read it. You wouldn't know what treatment was in there unless you read it, because they had no way to give you these details that the computer does. But we were inventive creatures. And one of the worst parts of our jobs was that we had a big interlibrary loan [ILL] service, but you didn't know where any journal was. There were no outlines with everybody's holdings.

S: So you didn't know who had a journal.

M: You didn't know who had a journal. Many libraries went to Harvard and then NLM [National Library of Medicine], which was a killer to both of those places, because the journal could be sitting next door in that institution and you didn't know it, so you wouldn't bother looking in your neighborhood. You would go to a big library and interlibrary loan. But what we did—we sent labels with our ILL. There were four medical schools in Upstate New York. So when we had a request for a medical journal we did not own, we would send it to Buffalo with mailing labels to Syracuse and all the different libraries. So rather than sending it back and saying, "Sorry, folks, we can't provide it," they forwarded it on to the next library.

S: It was all done by mail.

M: It was all done by mail. And it had four or five pages on the ILL form that you had to type out, put in the mail, and send along with those mailers so that it went the circuit. Then in the end, if you couldn't find it, you went to NLM. But they were overrun with requests for very common journals. And that's when the networking began, and that's what was important about having a network. So you didn't do that, and you were

required to use your local area before you went to somebody beyond. For all you know, it could be right over there in a hospital library, or it could be someplace close to us.

S: So no wonder it took so long.

M: Oh, that's right. But we thought we were quite foxy and clever to do that—save the time of returning it and sending it out and returning it and sending it out. So that was one of the ways we coped with problems. Then the Medical Library Center of New York developed a union list of serials in this area, and that was a godsend for the library. We had to rely on other people. No library could buy everything. And there were lots of requests for journals that we would never own. So this was a way that we could share. And when you belonged to the network, that was one of the rules. You couldn't join it unless you agreed to share... Because some people borrowed dozens and dozens and dozens and maybe loaned only a few. And yet you had to have something you could share in order to be part of the network.

So bit by bit, these automated things were coming into being. In the early 1960s, MEDLARS [Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System] was created at the National Library of Medicine, and that was a computer database. You could request a search from them. However, it often took six weeks. Well, there was no researcher who could sit around and wait for six weeks to get a bibliography going. So you could do that, but obviously that wasn't going to be the solution. So when the SUNY BCN came, that was what was going to happen. It was a great opportunity for us, because at the beginning, only the librarian knew how to do it. We didn't have any real training at the beginning, but we could put in subjects and get a search for a user. And we even for a while allowed users to do it on their own with us standing by telling them, "No, you can't put in a big subject like biochemistry." But we became very prominent when we were the queens of the database.

S: You were the keepers.

M: We had people lined up wanting searches. And they asked for the craziest things, because they had no concept of the MeSH [Medical Subject Headings] list that told you what the subjects were. They didn't know those words and they didn't use those words. So that was just like our cancer lady. Cancer was not a subject; neoplasms was the subject. And you had to learn. But that MeSH book was a marvelous tool, and we had those available for people, and learning how to formulate a search and get the best subjects using the MeSH with a reader. We gradually got that going. But people weren't content to let us do it. It would be something they thought they should be able to do. And that opened the door to our big teaching element, and I think that was wonderful. But once we had *Index Medicus*, then we couldn't stand it until we got *Biological Abstracts*, and *Chemical Abstracts* [online]. And *Science Citation Index* came along with citation indexing. All these things were just remarkable, because it gave us the ability to do what we had done in the past by hand. By hand is a very slow process. And then you had no help; you had to do it all yourself. There were people who just did bibliographies, and they spent their lives digging into things. But this was a very important point for us.

And I think, if a hundred years from now when they look back, they will see what changes started with that little bit of automation.

S: Can I ask you a question? What was the relationship, if there was one at all, between the BCN and MEDLARS?

M: Irwin Pizer was a visionary man, and he really got the BCN going. NLM had been involved in that [making the MEDLARS tapes available], but it wasn't an NLM product. We had these nine libraries that paid into that, and the State of New York did a lot of the funding. As money got tighter and New York decided that they were spending too much money, the BCN looked for a buyer and got one, and became an independent [Bibliographic Retrieval Services (BRS)]. They were not part of NLM. The NLM databases started soon after that—the very beginning ones. And BCN went on for a while with another owner, but gradually the volume took them over. They couldn't really do what NLM could do, so it went out of existence. But it was the first interactive, online medical database in the world.

S: So did they have people who input all this by hand?

M: Oh, yes, they did. They had computer people, and they had library people at Syracuse who worked on this as well. What was interesting was that we had nothing to show us [how to use it]; it just started. And we used to call each other on the phone and say, "I found something today. I figured out how to do something today." That's how we learned from each other. But soon, there were many, many groups. Every database had its little cluster of people who were advising.

Because most of the people who were in the computer business had no idea what libraries really did. We had, in the early days, vendors come to show us their product, and they had already been in industry. So they could do things with cans of soup or do things with bolts and nails and whatever. They knew how to organize that. And one vendor came, and he didn't know much about journals, so I asked him, "We have some journals with more than a hundred volumes. They go back to the 1800s. And each one of those volumes has to be recorded, because you can't just put in a journal title; you've got to have a record of exactly every volume and issue that you have, and how do you do that?" Well, he had no idea what I was talking about. Now, they were selling this product to libraries. And I said, "How are you going to deal with a music library, where one hundred different violinists play the same piece and there's a record? How are you going to do all those records?" I think they went home very discouraged. But that's the kind of thing that made you a part of the whole thing, because we had to first understand all of this stuff. So I think we shocked them a lot, because of what we expected out of them. They had thought, well, a book is a book and that was easy. They could sell their thing to the public library that didn't have 14,000 journals. But when it came to an academic library, the big libraries, you have to be able to contain every item somehow or other in your system.

But it was a great, exciting time, because you didn't know from one month to the next what great thing would be discovered. It was a very, very good time to be a librarian, because you could get up and talk about your databases and your this and your that, and most people didn't know what you were talking about. But it was very good, because it gave the people access. Beforehand, if you didn't have the journal, you really couldn't give them anything.

And then along came OCLC, and there were lots of people who lost their jobs, because in the manual days you had to handle each item by itself, and maybe three million people cataloged that same book across the world. But you didn't know it and you didn't have any access to it. When OCLC came along, some academic libraries had thirty catalogers to handle the volume. Well, if you were a four-million-volume library, you had a lot of material.

S: And you had backlogs, too. Wasn't that the norm?

M: Oh, yes. You tried to keep up with the new, but there were stacks of things you couldn't get to. And no one liked to do government documents, so they piled up all the time. But every inch of the library was becoming involved with the machine. And, of course, when you could catalog with OCLC and you didn't need a librarian to know how to do it, because it was already on the screen for you, and what you had to do was a technical job to transfer that data into your catalog, well, all those thirty melted down to two or three for a big library, and the rest of the staff was trained to do the rest of the work.

But it was an exciting time, because not only did people enjoy having this extra knowledge, but we really had an opportunity to learn. We had training classes all the time to go to, and there were new things every time. And when you went to the exhibits, there was something you never heard of. Oh, it was just more than we could believe. There are so many things that—you can read about them in articles about the history of libraries. For centuries, the library was exactly the same. There was nothing different you could do.

S: Then all of a sudden it exploded.

M: It did. It burst on the scene like fireworks.

S: How might you compare that time, when you're talking about the automation, with what's happening now? Do we have as much new stuff happening now as we did before?

M: I think we do in terms of the refinement that they're making on all these systems. Every time I get a library journal, there's somebody talking about a new way to do 'this,' or you can search across your whole collection. You can digitize the library books and have them sent to any place in the world that has a computer to open it up. I think that some of the things have been great additions to education.

At Harvard, we had a number of programs on subjects. They did one on immigration. Our medical library there had a lot of material on early physicians and so on. And all of the libraries contributed to this. They put together a package on immigration and made this free and available to the world. Now, if you were in a small college that didn't have any rare books or didn't have any extensive collections of that time period, your students could take that and write papers and do research. So I think that is the kind of marvelous thing that digitization and automation has done for us. When you look at the [Medical] Heritage Library and you see what you can see in there of old journals, old books, classics—everything that you can possibly imagine—and it's free and anyone in Timbuktu can read it if they can read English.

So it seems to me that the pluses of this automation have been very good. There are detriments, I think, because, for example, I have taken books to students that have a wonderful answer to their question, enough history to give them a little background but not too much, an answer to whatever they were looking for. And then I would sit and watch the student, and about four-and-a-half minutes after I had given it to him or her, they would get up and come over and say, "That's okay, but do you have anything online?" They were not content to read that book. And I thought, okay, but it's cutting out some of the great stuff that libraries have. If you were look in our history collections and just handle some of those materials, you would have a sense of people over the ages. But they don't want to do that.

S: Well, they grew up in the digital age.

M: I know. And when I see these little kindergarten kids at their computer, I think, okay, but, on the weekend, make them read a book. Because they're missing out. Not only missing the great literature that's in the books, but they're missing the habit of reading that way. Now, I do not want to read a whole book on a computer, but I don't think they read the whole book. I think they read the pages they need and that's it. Sometimes the whole book has great stuff. Journal issues are the same way. Now, you can find the articles on your subject. That's easy and that's great. But if you look through journal issues regularly, you find all sorts of little, hidden treasures that you will never find any other way, because you won't necessarily go to the computer and read the whole issue.

S: Can you give an example of one of those treasures?

M: Well, letters to the editor. That's one treasure. Editorials. We've had some fiery editorial writers in the medical field. So it's just a different way to absorb. But there's something about time. If you take a year of *Index Medicus* and you look at your subject, and you follow the next year, you can see the patterns. You can do the same thing with the textbook, like Harrison [*Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine*]. If you read ten years of Harrison, the same subject, you will see the developments of medicine.

There are all kinds of things you can do with material that you don't do the same way with a computer. Now, when you want something quick, the computer is your answer. When you want an expansive thing, a computer is your answer. But if you want to revel



in a subject, if you are really interested in somebody or something, then I think you have to turn to a different access point than simply putting [a subject in a computer]. I had a library friend whose answer was the computer every time. Somebody wanted biographical information. And we have all these areas full of biographical data. Wonderful collections and excellently written biographies of famous people in science. But you're not going to find that in the computer. But that's the only way she knew how to look. So it depends on how you approach the field. If you are a natural reader, you will read, and if you've not been a reader, then I don't think you will, because the computer answers your question and then you don't go beyond that. But that's a soap box...

