

SUMMARY

The interview with Isabel McDonald begins with her description of growing up in Canada. She was born in Vancouver, British Columbia. Her mother died in 1932, and Isabel and her brother were sent to live with another family. She describes how the Great Depression affected the family with whom she lived, noting that the mother was an excellent manager of scarce resources.

As a student, Isabel was interested in science, but also spent time working in school libraries. Although she started college at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, she graduated from the University of Toronto with a library degree in 1947. Following graduation, she worked a succession of library jobs, some in Canada, some in the United States, including a circulation and acquisitions librarian at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, work for the Vancouver (British Columbia) Medical Association, and the Stanford Medical School library.

Isabel was hired as a research librarian at the new Oregon Regional Primate Research Center (ORPRC) in Beaverton, Oregon in 1961. She shares her experiences setting up the library from scratch since the buildings housing the center were not yet completed at the time she was hired. She describes the staff at the library and at the center, including Dr. Donald Pickering, the ORPRC's first director. She notes that obtaining and cataloging serials was a large part of her job.

The interview continues with Isabel's explanation of how the Regional Primate Research Centers were created by Congress in order to conduct basic research on primate biology. The center in Oregon was the first of a series of centers built throughout the U.S. for this purpose. The University of Oregon Medical School was the host institution for the Beaverton facility.

The relationship of the ORPRC library to the University of Oregon Medical School Library is examined, in particular the sharing of resources and technology. In 1963, Isabel became the head librarian at ORPRC, and in addition to her other duties, she was responsible for the library budget. Also discussed is the incorporation of new technology into the library in the early 1970's.

Isabel created and maintained a special index to the research literature in primatology. Isabel next discusses the primates themselves and some of the topics of research conducted on the animals. This leads to a discussion of how animal rights issues have affected the ORPRC. Isabel comments on security at the facility during protests, harassment by protestors, and researching national animal rights leaders.

In closing, Isabel summarizes her administration of the library up to 1990, the year of her retirement.

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Interview with Isabel McDonald
Interviewed by Heather Rosenwinkel
December 8, 1997
Site: Isabel McDonald's home
Begin Tape 1, Side 1

ROSENWINKEL: This is the first tape of an interview with Isabel McDonald, now retired from the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center, where she was a librarian from 1961 to 1990. This tape is being recorded on Monday, December 8, 1997. The interviewer is Heather Rosenwinkel.

Well, Isabel, I'm going to start off by asking you about your personal history. I gather you grew up in Canada. Could you tell us where you grew up and what you remember a little bit about your childhood and growing up?

McDONALD: Well, I was born in Vancouver, B.C. My parents were living in a small town, Powell River, B.C. My mother took ill when I was seven, and I never saw her again. We lived in Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia for a year and a half, and I also had some of my schooling in Vancouver, B.C. Part of my high school training was there, and also, then, in another town on the coast called Ocean Falls, where I continued my high school education. I then went to the University of British Columbia to seek my BA degree. Then, following that, I went to the University of Toronto, where I received my bachelor of library science degree. Is that...

ROSENWINKEL: That's enough, yeah. There's only one thing I wanted to ask. You grew up, partly at least, during the [Great] Depression years.

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, what effect did the Depression have on you and your family? Oh, you haven't told me what your family consisted of yet, either.

McDONALD: Oh, okay. I have a brother who is five years younger than I am.

ROSENWINKEL: So you're talking about your father, yourself, and your brother.

McDONALD: Yes. It was just the three of us in the family from 1932 on.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let's get back to the effect of the Depression. Do you have any remembrances of the Depression and the effect of that time?

McDONALD: Oh, yes. At first it didn't affect us because my father, although he wasn't working when we lived in Nova Scotia, had enough money saved for that respite that he took. But then, in the late thirties, we came back to Vancouver. My father had to find work, and that was a very difficult time. He had us stay with friends of his that he had known in Powell River, and I lived with that family roughly—and my brother—probably two or three years.

Times were very hard during that period. The family we lived with did not have a single breadwinner, either, but the mother in the family was a great person who managed to stretch everything. And as I grew older, there were three children younger than myself: my brother and two of the daughters of that little family. As I learned to sew, I was then remaking clothing for them, castoffs, or should we say outgrown ones by the two older sisters who were in their very late teens. So I learned a lot about sewing. I learned a lot about managing, too. The lady whose family I stayed with would even find something to help less fortunate families who had run out of everything, food of all kinds, by the end of the month.

ROSENWINKEL: So she was an excellent manager, then.

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSEWINKEL: And fitted in well with this family?

McDONALD: I think so. I learned also to work. It was sort of hard for me, since I didn't have an older brother or sister. There was an older brother in that family who teased me a lot and—but we had lots of jolly times because the lady, whose name was Lucy Smith, was an improviser, and she would have, what shall I say? We used to have a lot of sing-songs. She played the piano, and it was jolly, and she always had a funny story, I think, every single day, which was so wonderful for, well, her husband, I think, who could not find work. And he did not find work until 1939, when the king and queen came from England to Vancouver. The war, of course, started in late 1939.

ROSEWINKEL: Then you moved from here?

McDONALD: No, not until 1940. One year later I moved—my father began working in Ocean Falls, and once he was able to get a house for us, or an apartment for us, we were sent up there.

ROSEWINKEL: So you were reunited as a family then?

McDONALD: Right.

ROSEWINKEL: Now, I note that you did go to Toronto eventually, and I'm curious about why you chose Toronto and why you chose librarianship out of all the occupations in the world.

McDONALD: I believe I started working in libraries in grade eight, but I have to say that during the years that I lived with this family, whose last name was Smith, we didn't have money for streetcars, and I walked a long way to the main public library in Vancouver. So we were library users from early on. Then, in grade eight there was an opportunity to help out in the school library, and so I took that, and I believe that I probably helped out in the libraries in both high schools I attended. And also I worked—this time I was paid—at the

university. I worked in the reference department, and I was paid by the hour for the □

ROSENWINKEL: At the University of Toronto?

McDONALD: No, this was British Columbia.

ROSENWINKEL: How did you get to Toronto, then?

McDONALD: Oh. I'm trying to think. Okay. At first I thought I was going to be a chemist. I wanted to be in science. That was the thing. After my second year at the university I decided I was not going to make it as a chemist. My grades weren't good enough, I wasn't applying myself, and in those days you simply did not get into a science position unless you were the top person in the class. You know, that was a time when women had very few opportunities, and so since I had the library background, that seemed to be a good choice for me. Also, in the co-op house where I lived there was another person who was going to library school, who graduated the same year, and who went to Toronto. I had wanted to go to McGill because it concentrated on special libraries, and she wanted to go to the University of Toronto, which was a more basic thing and was more for public libraries. In the end, I think it was a better place for me to have gone, even though the emphasis was not on special libraries. But there was one course, an elective that I had, on special libraries, and so that's my reason for becoming a librarian.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, what year did you graduate from the University of Toronto?

McDONALD: Nineteen forty-seven.

ROSENWINKEL: And, then, I gather, you eventually came to the States. What circumstance made you come to the States, to go from Canada to the States?

McDONALD: I was just trying to remember. I came to the