S: Well, that's great. You gave us your insights on the evolution of the profession. Do you have anything else to add to that?

M: No. I think the one other good thing about that for the librarian was that we began—we've always been teaching in the library. I used to take a truck of books and show them examples of every form of literature.

S: I remember that, Lucretia, when I first worked here. I remember you going out and doing that with your truck of books.

M: That's right. That's what we did. We showed people—it's amazing how little people understand unless they have a guide. I had many students who had been to the best colleges who had never heard of *Science Citation Index*, never heard of citation indexing, never heard of this, never heard of that, and I think, that was our job: to make you aware. Statistics—we had a wonderful collection of statistics, wonderful collection of dictionaries in medical subjects, all kinds of things that people had spent their... One man spent his entire lifetime on an abstract service that covered his field for fifty years. Now, if you were interested in that subject, you wouldn't have to lift a reference book. You could take that. He had read everything; he had eliminated the poor stuff. This was a book that would be your bible if you were studying. And schistosomiasis was the subject. Now, that's not a very popular subject, but it covered that whole fifty years of what happened to that.

S: And people don't know it existed.

M: They don't know it existed. So I think in some ways we've lost something. The computer is a great advantage to science because it's quick and you can do great things. And the people in math can do giant things.

S: Big data, huh?

M: Big data is the word today.

S: I believe we are ready to go on and talk about you and what you've done since 1998. So you had been retired for five years when you did your first oral history interview, and

at that point you'd some consulting gigs, I think, at Stony Brook and at Harvard. Tell us more about that. How did you end up at Harvard for another whole career?

M: When I retired in 1992, I had no plan whatsoever. I thought, I don't know what I'll do, but I'm too busy to think about it right now. You know, you have to clean out your office and you have to take away all the stuff, and you have to wind up everything. Anyway, so I didn't make any plans. Somebody had told me that the best thing to do in retirement was nothing, and let things come to you. So everything that I have done since I've retired was something somebody asked me to do, not something I ever dreamed I would do.

The first thing after I did after I retired was take a cruise to the South China Sea with my sister and her husband. When I came home, I thought, now I've got to think of something to do. But before I could, I had a call from Nina Matheson asking me to come with her to Stony Brook [University, SUNY]. Now, I had never been to Stony Brook. I had no idea about that institution. But she was consulting there, and they were planning to give their librarian a year's sabbatical and hire a different person to be the director of the Health Sciences Library, and so they needed somebody there while they had the search going on and to be a placeholder. So that summer, I commuted to Stony Brook four days a week and met with staff, and we did what we had to do to keep the library going. We had a search, and the various candidates came and so forth, and they found a new director for the library.

But while I was still going to Stony Brook, I was also invited to be on a committee at the Countway Library [of Medicine] at Harvard, because they were going to be getting a new director of the rare book collection. So I would periodically take an afternoon and go to Boston for that meeting, and so I was working with them. Then I was asked to do some surveying of the collection and various things at the Countway Library, and so I went there quite frequently. Then Judy Messerle was the director, and she asked me to come for three months to look at the search process for this new director of the rare book collection. So I went there that fall. Then the director of rare books who was retiring was asked to be scholar in residence for a year. Because he was going to be there, it didn't seem proper to hire someone with him on the premises. So I stayed for that year, again as a placeholder for the history of medicine section of the library.

Now, the Countway is, I think, the largest medical school library in the world, and is really second to NLM and the New York Academy of Medicine for size. It has about 600,000 volumes. And it's a great, big building. One of the things that people were talking about was the need for renovation of the Countway Library. So I was continuing to go to Countway to work in the collections in rare books and to do other things that were needed. Judy was a great mentor to me. She had taken over this library, which is a very large institution. It had had not much direction with the previous director, and then there was a long spell of somebody who was sitting in that place as a placeholder while they waited to hire a new director. So I commuted to Boston every week, because I had little grandchildren here and I didn't want them to never see me, and I didn't want to miss all the excitement of little kids. So I would go on Sunday and come home on Thursday

night, and I worked four days a week. I came for three months but I stayed seventeen years.

S: So you did that back and forth by plane?

M: Oh, yes.

S: And I remember one time you and I did some traveling together not that many years ago—just maybe two or three years ago. And when I was with you at the airport, the people knew you.

M: Oh, yes, they did.

S: And they were so happy to see you again after you had not gone for a little while—after your second retirement. And I was so impressed that all these people knew you and were so concerned about you and wanted to make sure you were comfortable.

M: Oh, yes. I said to them, “Well, I supported US Air over the years.” They were very nice people, and yes, they helped everyone, but they got to be friends, because they would always say, “Well, where were you last week?” or “Are you coming on Sunday?” And I would answer, “Yes, I’m coming Sunday, and I hope no snow will fall.” But it just worked out. I had no reason not to. I lived alone. My husband died and so I was alone. And I had no reason not to do things, so whenever I got an invitation, I went and did it. So it was just what the person said, “You wait and then something good will come to you.” So it was a very, very good move for me, because there were lots of challenges in that library. Judy was a very good mentor, and she had strong leadership.

Then it was determined that the medical school wanted the library to be renovated. When you think about 600,000 volumes, six floors, jam-packed full, every inch full; and of course it’s an old institution, so the collections were also old. So there was much to do. This Countway Library opened in 1965, and that’s when it was a brand-new building and very exciting and half-empty and all of that. But now it was in the late 1990s, and there was new renovation coming, and we had to move this enormous collection. The first move was to take the rare books, which were on the fifth and sixth floors, and move them to the ground floors so we could have compact shelving. Now, the rare books collection had 250,000 books of its own, plus all the archives and the objects and everything else that we had in that collection. We packed and sent 5,000 boxes out to the depository from rare books, and that was just the beginning. We also had to go through the various collections, the older collections, and weed out anything that was not needed. In fact, I found some mimeographed bibliographies that had been done, and that purple ink had faded totally away, so there was nothing there.

S: I guess you threw those out.

M: And we threw those out, yes. You accumulate lots of things, and there were many items that were not at all relevant to medicine or were in other Harvard libraries. So we

did a housecleaning with that in mind, to clear out anything that wasn't really needed and then to pack it up. We had to pack books, we had to pack journals, we had to pack everything that we had to get out of that floor.

S: So you sent it to a temporary area?

M: Harvard has a depository.

S: But then you brought that back again.

M: Some of it. Oh, yes, it came back bit by bit. But there was just an enormous amount. And a lot of it was objects and things like that. Well, you can't just throw that in a box. So we had to hire a lot of people to help with this. The first thing they did was to do the ground floor and move the rare books down, and then we could move floors bit by bit. But it was an enormous job. And working with the collections was wonderful for me, and we had many treasures that we found in working with the collections.

S: So were you like a project manager on this?

M: My title was special assistant to the director, and that meant that I could do whatever Judy needed me to do. And I did lots of different things at Harvard. I edited the newsletter, and I did book sales. Over the years I was there I raised \$360,000. Now, the book sales didn't bring in very much money, but I had three or four a year, and I had book dealers coming. We didn't sell individual books; we sold lots.

S: Okay, so you did it to dealers.

M: Well, most people don't want these anyway. They could have come, but we wouldn't sell them a single book. One man came, and he wanted a book. Well, I said, "We don't sell books; we sell lots. You'll have to take the whole thing of forty books" or whatever it was. Anyway, I had a lot of good friends in the book world there.

We organized the reference collection. It had books as old as 1978 in it, and I thought, we don't need to give space to that. The book is there, but nobody would use it for current information. So I did that kind of thing. I had a rare book binder who came periodically, and we were trying to fix some of the bad books in the library. I had all kinds of jobs like that.

S: So if it needed to get done, ask Lucretia to do it.

M: That's right. I did gifts. I did whatever came forth that somebody needed to do. So I was involved in lots of things. When a person got a new job and moved away, I could be their temporary person.

S: You were the Gal Friday.

M: I was, indeed, and that was a wonderful experience. Anyway, we did get the renovation done. The library was beautiful. And we had a big rededication in 2000. It was a big, big undertaking. So, one of the exciting parts of being there was seeing what could be done, because, obviously, when the building was built in 1965, they didn't need plugs everywhere. But the collection was monumental, and it was a great thing to be able to work in rare books. I worked in both rare books and reference and did whatever.

S: Do you have any memorable moments from your days in reference?

M: Well, going back to the early days when I was a reference librarian here in this library—going back to doing searches for people and finding books for people—we had classes for students, and I taught one on using research material. The students who came were very new students. Didn't know anything about the medical literature and so forth. Among the things I showed these people was material from Oliver Wendell Holmes, who had been a dean of Harvard Medical School at one point. Of course, most people remember him as an author, and they don't know anything about him as a medical person, but he was the dean and he actually admitted black students to Harvard in his day. He wanted to admit women, but the students set up such a howl that he backed off of that. There were never any women students until World War II at Harvard Medical School. But I had talked about him in this class, and one day I got a call from a faculty member saying that they were having this dinner, and they wanted somebody to talk about Oliver Wendell Holmes, and this young fellow in my class had told him that I could do it.

S: That you knew all about it, huh?

M: So I got invited to that, and I gave it a couple or three times to groups there at Harvard. It was a great experience because, as always with students, you never know what you're going to find out, you never know what you'll be asked, and you have no idea what the answer is, and that's the great blessing of our job.

S: Did you ever help any important people?

M: Well, I did a lot of work for the dean of the School of Public Health, and of course the dean of Harvard Medical School had been a student here at Rochester, Joe Martin, so I knew him and came to his Christmas party and talked to him and his wife. Yes, there were many, many scholars who came to the library to use material, and I knew some of them by name. So, yes, I did meet some people who were wonderful to meet. We had collections of papers, as all rare book places mostly do, and we had some marvelous collections of people in the library when they came to edit their books and read and learn. So helping those people was a very nice experience.

One day the phone rang—we all shared time at the reference desk—and I answered the phone. It was a woman from Washington, DC, who said she was calling on behalf of Hillary Clinton, and Hillary Clinton had been invited to come and speak, and she wanted some information, and if I could help her. I said, "Yes, I can, and I will be very glad to," and she said, "Now, you cannot tell a single person about this." So until long after, I



never told anybody that I had spoken to her. Anyway, so I looked up the material that Hillary Clinton wanted, and I reported it to the lady, and she came for graduation and was one of the speakers. I read her speech, and she used what I gave her. But it was interesting, because I thought, who am I going to tell that it would make any difference?

S: But you were sworn to secrecy.

M: But I didn't do it until then. And Hillary came here to speak to the School of Nursing when they had a big program.

S: Here at the University of Rochester?

M: Yes. And I went up afterwards and shook her hand. I didn't tell her I got her library information, but I shook her hand and said I was glad to hear what she had to say. But it was kind of interesting.

People you helped often put your name in the credits, the acknowledgements, that they appreciate the work...

S: In books or articles.

M: Yes, in books and articles. So it was a very interesting kind of work. And I'd be there still today if I didn't think I should be closer to home. So I had a good time anyway.

S: Well, good. So, anything else you want to say about Harvard, or shall we go on to your post-Harvard time?

M: Well, let's go on to the next item.

S: Since your second retirement from Harvard... What year was that?

M: 2011.

S: ...You've continued to be a librarian. So can you tell us about your volunteer positions? You've had two that I know of—one here at the University of Rochester at Edward G. Miner Library, and the other at Valley Manor, which is your residence.

M: I'm having a very good time in retirement and doing what I've been doing for the last fifty years, and plan to do it forever. Now, it's Miner Library. I'm working in the archives, and I'm doing different projects.

One of them was a collection of trade cards, and they were all these little cards that dealers used to give people when they were selling their patent medicines. And, you know, Mrs. Jones's Indian cure would cure diabetes, cancer, broken legs—almost anything. It was an interesting, interesting collection. And I must say, I think Lydia

Pinkham had 18% alcohol, which was no doubt why people felt better after they took her stuff. And I had a collection of Rorschach tests that a psychiatrist had done over the years. I don't think there's any scientific evidence that proved [the value of the Rorschach test], but it was very popular. He was a well-known psychiatrist in New York City and treated all sorts of people, some famous. And I have done a lot of photographs of the university medical school in the building of it. There was one collection that was of patients and their doctors, and the diseases had very strange names, because they were not what you would call them today. That is a restricted collection because it does have patient names in it. But there are all kinds of collections that people leave for libraries, and they don't do any good unless you have access to them. Now they have a place in the computer, so people will know that these things exist, and they can come and use the collection.

S: So you've been working with Chris Hoolihan, our rare books and manuscripts librarian, to do all of these things. I'll say that we're all so very happy that you are, because Chris can use another pair of hands and another good brain to work on all these projects.

M: A lot of these are collections, and people don't know how to do collections. Sometimes you get a box, and it's just like they took the desk and dumped it in, and sometimes you'll get old Christmas cards and all sorts of things that people put in a box, just because they don't know where to put it. But it's been very interesting, and we have a lot of wonderful illustrations of the building of the medical school. The pictures are great, because you can date it by the cars that are parked around this area. It's very nice for me, because I remember this building was the original building that was the hospital when I came here. The new hospital didn't get built until 1975, so for a long time we worked in that original setting. There was no paint on the floor. There were no ceiling tiles; the pipes were exposed. Dr. Whipple and George Eastman were both very tight with the dollar, and they said, "You can get your plumber much cheaper if there's nothing up there but pipes." So there was nothing on the ceiling but the pipes. The floor was unpainted cement; the walls were unpainted cinder block. [Editor's note: George Hoyt Whipple was founding dean of the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, serving from 1921-1954. He also shared the 1934 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. George Eastman, founder of Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, was a major donor in establishing the school.]

S: Now, there was one beautiful area, however, and that was the old lobby.

M: The lobby of the medical center had been done... the architect wanted to make it marble. Well, George and George wouldn't hear of that, because that was too costly. But they did make the lobby a beautiful wooden oak wall cover. And when the library was expanded, we got the lobby and were able to restore it just exactly as it was in its original day except that it became our reading room.

S: And still is.

M: Yes. And it's a very nice area. Dr. Whipple was a wonderful man, but he was very, very cheap. He was not going to spend any money on frills. So there were no frills when this building was built. And also, there were no locks on the doors, because he said that nobody in science would need to have locks. And that's an interesting comment on our society, where we have to lock up everything, and it's different.

S: Something that he did spend money on, though, was historical collections.

M: He liked the library. He was very fond of the library. He also would give you a perfectly marvelous microscope, but he wouldn't buy you a desk; he'd give you a table to work on. But he did like the library, and he did believe that students needed it. After he retired, his office was right down the hall here, and it was not painted. It had a cement floor that was not painted. One of the workmen here said, "Dr. Whipple, I'll come and paint it, and I'll buy the paint myself," and Dr. Whipple said, "No, I'm not going to have any of that." His office is a museum, and it's still just exactly the way he had it. But he had a telephone, and he would let the medical students use his phone if they needed to call home, and he would let them come in and talk, and he would tell them all about whatever.

S: How long was he dean?

M: He died in '76. He was retired when I came here in '64, but he came to work until the last two years of his life he was in the hospital.

S: And the medical school [the first class] started in '25.

M: It opened in '25. And we had women in the first class, which I think is very interesting, because many places did not. The medical school was very much a reflection of Dr. Whipple and his ideas. He had very strong opinions, and the students really liked him. He taught the Saturday morning pathology class, and they always worried about him. But when we used to open his office during graduation and when we had alumni coming, they would stand in there and weep.

S: Wow.

M: Because they remembered him... And his legacy is all the people he taught. They went out and taught like he did.

S: I'm not sure we'd have former students weeping over deans these days.

M: No, I don't think so. But he was a powerful man in the medical school. And, of course, the library has his Nobel Prize, and it's been on display. He was an acknowledged leader in the medical field. But a very simple man. Mrs. Whipple was a beautiful Southern belle, and she was a lovely lady. I knew her too. But that original faculty here was quite distinctive, and most of them came from Johns Hopkins. That's why we were called the "Little Hopkins." They got their training there, which was a

great institution. We had remarkable faculty at the beginning. And we do today, but it's a different kind of institution.

S: So how about telling us about your librarian position at Valley Manor.

M: Well, Valley Manor has had a library since it opened, and there have been different people organizing it and running it. But it's always been a focus of the institution, and we have a lot of people who are good readers, and they want a nice lot of books. So when the librarian at Valley Manor several years ago died, I was asked to become the librarian. I have gone back to the original life of public librarian. I buy the books, I catalog the books, and I shelve the books. Just the way it is. And I have a great time doing so. There are a lot of people who are not able to get out a lot, and reading is one of the great joys of being in an institution where you have access. So we have new books every month and we get lots of nice gifts, and they add to our collection. So it keeps me busy, and that's good so I won't forget all I learned way back when.

S: How do you catalog?

M: Very simply. Well, it's a public library, the way it was set up, so that's what we have. I use a very simplified form, because we don't need great detail. We don't have people doing any research, or we don't have people writing any papers, so...

S: Do you have a card catalog?

M: We have a card catalog, and I told the people that they need to make sure that they build in plenty of access in the building for when the library will someday be automated. But most people don't have computers at this point, but I think in the next decade they will. It will be up to someone when the time comes to automate the library.

S: So it's not going to be you?

M: Not me, no, I don't think so. I don't think it will be that soon. But it is a great resource. Especially in the winter or when it's terribly hot, and you don't want to get out, you always have something you can read. We have a lot of classics as well as new books, a lot of good nonfiction; a lot of things to read. And it's amazing, because I think if I had been in a public library, this is exactly what I would have done, and now I'm doing it at the end.

S: Okay. So is there anything I've forgotten to ask about that part of your life—your retirement and your time at Harvard and your current jobs?

M: I can't think of anything else specific that I wanted to bring up.

[Wave sound recording file\_3]

S: I think we're ready to move on. We are looking at your professional activities since 1998, when you had your last interview. You've remained active in our profession all along, Lucretia. In fact, you just went with me to the UNYOC [Upstate New York and Ontario Chapter] annual meeting in Buffalo a couple of weeks ago. So, since 1998, you've written at least twenty-five articles or reports; you've served as editor of five or six publications; you've chaired committees and boards at the local, regional, and national levels; you've taught classes; you've given presentations; and you've received more awards. And all of us wonder how you do it. But rather than how, let's first focus on the why. Why has it been important for you to stay involved?

M: I think that the profession has become such a part of me that I just can't stop.

S: You don't know how to do it otherwise.

M: I don't want to live otherwise, right. I've got to have some book connection. In fact, I think of myself as a bookie, because everything I do isn't all books, but I like to write and I've had good experiences. I edited one of the handbooks [*Current Practice in Health Sciences Librarianship*, the successor series to *Handbook of Medical Library Practice*]. I've written about Estelle—that she was a very important mentor in my life. She was as tough as nails, and she could really send an arrow to your heart.

S: So that was Estelle Brodman.

M: Estelle Brodman, right. But she was a wonderful friend and a great mentor, because she laid it out to you and told you what it was, and it was. So I worked hard on those articles about her. I wrote about Brad Rogers, I wrote about Nina Matheson, the people who had influenced me. It's awful to write; it's hard to write; but it's very satisfying, too. I like to write about reading and journals and advocating libraries, about copyright, about preservation—all of the things that I have been involved in. And you talk about librarian, and I know people have this view of us that makes us an old maid with a bun on her hair, and telling people not to make any noise in the library. But we're not like that. We're very aggressive, and we're very eager to do something with our experience. So it's important to have people who will be telling you things that you need to know. I was also involved with the newsletters at the Countway, and of course the newsletter here that I edited—the IFLA [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions] newsletter for our group. And I had a column in *The Watermark* for the [Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences]. So I had a little voice in a lot of places.

S: What might have been the most memorable or important writing project? Can you think of one or two that you were specifically really engaged in?

M: It's hard to say. Usually I wrote because somebody said, "We want to put this together and here's your chapter," or "here's your section." The things that I wrote for publication were things I wrote, but I responded to people saying, "We need somebody to



do this or that.” But as long as it’s published you feel good about it, even if you wish you had done better. And you can rewrite until the end of time, so the best thing to do is get it down on paper and then work on it. And that’s the only advice that I really think counts when it comes to writing. I’ve had one or two more in my head, but they’re not on paper yet.

S: Specifically things that people have asked you to do or that you want to do?

M: No, just things that I want to do, but may never do. Of course, you never know.

S: Oh, I don’t know, I think you probably will. Well, since 2000, you’ve presented seminars at Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science, also at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and at the Countway. What do you remember about those teaching experiences in particular?

M: It’s always interesting when you’re speaking to think about the audience. When you talk to young people in library school, always try to rattle them up; make them think about something they haven’t thought about. Last time we went to Simmons for that group, my assignment was to talk about cataloging and copyright or something like that. And both subjects I think... I don’t really know if they teach cataloging anymore, other than some basic things, because they assume everybody will have OCLC.

S: Well, I think they call it metadata now.

M: They probably do. Everything has a new name. But in fact, cataloging was the basis of librarianship before the computer came. Everything was based on your understanding of knowledge, and how to put it together, how to deliver it, and all of that came with the cataloging. And it was really a very interesting job. Although nine out of ten librarians would tell you it’s boring, it isn’t boring. Again, you can read the book while you’re doing it. I mean, how can you get anything better than being paid to read? Anyway, we talked about that, but I don’t think copyright thrills anybody, either, although it has a great impact on us. And I think we really need to work on getting better rules for copyright in the digital age. They are working on it, but it’s very slow to move. All the people, like Disney, don’t want to give up any rights, and it’s too bad, because we can’t now have any of that literature for so long that you can’t use it in the way we could use old literature.

S: Well, I think people are confused by copyright.

M: They are confused.

S: And so having someone who is an expert on it, which you have been for a long time, I think we all count on you.

M: It was an interesting subject. I didn’t ask to do that. I was just invited to be—bluntly told no one else wanted to do it, “So please do it.” So I said, “Fine.” But it is a very

important subject for us, because our work is being pirated around the world, and there are many countries that don't honor anything to do with copyright. An author ought to know what is okay and what is not okay.

S: It's even more interesting now with all of the educational resources that are put together, and what can you put in your syllabus or your online course?

M: That's right. I've had people here who wanted to gather all their good articles and put them together in a book, and I say, "No, no, no, you can't do that unless you have permission." I said, "You just can't gather up anyone else's work." And the worst thing is authors giving [publishers] their copyright. When they sign the agreement, then the publisher owns it. It's their work, and they can't use it.

S: I think we're trying to change some of that with open access and such things.

M: Yes. And I think over time, there has to be a new and better way, because it's too difficult today. But those are subjects that interest me. I find it very interesting. I've talked to some copyright authors and editors, and it is a very tangled mess when you read it.

S: Well, I'm sure that you made it at least somewhat clearer to those students in those courses.

M: Yes, well, you had to go back to the basics. I went to one meeting about copyright, and they distributed a booklet that was full of pictures, and not one of them had permission. They didn't mean anything, but they really didn't realize that those pictures were not theirs to take. You can't give permission for somebody to use something that belongs to someone else.

S: So, in the past seventeen years, in addition to your teaching, you've also given lots of presentations to librarian audiences around the world. I looked up all of your presentations. You've gone from Boston to Washington, DC, to San Antonio, to Phoenix, to New Orleans, and as far away as London. Tell me, first of all, do you get nervous when you have to present to a group?

M: There's always a little edge of apprehension, because you think you're ready, and then you get there and you think, "Oh, I should have said this, and I should have said that." But once I get talking, I don't mind it. I do have to tell you the funniest one, I think, although I don't remember any of the details about it. But do you remember when we had the great debate?

S: With Herb White?

M: No. This was a talk between Bob Braude and me. I think it's in my list of presentations, but I don't remember what we were debating about. But Brett Kirkpatrick introduced me and Bob to the audience, and he said, "This is a debate between the

Energizer Bunny and Godzilla.” I thought that was the best description of us I had heard. [Editor’s note: McClure and Braude debated removing/replacing the reference librarian at the reference desk; the session was held at the MLA 1994 Annual Meeting in San Antonio.]

S: Now that you say it, I do remember it, because I remember that characterization.

M: It was so funny.

S: Do you remember anything else about any of these presentations, or about them collectively? Some things that might stand out in your mind other than that? Or which one you might think was the most significant presentation you gave during that time period?

M: It’s hard to say one or the other, because usually there was an emphasis at the time we were talking about. I’m very interested in the history of medicine and the value of it to students and other people, and I’m interested in all those library subjects about literature and the library itself and our responsibilities. So it’s usually talking about one of those kinds of things that I would be writing or talking about. And mostly it’s because somebody asked you, “Will you give a talk on X?”

S: Although you have these two things in your mind right now, so you have to...

M: Well, that’s right, but I haven’t got anything that’s jelled yet.

S: So we’re going to leave out MLA and NLM for now, since we want to focus on those separately. But you’ve served on or you’ve chaired local, statewide, and national committees or boards in the past fifteen years. For instance, the New York State Regents Advisory Council on Libraries or the Rochester Regional Library Council [RRLC], as president, or the steering committee of—oh, dear, what’s ALHHS?

M: Archivists and Librarians.

S: Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences. So which of these, or one or more than one, has been the most rewarding for you, and why?

M: Actually, all of them, because they’re all different. Now, the RRLC is our local organization, and I’ve been a member since it began in 1968. And I’ve also been a trustee for I don’t know how many years, but a long time. What I think is important is that this is an organization that covers all kinds of libraries. Now, mostly I’ve dealt with the medical world, but RRLC is an organization in this five-county area that covers school libraries, special libraries like museums, academic libraries, public libraries, business libraries. Any kind of library can be a member of the council. Its value is that we touch all avenues of life. I think it’s a great organization, because it does things in a cooperative way, and it buys things and everybody shares in the cost. That means little libraries in a small town can have access to databases and other things that they would

never have on their own. So the RRLC is one of the organizations that I really appreciate. I don't know any other state outside of New York that has these councils that are like ours. And the nine [regional] councils do things together, so it's broader than just us. But we are the best council...

S: Of course we are.

M: ...not only because we are on it, but because we have lay people, and all the other councils are made up of librarians.

S: Oh, so the others don't have boards of trustees with lay people on them?

M: No. They're mostly librarians.

S: I didn't know that.

M: Yes—except for me, we have a lay board. These people come from schools, they represent colleges or businesses or whatever, but they're not librarians, which means that they have a much broader viewpoint. Also, there's no competition, because we're not after... I mean, the councils have grant money to give, and the librarians who are on their boards can compete with their colleagues. We don't have any of that, because our people are not available to get grants to libraries. So I think we have a very strong library presence in Upstate New York, and I think other councils will agree that we have a very strong council. I think that was done because Harold Hacker was one of the founders, and he understood this very important part.

Now, the Regents [Advisory] Council [on Libraries] is a very different organization, because the Board of Regents in New York is extremely powerful. They control education and learning. We're a part of that, but we're not a very prominent part of that. So the Regents Council has to consider how we can get libraries to be supported by New York State.

S: Within the educational realm.

M: Within the education realm. And we haven't been terribly successful at bringing in big money. But it's very interesting to go and be a part of that, because on one day we meet with the regents, or the regents meet with us, so we have a chance to give some points of view. And it is a very broad...because it's people from all around the state. So you meet people who are trustees or you meet people who are heads of consortia. It's different from our kind of local group. It was interesting. When I was on that board, Janet Welch was the state librarian, and of course, she'd been the council librarian here before that. So it was very well done. You learn a lot about state politics, and the state library is heavily involved. It's a very interesting organization, but it doesn't affect us the way the [RRLC] does, because it's the local one. It was very interesting.

S: Let's make sure we cover honors and awards first, even those you may not want to talk about those.

M: There's no reason not to talk about it. I was privileged to have awards given to me. But the one with my name on it, I have no idea how that started.

S: You don't?

M: No.

S: I do.

M: Well, tell me.

S: Katy Nesbit.

M: Well, I had a feeling that Katy was involved, but I never knew for sure.

S: Katy Nesbit used to work here, as you know. I'm telling the listeners this. She was our education librarian. And she thought that you should have an award in your name, because you've been so important in MLA. So she did fundraising to put together an endowment fund that would be able to sustain an ongoing award in education, and she chose education, because she was an educator and because you were too.

M: That's right. And I taught a lot of classes for MLA back in the early days. Well, anyway, the president called me up and said, "You're going to get this award," and I was blown away. I didn't know it.

S: Well, you got your own award. You got the award that was in your name and that now is given to many others. [Editor's note: The Lucretia W. McClure Excellence in Education Award was established in 1998 by MLA and first awarded to McClure in 1999.]

M: Yes. It's a very nice honor, and I sort of thought Katy might have... But I wasn't sure.

S: How interesting. I thought that you would have known that.

M: No, I didn't really know for sure how it came about. Well, anyway, it was a surprise, and very nice to be honored. I think the honors that count the most are from your colleagues. You can get something from someplace, but to have your own colleagues do it is very meaningful.

S: Shall we move on to NLM?

M: Yes.

S: So you've been connected to the National Library of Medicine for many years.

M: Yes, I have, all these days.

S: You've served on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the NLM.

M: Yes, I still live there.

S: And of course you chaired the Literature Selection Technical Review Committee [LSTRC] in [2005/06]. So tell us about that particular experience. What was the committee's charge, who did you work with, and what do you remember most?

M: That literature committee was challenged to review the journals that were coming up requesting to be in MEDLINE. This is the group that gets together, and you have to review these titles and make a decision, and then the group votes on it. If you liked the journal and thought it was good—you had lots of things you measured it with, then you would present that to the group. Sometimes they would agree with you and sometimes they would not. It was a very, very interesting group made up of physicians, scientists, people in libraries, and people who were connected in some way with information. It was a very good committee, and I enjoyed that very much. I've been on it for a long time, and now that I'm not an active member of the committee, I get invited occasionally when they need help. So I have a continuing relationship with it. It just gives you a chance to meet people. I do a lot of reading in that library, because when you have free time, you can call up [materials] from the stacks. I look at journals I don't have and all sorts of things that they have. They have wonderful exhibits.

One of the things I did at NLM that was most interesting to me was I had a contract to survey their journal stacks. I was looking for titles that they didn't need to retain, and I worked with a lady there in the serials department. I had great fun because the stacks are not open, so you can't just go in there and run downstairs.

S: But you did.

M: But I did. I had a pass to get in so I could look at all the journals.

S: Do you know when that was?

M: No, but it was a long time ago. I used to go to Washington for several days and work in there. Anyway, that kind of thing was of interest to me.

S: That was fun.

M: Yes, it was fun. And of course I like to just go to the library and poke around and see Dr. Lindberg.

S: Yes, you have told me that Sheldon Kotzin and Dr. Lindberg were both influential to you.

M: Yes, because Sheldon was head of that committee [LSTRC] when he was still there, so I worked with him on that, and on other things too. He was one of the very good people I met there. And I knew Dr. Lindberg and his wife and we got to be very good friends too.

S: So you would just go up to the mezzanine and knock on his door and say hi?

M: [Laughter] He would always come to our committee, so we would see him there and often at dinner. So we had a good time. I don't know who's going to be the new head [of the National Library of Medicine after Donald Lindberg's retirement], so we're all waiting...

S: None of us do.

M: ...with a big interest of what's going to happen next.

S: Is there anything else about NLM that we didn't cover?

M: No, I don't think so.

S: So let's move on to MLA.

M: Well, of course, I've had a lot of experiences at MLA, and I like being in the annual meeting. I like to be on the board. I liked all the chapter areas that I've been to. When I was president [1990/91], I got to go to ten different chapters, so I had a great time seeing what people are doing around the country. It was a very interesting time for anybody to see.

S: Since 1998, the last interview, you have been part of copyright, you've been the parliamentarian, you've been in the History [of the Health Sciences] Section, you've edited or written a column "Honoring Our Past," and you've been part of the Fellows group. Do you want to talk about several of those and let us know what you thought was important about that?

M: Well, "Honoring Our Past" [column in *MLA News*] was kind of funny, because I think they went through the whole membership, and no one wanted to do it. So I decided that would be fun for me. And it is; I enjoy it very much. I look at something over a period of a year or two and try to find things that you would laugh at today or some of the things that you would be surprised at today. Also, of course, when I'm doing that, I have to stop and read a lot of the articles.

S: Which is your favorite thing.



M: Yes, it is my favorite thing. Our old journal really was very interesting. Now, it isn't like the one today.

S: You mean the BMLA [*Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*]?

M: The Bulletin, or the Journal [*Journal of the Medical Library Association*], as it now is called, which is much more focused on research. And I'm sorry, in a way, because the other one had so much interesting stuff that was not scientific, but it was so relevant at the time for the libraries.

S: Can you think of an example?

M: I'm not sure I can think of any examples, except that we had a lot of doctors who wrote on history, and I found that to be very interesting. There were many doctors in the original MLA who were members, and they were more important than the librarians at the beginning, because I think they held it together. Now our journal is focused on us being as equal as we can be to science. In some ways, I think it's too bad, because we don't have those kinds of papers that we used to get in the old journal, because they don't fit the mold. When you write about history or something, you can't really make a structured abstract with conclusions the way you do if you're doing some kind of research. But that's just my opinion from the past. We had more humor in the past in our journal. I think people said things that they would never write that way again in today's world, but it's fun to read. I try to find things that I think show us how we were fifty years or forty-five years ago.

S: Well, I know I enjoy reading your [column].

M: I have fun [writing] them, and since I know a lot of the people, I know who said that. Being on the Fellows [convening the MLA Fellows group] was another job that was given to me. The Fellows kind of died away at one point and then got rejuvenated many years ago. At the very first meetings we tried hard to find something that we should do as Fellows. What is the purpose of being a Fellow? Well, it's an honor, yes, but you're supposed to have knowledge and you're supposed to create something or do something. So our first thought was that we would write white papers, as people do, on a theme, and submit it to the Board [of Directors], and then it would be published as a paper from the Fellows. Well, we were blasted right out of our seats, because they said, "You're trying to take over the organization," and they would have no part of it. We were not going to write papers, and the board was not going to deal with us that way. So that idea went out the window. We struggled for quite a while trying to find a meaning. But it is a thriving organization today, and we do try to do things that support MLA and support librarianship and support individuals. So I think it's doing all right, but it had a very kind of stretchy [beginning]... People used to come to our meetings who weren't Fellows. They didn't know what it meant, so they would just drop in. It was kind of interesting in the beginning. But we finally got it organized in a way.

S: Well, and you were pretty much leading it during that time, right?

M: No, there were lots of big names in the Fellows. Al Brandon was there. I remember him speaking very strongly...and Erich Meyerhoff. There were lots of people who could have written very good [papers]... We didn't want to run the organization; all we wanted to do was write about issues. And I don't remember what year this was or who was on the board except that it was a resounding "No" to our suggestion. So we didn't do that and we don't do that to this day. But in many organizations, if you look it up, it's the fellows who tackle an issue and put forth a paper with suggestions, and you see that a lot in other organizations, but not ours. So I don't know.

S: I don't know. If that idea were floated again, maybe it would go somewhere now.

M: It might go through, but I don't know. It's an entirely different environment today. Anyway, but we did hang in there and it is a great organization to be a member of, because we are all more or less from the same generation—not me, but the rest of you.

S: What about your copyright and your parliamentary roles?

M: Well, I've given up the parliamentary because...

S: But just recently, right?

M: Yes. I couldn't go to MLA last year, so somebody else... And that's fine; I've been doing it a long time. Again, I think it was because nobody wanted to do it, so they finally asked me and I said, "Fine, I'll be glad to do it." I had to go buy a *Robert's Rules of Order*. I still have it, and I look at it now and again when I'm on a committee. Anyway, it was all right, because it made sure I went to the business meeting.

We used to have so much fun at business meetings. I wish the young people could see a video of one of our early business meetings, where we had people who stood up and argued and shouted and condemned. It was such a different organization. That's because we didn't have a strategic plan. When you came to the annual meeting, you brought your motions, and they were discussed at the annual meeting. And this committee would present a motion, and it would be discussed by the membership. We don't do that anymore, because it is carried through a different avenue. But we used to have a lot of people who were just full of crazy ideas. I remember one meeting when they wanted to take a vote against the war, and I don't know what they thought librarians against the war would do.

S: Was this the Vietnam War?

M: Yes.

M: But it didn't pass, because we have a strict rule that you have to provide your motions ahead of time, and this person had just thought of it, so it didn't work. But we did used to argue these things in our meetings, which gave us a lot more interesting

things than we do today. [Editor's note: A resolution cosponsored by sixty registrants at the 1970 Annual Meeting in New Orleans calling for withdrawal of armed forces from Vietnam was ruled out of order by the parliamentarian as not compatible with the charter; a two-thirds vote to overrule the president failed.]

S: So are you still part of the History [of the Health Sciences] Section?

M: Oh, yes. Yes, indeed. And I speak up because I'm the only old one there who remembers anything from the past.

I think it's an interesting thing, because so many of the medical schools today do not teach history. They may have, as we do here [at the University of Rochester], an organization, but they don't really teach it formally as a course. Some doctors teach it in their teaching. But we had a very active history of medicine group here years ago. There is a group still today, but I don't know that many students come to it, and that's too bad. We used to try to get students to participate. But we have such a fine collection. There's nobody in New York except the Academy [of Medicine] that has any kind of collection as good as ours, so it is really remarkable.

I really enjoy being part of that section, because we do get new people and we want them to be a part of... Most of the History Section librarians don't have great administrative control, so they're not in that part of the library. But they come to MLA and they meet with people who are directors and administrators and heads of departments, and it's a much broader way. And they need that; I think it's very important. But again, many of them don't have any funding or they can't do it. But the history meeting always has something interesting, and I've enjoyed being a part of that. Years ago, way back in the early years, most of the library directors came to it.

S: To the history meeting? No kidding?

M: Oh, yes. I remember a number of the lady directors of the libraries were always there. And gradually, as we moved from books to automation, they came to the automation information part rather than the history part.

S: That's interesting.

M: So it's very interesting to see the changes that have taken place. We had many doctors who used to come as well, and they don't anymore.

S: To the MLA meeting?

M: Well, they came to the History Section. But today we're more a part of ALHHS [Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences]—part of that organization as well as being in [MLA]. Some people don't come to MLA, because they go to the other. There are two organizations. The other one is strictly history, and of course MLA is not, so they have had to juggle both. But I think it's important, because

you have to know the history of where you are and how you got here and what your purpose is, and it's all there from the first days of Hippocrates.

S: You need to know the background.

M: You need to know it.

S: So, let's go on here. You may have some thoughts about MLA—specifically, suggestions for change. I'm wondering if you would like to talk about those—your insights related to the organization itself or relationship to library education—any of those things.

M: Yes, I would, because I think Estelle Brodman said years ago that we should be talking about what we need twenty years from now. And I can't even imagine what kind of automation there will be twenty years from now, because every single year we see a development coming.

My greatest concern today is about the education of librarians, because I feel like we should be an active part with our colleagues in the library schools. I've hired a good many young people over the years, and they're all good people, worthy people, but there are so many things they don't know that I think they would benefit from in preparation for working in a medical library. I think, for example, we should be a part of the review team that goes and looks at the medicine classes in library schools. I have no idea what they teach today other than computers. I don't really know what they do. But there were so many basic things that young people did not know when they came to work that I think they would have known had they had a class that developed this area. So I think we ought to be partnering with our colleagues in the library schools. We do have faculty who come to MLA, but I don't think we have anything to say about it [course content]—at least I don't know of any relationship directly that we have with them. I think we should have more contact with library schools.

I think the future of librarians is going to be directly related to more science. I think they need more biology; I think they need more genetics; I think they need more of what the medical schools are utilizing. I don't know that the library schools can do that or should do it, but I think we need to find out about it.

I think there are skills that we're going to need down the road, and I don't know that we're prepared for it. In the manual world you could teach everyone everything they needed to know and do, because you did it yourself and you could show them. That's not true anymore.

We're seeing libraries that are hiring non-librarians for their jobs. We see people who do our jobs and are not librarians, but they're doing what we do. We see people who are like Dr. Lindberg. The highest job in our land is held by a physician, because they view that as essential. But we don't do anything about this. We don't say anything. We're nice

people. We welcome everyone to the library. I think you look around and you see things that are happening that we don't have a part in, and I think we should have a part in that.

S: So you're thinking that MLA should have a more direct influence on library education.

M: Yes, I do. I think it would be great if we could partner with them and be interactive and have them come to our sessions, where we talk about what we need in the library today. If they get out of library school and think they have a job for life, that is wrong, because unless you keep learning, unless you keep growing, unless you keep adding new things to your skill set, you're not going to be a librarian ten years from now.

And it's not a job... It used to be that you could hide in the library for your whole career, and nobody would ever bother you. That was especially true of technical services. If you were not an outgoing, warm-hearted person, you could be a cataloger and never speak to anybody. And that was fine, because you were in the back room. No one ever came in there; nobody ever bothered you. That was great. Now you've got to face the public, and you've got to face people who are researchers, and they're not patient. They're not always kind. They're always demanding.

And that's our job. We should be right up there with them. Instead, I think we are not keeping up with where everything is going. I know part of it is lack of money, but I think we ought to be teaching more, speaking less, at our meetings, and doing things that open doors for librarians. So I think that's one thing that we could be doing right now that would help prepare us.

If we've had this much since I've retired, new stuff coming along... Just look at what we're doing today. Instead of that machine that they used to send out for the oral history, you have a little iPad, and it's taking our words. Just think—the changes in everything we handle. Every computer is different; every little database is different; every little thing is adding some quirk or another to what you do. Well, we're not doing that full force, and we should be. I think we should be the leaders.

One way I think we could change is—instead of having our annual meeting with all of us—we should be going to the other people's meetings and showing our wares. If we went to the surgical annual meeting, or the diabetes organization, or this organization, and show where we fit in as part of your team, I think we'd do much better. There was a speaker many years ago at MLA, a doctor, and I've never forgotten what he said, because I think it reflects on us. He said that the problem with the medical field is that the red corpuscle men speak only to the red corpuscle men, and the white corpuscle men speak only to the white corpuscle men. I think we should open our wings and embrace a much wider area than we do today. Our meetings are by us, for us, and about us, and I think we should be out there collaborating with areas like AMIA [American Medical Informatics Association] or ALA [American Library Association] or SLA [Special Libraries Association] or the law librarians or the education librarians or the veterinary librarians, and be ahead of the game instead of chasing it.

S: Well, you know, interprofessional education is a big thing in academic health sciences right now, and what you're suggesting sounds like you want to extend that to different kinds of library fields and have lots more discussions and interdisciplinary projects, probably.

M: I do think that. I do think we could learn from everybody, and I think that they could also learn from us. But we don't do it. I think we really do need to look at a broader area. Why don't we invite these people to meet with us? Why don't we do different kinds of things for meetings instead of what we're doing? I think that we have lots of colleagues out there in the world who don't know a thing about us, and we don't know a thing about them. I think we could do more. I think we ought to have more authors come and tell us what they're looking for in the library. I think we have all kinds of people who might benefit from us, but they don't know about us, because we don't really do anything with them. So that is my story for the world.

S: And you're sticking to it.

M: And I stick to it, yes. I don't think it would be hard to arrange... We don't have to plunge in the ocean first; we can take a dip in the river and try it out with some other people. But I think if you had a booth at the medical meeting, as all kinds of vendors do, they would be surprised.

S: Well, I guess there is some of that going on in the National Network of Libraries of Medicine booths that are exhibiting.

M: Yes, but mostly we don't do it, and we don't go to their meetings. I know they wouldn't listen to us talk about surgery, because we don't do it. But we could learn from them what it is that would help them the most. I think we ought to start doing that. I think we ought to write in non-library journals. I know that would be a tough nut to crack, but I think we should try it. I think there are lots of ways we could involve ourselves with other kinds of people that we serve.

S: All right. So I know that you've spoken at the MLA new members reception every year—for decades, I'll bet—and I know that you make a big impression on those fresh new faces. Can you summarize what you tell our newest members and discuss your thoughts about encouraging the new generation of librarians?

M: I really enjoy seeing them, because they're not all young people; there are lots of middle-aged people who also come into the library world. Many of them have worked in the library but have never been able to come to the association. I try to focus on two things. One is the value of MLA, and the value to them right off the bat is that they begin to have colleagues. So many times you get an email from somebody asking a question, and you think, don't ask that kind of person. You've got library colleagues who know exactly what that is. You need to go and have a group of people that you become acquainted with. And when you are at MLA, you go to a speech or a group of some kind

and you begin to meet people, and they're all interested in what you're interested in. I don't know a single person who wouldn't help you if you called up and said, "I need to know something about your community. Would you help me?" You would get 100% return. One of my colleagues of Valley Manor asked me a question about a person in—I don't know whether it was Arizona or New Mexico, or some place. I immediately went to a library there and asked the question, because I know somebody down there. And I said, "I've got a friend in practically—I used to have a friend in every place." I would say, "If it's about this area, I know somebody there who could help us." You could benefit from that greatly, because people ask you questions. I know how it is. First day I was in reference, I had no idea what to do. But I figured it out. I had colleagues. And as soon as you have friends in other places, you have an avenue of support. And every year you come to MLA you get more and more of them.

Also, talk about the value of what we do and our resources and what kinds of organizations we want to be, and the value of them contributing and learning to take on a chapter or a section. Be active. Do something. Get yourself involved. Even if you don't think you can write, write something. Speak somewhere. Do something that helps your library. Make sure that you're helping your own library people, and mix up with other libraries in your community—that kind of thing, to say you have a voice and you need to use it. And MLA will help you.

S: So those are your words of advice.

M: Yes. Advice is free.

S: But it's appreciated. I know that.

M: When you first go to MLA and you don't know a single person, practically, and you sit there with 500 other, 600 other people in a meeting and you think, "What am I doing here?"

S: Well, the way that you learn to know those people is the second thing you were talking about, and that is by getting involved and being on committees.

M: Being on a committee.

S: And then you know the people that were on that committee with you and you build your network.

M: And you start, and then the next year you meet them again. And pretty soon they're good friends, and they meet you with some other friends. And I said, "And you can go right up..." I'd point out, if she was there, to the president, and, "...speak to her. She can't hide herself away here. She's right here." And if you have any question, you can go to any board member and say, "I don't understand this." You can go to anybody in the office at MLA and ask, "What does this mean?" Be a part of it. Kick it around, if you will, but do something.

S: Very good. So do you have any big, overall thoughts about where medical librarianship might be headed in the future?

M: I think it's going to be more demanding. I think you're going to have to be more based in science, because if you're going to be an embedded librarian, or if you're going to be a clinical librarian, or if you're going to run a library, you have to have the skills that come with all of those arenas.

Not just library, but in every aspect there are ways to grow, and we've got to start showing people. If you think, when you graduated from library school, that you have a job for life and that you need no more education, then you'd just better pack up and go home, because that's not going to happen. And you better practice on new computers, bigger computers, better computers, whatever, because they're coming. And there are going to be other job people who are going to kick you off your pedestal if you don't have these skills. So I think it's a serious thing that we should be talking about and working on and preparing for a future that we can't envision.

S: We try to envision it.

M: That's right. We try.

S: We try all the time. We try to come up with those visions. But it's really hard.

M: That's difficult. Well, nobody expected that these things would happen the way they happened, but you can know that you're going to have to change and grow if you're going to be a librarian in the twenty-first century.

S: So I have a question—the last one, I think. Overall, how would you like to be remembered by the library community? Actually, it's two questions in one. And what do you consider your most important contribution? This is a tough one, yes?

M: It's very hard to talk about yourself. I'd rather talk about your contribution than mine.

S: But this is your oral history.

M: I think I would rather be remembered as a cataloger, a reference librarian, a serials librarian—any one of those things; as a person who liked the profession the way it was, liked the way it changed, liked the way it's going to change, and wants it to be a continuing growth area and that there will still be people who are librarians.

Now, somebody else will have to look at my contribution, but I just feel like we have a lot to offer and we need to make it known. I remember when I put in our newsletter that a journal on brain research cost \$20,000 a year. Now, this doctor wrote a letter to the dean and said, "There's no journal that costs more than a hundred dollars."



S: I've gotten that same comment.

M: So I went and I took the *Brain Research* journal, and on the page where it tells you what it costs, I took the copy down there, and I showed it to him. I said, "You know, this journal has 1,500 pages, so it's got a lot of stuff in it. But it does cost \$20,000 a year." At that time you could buy a car for \$20,000. He was just overwhelmed. He couldn't believe. We haven't done a good job of telling people what issues face the library, monetary issues like that, because many people cancel that journal right off the bat. They can't afford to buy it. If it's important, is it worth the money? Well, that's the kind of thing that I think we have to be careful about, because we should make it known. We're just too nice. We want to help everybody. So we hide our problems often, and we don't let the world know that we need *Brain Research*. In fact, we need it desperately right now, because there's so much happening in the brain. And yet, if we can't pay \$20,000, you can't have that journal. And despite that people think it's all online, it won't be on your line, because you don't have the money.

S: The other thing that people always said, when they realized how expensive the institutional subscriptions were, was, "Well, then use my copy. You can put my copy down in your stacks."

M: Do you remember that journal that used to have a stamp on the front of their journal that says, "Do not give this to your library"?

S: I didn't know that.

M: Oh, yes, and I could take you down in the stacks and show it to you, because I wrote them a letter and said, "We don't do that. We pay the full freight, so you do not need to say, 'Do not take this to your library.'"

S: But some of the physicians just couldn't understand why we're paying so much more than he is.

M: But we serve thousands of people, for heaven's sake. If you didn't take it in the library, how many people would take *Brain Research*? Zero, because they can't afford it. They couldn't even afford some of the \$700 journals or the \$500 journals or the \$13,000 journals that we have in this library. But it's sad, because the online story goes on: "You don't need any more money, because it's all online." It's the worst doom we ever had, because it doesn't help us one bit, and it's not online free; it's online if you pay for it. So we haven't done our job in educating people to the understanding of the issues that face a library today. If you want the best journals, then you have to pay the freight. And we're fighting all the time with these companies, trying to get them to move their price down to help us, but they have us under lock and key, because if you want it, you can't buy it on the open market. It's for sale only by that owner.

S: That's right. All right. Well, I think we remember you for many things, Lucretia, and we've got through a lot of them today. And we are pleased that you took the time to do this. It will be important to have this in the MLA archives—your second oral history interview. Did we forget anything to talk about? Are there any last words you want to have?

M: Well, I would just like to say I appreciate all the things that these organizations have done for us and for me, because when I came to the first meeting, I thought, I'm going to sit in the back row. I'm not going to look to the left nor the right. I'm going to stare straight ahead and pretend that I'm not here—because I didn't know anybody. And it's come from that kind of feeling to feeling like, even though I don't know everybody anymore, I feel like I can go to anybody and say, "I'm a fellow librarian, and can you help me?" I think that's an earmark of our organization, and it's a valuable one that we ought to nurture. And I just think we've got to look at ways to prepare ourselves for what is coming, since we don't know what it is.

S: What lies ahead.

M: What lies ahead is to be discovered, and I hope we're around to discover it.

S: Well, thank you so much. It's been a pleasure, and I am happy that I was able to do this. Thank you.

M: Thank you very much.

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## **Lucretia W. McClure**

### **Employment**

2012-	Librarian, Valley Manor Library
1996- 2011	Special Assistant to the Director, Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA
1986- 1993	Medical Librarian and Associate Professor of Medical Bibliography, Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY
1979- 1986	Medical Librarian and Assistant Professor of Medical Bibliography, Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester Medical Center
1964- 1978	Successive positions as Cataloger, Serials Librarian, Reference Librarian Associate Librarian, Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester Medical Center

### **Education**

1964	M.A., Graduate School of Librarianship, University of Denver, Colorado
1945	B.J., University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri
1972	Certification, Medical Library Association, Recertified 1982

### **Honors**

The Metzdorf Award, Friends of the UR Libraries, June 5, 2014  
Lucretia McClure Day, declared May 6, 2013 at MLA, Boston  
Named "Living Treasure" at UNYOC Annual Meeting, 2011  
MAHSLIN Hall of Fame, 2006  
Holloway Award for Contributions to the Profession, Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences, 2003  
Lucretia McClure MLA Excellence in Education Award, 1999  
Marcia C. Noyes Award, MLA, 1996  
MLA President's Award, 1995  
Fellow Medical Library Association, 1993  
Medical Librarian Emerita, Edward G. Miner Library, 1993

Distinguished Service Award, University of Rochester, 1992  
Fellow, Upstate New York and Ontario Chapter, MLA, 1990  
Distinguished Member, Academy of Health Information Professionals,  
1989  
Honorary Alumna, University of Rochester School of Nursing, 1988  
Janet Doe Lecturer, 1985 Annual Meeting, MLA

### **Library Consulting**

Welch Medical Library, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Baltimore  
Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston  
Health Sciences Library, State University of New York, Stony Brook  
National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD  
Library, National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, Washington,  
DC  
New York Public Library  
Moody Medical Library, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston  
Falk Library of the Health Sciences, University of Pittsburgh

### **Memberships**

Medical Library Association, 1965-  
Upstate New York and Ontario Chapter, MLA, 1964-  
North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries Chapter, MLA, 1996-  
Southern Chapter, MLA, 1990-  
Southwest Chapter, MLA, 2001-  
International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), 1982-  
American Association for the History of Medicine, 1973-  
Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences, 1973-  
MAHSLIN, 1997-  
Association of Academic Health Sciences Library Directors, 1979-1993  
Copyright Society of the U.S.A., 1983-1993  
Council of Biology Editors, 1985-1993  
Society for Scholarly Publishing, 1987-1993  
New York/New Jersey Chapter, MLA, 1985-1993  
Rochester Area Libraries in Health Care (RALIH), 1976-1993

### **Teaching**

*Copyright in the Digital Age*, University of Massachusetts Medical School, April  
10, 2002  
*Inside Medicine*, Countway Library of Medicine, 2002-2004  
Copyright Seminar, Archives Class, Simmons Graduate School of Library and  
Information Science, April 25, 2001  
Reference Seminars, Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information  
Science, April 7, 1999; April 4, 2000

Seminar on Collection Development, Fordham Health Sciences Library,  
 Wright State University, Dayton, OH, March 8, 1989  
 History of Medicine Seminar, Catholic University, Washington, DC,  
 November 1, 1989  
*Biomedical Materials: Selection, Acquisitions, Management*, CE Course at  
 Fifth International Congress on Medical Librarianship, Tokyo, September 30,  
 1985; IFLA, Chicago, August 17, 1985  
*Reference Issues and Resources*, Southern Chapter, MLA, Miami, October 13,  
 1984  
 History of Medicine Seminar, University of North Carolina School of  
 Librarianship, Chapel Hill, July 1, 1984  
*Inside Reference*, Miami Valley Librarians, Dayton, OH, March 2, 1981  
*Medical Skills Section on Library Resources*, University of Rochester School of  
 Medicine and Dentistry Course 410, 1977-1980  
*General Reference Works*, MLA CE Course, IFLA, Helsinki, Finland, September  
 5, 1979 (The first CE course for medical librarians taught in Europe)  
*Management of Reference Services*, MLA CE Course presented 35 times, 1976-  
 1996  
 Visiting Instructor, *Introduction to Biomedical Library and Information Science*,  
 School of Library and Information Science, University College of Arts and  
 Sciences, Geneseo, NY Summer Session Course, 1976-1982  
 Guest Lecturer, School of Information Science, Syracuse University, 1978  
 Visiting Instructor, University of Denver Graduate School of Librarianship,  
 Summer Session Cataloging, 1967

## **Professional Activities**

National Library of Medicine  
 Literature Selection Technical Review Committee (LSTRC), 2002-  
 Chair, 2005-2006

New York State Regents Advisory Council on Libraries, 2002-2008  
 Chair, 2005-2008

Medical Library Association  
 President, 1990/91  
 President-Elect, 1989/90  
 Immediate Past President, 1991/92  
 Parliamentarian, 1983-  
 Copyright Referent, 1983-  
 Convener, MLA Fellows, 1993-2011  
 MLA Ethics Task Force, Chair 2008-2009  
 Conference on Fair Use, Representing MLA and AAHSL, 1994-1997. Testified  
 At Public Hearing on Intellectual Property, September 22, 1994  
 Platform for Change Implementation Task Force, 1993-1995  
 Nominating Committee, Chair 1992, 1989; Member 1995, 1986



Task Force on Ethical Issues, Chair 1991/92  
MLA Archives Committee, Chair 1987-1990  
Bylaws Committee, Chair 1984-1988; Member 1983/84  
Strategic Planning Task Force on Honors and Awards Governance, 1983  
Finance Committee, Chair 1981-1983  
Board of Directors, 1980-1983  
Membership Committee, Chair 1975-1979  
History of Medicine Section, Chair 1978/79; Chair, Program Committee, 1983/84  
Medical School Libraries Section, Chair 1977/78; Strategic Planning Committee,  
Chair, 1988  
Ad Hoc Committee to Draft a Code of Ethics, 1985-1987  
Oral History Committee, 1988/89  
Ad Hoc Committee for the Cunningham Endowment, 1988-1993

Upstate New York and Ontario Chapter, MLA  
Chair, 1969; Committee on Education, 1978-1981

Association of Academic Health Sciences Library Directors  
President, 1985/86  
President-Elect, 1984/85  
Immediate Past President, 1986/87  
Legislative Task Force, Chair, 1990; Member 1985-1991  
Economics of Information Committee, Chair, 1991/92

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)  
Standing Committee, Section of Biological and Medical Sciences Libraries, 1987-  
1995

Friends of the National Library of Medicine  
Board of Directors, 1991-  
Committee on DeBaKey Award, Chair, 2000-

Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences  
Steering Committee, 2001-03  
Honors and Recognition Committee, Chair, 2001  
1986 Rochester Meeting, Program Chair  
Bylaws Committee, Chair, 1988  
AAHM Luncheon Program, Chair, 1988

American Association for the History of Medicine  
1986 Rochester Meeting, Local Arrangements Committee

New York and New Jersey Regional Medical Library Advisory and Planning  
Committee, Chair, 1981  
Secretary, 1977-1980  
Subcommittee on Education, 1975-1978

Research Libraries Group

Medical and Health Sciences Program Steering Committee

Chair, 1987-1989, Member 1985-1989

Biomedical Communication Network

Board member, 1976-1985

Advisory and Planning Committee, Secretary, 1976-1980

Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine

Resources Management Committee, 1985-1987

Statewide Continuing Library Education Advisory Committee, 1980-1985

Rochester Academy of Medicine Library Committee, 1979-1999

Rochester Regional Library Council

President, 2002-2005, 2011-

Board of Trustees, 1995-2005, 2006-

Automation and Technology Group

Chair, 1986-1989

Advisory Committee, 1979-1993

Chair, 1980-1993

Hospital Library Service Program

Program Advisory Group, 1984-1993

University of Rochester Committees

Executive Board, Friends of the University of Rochester Libraries

President's Commission on Benefits

University Libraries Council

GEAC Policy Board

Medical Center Education Committee

Medical Center Computer Assisted Instruction Committee

University of Rochester Library Trustees Visiting Committee

Saward Archives Committee

Friends of the UR Libraries

Executive Committee, 2011-

Executive and Acquisitions Committees

Countway Library of Medicine Committees

Electronic Resources Committee

Weeding Project, Chair

Fourth Floor Planning Group

Retro Steering Committee

Leader, Google Project

Leader, NEH Microfilm Project

## Editorial Responsibilities

Library News, Valley Manor Library Column, 2012-  
Countway Newsletter, 2001-2004  
ExLibris Column Editor, *The Watermark*, 1998-2004  
*Global Connections, Newsletter of the IFLA Section of Health and Biosciences Libraries*, Editor, 1994-2005  
Guest Editor, Millennium Issue, *Against the Grain*, 12, 2002  
*Health Sciences Environment and Librarianship in Health Sciences Libraries*,  
Editor. V. 7 of the *Current Practice in Health Sciences Librarianship*, 1999  
Editorial Board, *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, 1981-  
Cover Editor, *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 1985-1989  
Editor, *Copyright and the Health Sciences Librarian*, Rev. Ed. 1989

## Publications

### McClure, Lucretia W.

When the librarian was the search engine. *J Med Libr Assoc* 101:257-60, 2013  
Honoring our past, *MLA News*, monthly issues, 2013-  
Raymond Alford Palmer, 1939-2011. *J Med Libr Assoc* 100:234-35, 2012  
Advocating for history of the health sciences libraries and librarians: a position  
paper by the History of the Health Sciences Section, MLA. With MA Flannery.  
et al. *J Med Libr Assoc*. 98:9-11, 2010  
A student of history: perspectives on the contributions of Estelle Brodman. *J Med  
Libr Assoc* 96:255-61, 2008  
Personal recollections of the contributions of Estelle Brodman: an enduring legacy  
for health sciences librarianship. *J Med Libr Assoc* 96:239-41, 2008  
A curious mind. *J Med Libr Assoc* 93:197-8, 2005  
Cushing's way. *J Invest Surg* 17:181-3, 2004  
History sources. In: *Introduction to Reference Sources in the Health  
Sciences*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Edited by Jo Anne Boorkman (et al). New York:  
Neal-Schuman, 2004:327-43  
Take the lead. *The Leading Edge; Newsletter of the Leadership and  
Management Section, Medical Library Association* 15:1-3, August 2003  
A rose is a rose. *J Med Libr Assoc* 91:144-46, 2003  
Why we read. *J Hospital Libr* 3:3-9, 2003  
102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Medical Library Association. *Against the Grain*  
15:77-8, 2003  
History in Kansas City. *Against the Grain* 14:70-1, 2002  
Separate paths to greatness. *J Med Libr Assoc* 90:104-6, 2002  
Surgical information resource discovery. In: *Surgical research*. Academic Press,  
With Suzy Conway and Anna Getselman, 2001  
Standing on the shoulders of giants *Health Info Libr J* 18:153-5, 2001  
Lucretia's view: an interview with Lucretia W. McClure about medical reference  
through the years. February 25, 2000. Interview by Nancy W. Clemmons. *Med  
Ref Serv Q* 20: 1-10, 2001

A tribute to knowledge *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 89:81-2, 2001

Journals of the century in medicine and surgery. In: *Journals of the Century*, Edited by Tony Stankus. New York: Haworth Information Press, 2002:413-25

The toothache: imagined, realized ... and acquired. *Harvard Libr Bull* 11:57-9, 2000

The path to history *Watermark* 23:1-4, 1999-2000

From the past: historical resources and the virtual library *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 87:87-8, 1999

New directions for Miner. *Source* 5:1-2, 1998

An essay on reflection *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 86:251-7,

From ether to Bill Gates *MAHSLIN Newsletter* (electronic) 1998

Focus on fair use. *MLA News* No. 300:12,15, 1997

Fair use: worth fighting for. *MLA News* No. 292:22-23, 1997

Education for health sciences libraries In: *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* V. 60: Suppl, 23:64-82, 1997

Oral history interview with Lucretia W. McClure conducted by Christopher Hoolihan, 15 March, 1996 *Watermark* 19:99-102, Summer 1996

The pursuit of learning – still our job! *Against the Grain* 8:31, 1996

Libraries & copyright: a guide to copyright law in the 1990s. (Book review) *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 83:374-5, 1995

Preserving the balance: the value of fair use for our future *Acad Med* 70:606-7, 1995

Who needs history! (Letter to the editor) *Acad Med* 70:461-2, 1995

MLA and AAHSLD testimony on intellectual property and the national information infrastructure *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 83:252-3, 1995

From brick face to cyberspace *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 83:311-4, 1995

Libraries & copyright (Book review) *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 82:338-40, 1995

Still in print *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 81:325-6, 1993

Leadership: people count *MLA News* No. 258:23, 1993

Medical libraries: services to users. In: *World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services* Chicago: American Library Association, 1993:552-5

The importance of the New York State Journal of Medicine to the Medical Society. *NY State J Med* 93:150, 1993

Copyright law: know your rights *MLA News* No. 249, Oct, 1992

Old books in a new age: the role of a historical collection in today's medical library: from the perspective of a library director. *Watermark* 15:39-40, 1992

Bibliographic negligence (Letter to the editor) *Scientist* 6:12, 1992

The Vesalius connection ( Presidential address) *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 80:67-69, 1992

Edward G. Miner Library *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 79:75-6, 83, 1991

Financial threats to hospital libraries (Letter to the editor) *JAMA* 266:1219-20, 1991. With Robert J. Joynt and J G Marshall.

Focus on values *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 79:241-2, 1991

The potential for power (Inaugural address) *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 79:141-44, 1991

The last issue *Serials Libr* 19:3-11, 1991

Two opinions *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 79:101-2, 1991

Eliminating the requirement for medical libraries in hospitals (Letter to the editor) *NY State J Med* 90:77, 1990

Influencing our future *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 78:413-5, 1990

Remembering our history: the roots of knowledge *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 78:66-8, 1990

Selection for preservation: considerations for the health sciences *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 77:284-92, 1989

Comment on the Second Report on the Register of Copyrights: Library Reproduction of Copyrighted Works (17 U.S.C. 108) *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 77:74-6, 1989

From curiosity to knowledge: the role of the library in medical education *Pharos* 51:7-10, 1988

Support your library *Bioscience* 38:309, 1988

The copyright primer for librarians and educators (Book review) *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 76:82-3, 1988

The Billings connection *Watermark* 11:13-5, 1987

Copyright update *MLA News* No. 196:9, 1987

Information explosion and the nursing profession: suggestions from the library. *Dean's Notes* 8:1-3, 1987. With RA Palmer

Symposium on electronic publishing (Letter to the editor) *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 74:166, 1986

Copyright issues: a brief bibliography *MLA News* No. 185:8-9, 1986

Information and responsibility. In: *Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medical Librarianship*, September 30-October 4, 1985, Tokyo, Japan. Japan Organizing Committee ICML, 1984:423-7.

The promise of fruit ... light. The Janet Doe Lecture. *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 73:319-29, 1985

Response of the Medical Library Association to the Report of the Register of Copyrights to Congress: Library Reproduction of Copyrighted Works (17 U.S.C. 108). *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 73:66-9, 1985. With RA Palmer

World Guide to Scientific Associations (Book review) *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 71:359, 1983

Museum, a tribute to Dr. Whipple *Bull Monroe County Med Soc* September:30-1, 1983

Copyright law update *MLA News* No. 156:1, 1983

Reference services in the academic health sciences library: implications for the future *Bookmark* 41:69-74, 1983

Reference services: policies and practices. In: *Handbook of Medical Library Practice* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: Medical Library Association, 1982

Classics and other selected readings in medical librarianship *JAMA* 245:1681, 1981

Management of reference services: syllabus for *Continuing Education Course 128*. Chicago: Medical Library Association, 1976

*Fifty Years of Medicine in Rochester* Rochester: University of Rochester Medical Center, 1975

## Media

The confident path: a distance learning course in the History of Western Medicine (Video). Produced by the University of South Carolina. Moderated by Dan Barron with discussion by Lucretia W. McClure and Jonathon Erlen, 1997, 1998

On legislative activities (MLA Centennial Moment), 1998  
Oral history for MLA, interviewed by Ursula Poland, 1998

## **Presentations**

Seminar on copyright, Boston Biomedical Library Consortium, March 8, 2007  
When the librarian was the search engine, Health Sciences Library Association of New Jersey, 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Meeting. April 18, 2007, Manalapan, New Jersey  
The Sherrington School, Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, Phoenix, May 21, 2006  
Fully qualified; never appointed, Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, San Antonio, May 14, 2005  
A curious mind, Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, Washington, May 24, 2004  
Lecture on copyright to faculty at the University of Massachusetts, April 10, 2002  
A funny thing happened, Tri-Chapter MLA meeting, New Orleans, November, 26, 2001  
Class on copyright, Simmons College Course on Archives, April 26, 2001  
Separate paths to greatness, Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, Orlando, May 28, 2001  
Giants of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Eighth International Congress on Medical Librarianship, London, July 4, 2000  
UNYOC history: a centennial perspective, UNYOC Annual Meeting, Geneva, NY, October 15, 1998  
From ether to Bill Gates, MAHSLIN Annual Meeting, Lexington, MA, April 29, 1998  
From the past: response to Joseph Leiter Lecture, *The digital library: an Oxymoron?* By Dr. Jean Claude Guedon, NLM, May 12, 1998  
Copyright, intellectual freedom and fair use vs. publishing, resource sharing and Document delivery in the electronic era, NAHSL Annual Meeting, Burlington, Vt, September 30, 1997  
Knowledge and the container, EAHIL Fifth European Conference on Medical and Health Libraries, Coimbra, Portugal, September 19, 1996  
The mystery of access, UNYOC Annual Meeting, Buffalo, September 30, 1996  
The value of history, History of Medicine Society, SUNY at Stony Brook, March 2 1995  
The Great Debate: removing/replacing the reference librarian at the reference desk Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, San Antonio, May 18, 1994  
A perspective on image, Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, May 17, 1993  
Who ultimately defines customer service? UNYOC Annual Meeting, Toronto, October 8, 1993  
Old books in a new age: the role of a historical collection in today's medical Library—From the perspective of a library director. Medical Library Association

Annual Meeting, Washington, May 20, 1992

In defense of the book. Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, Washington May 18, 1992

On being a medical librarian. Medical Library Group of Hawaii, Honolulu, April 4 1992

The cost of our future. American Medical Publishers Association Annual Meeting, Princeton, NJ, March 3, 1991

On being a medical librarian. Alabama Health Libraries Association Annual Meeting, Guntersville, September 27, 1991

The potential for power (Inaugural Address). Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, Detroit, May 23, 1990

Remembering our history: the roots of knowledge. Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, Boston, May 22, 1989

Seminar on collection development, Fordham Health Sciences Library, Wright State University, Dayton, March 8, 1989

The economics of publishing and its impact on information dissemination. Association of Academic Health Sciences Library Directors, Chicago, November 14, 1988

Panel on serials pricing, New York/New Jersey Chapter, MLA, New York City, November 2, 1988

The Billings Connection. Cincinnati Health Sciences Library Directors. November 19, 1987

Wither books? Can Vesalius survive in the electronic library to come? George W. Corner History of Medicine Society, Rochester, NY, October 21, 1987

Electronic publishing. IFLA Roundtable of Library Journal Editors, Brighton England, August 19, 1987

From curiosity to knowledge: retirement event for Ursula Poland, Director of The Schaffer Library, Albany Medical College, June 18, 1987

Copyright and the medical librarian. Northeastern Indiana Health Sciences Library Consortium, Gary, June, 1987

The Billings connection. Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, May 18, 1987

Testimony at a Public Hearing on Copyright on behalf of the Medical Library Association, Library of Congress, Washington, April 8, 1986

All in the mind. UNYOC Annual Meeting, Buffalo, October 16, 1986

The view from Buffalo. Summary at the dedication of the new Health Sciences Library, SUNY at Buffalo, August 19, 1986

The electronic journal. UNYOC Annual Meeting, Rochester, NY, October 18, 1985

Information and responsibility. Fifth International Congress on Medical Librarianship, Tokyo, Japan, October 3, 1985

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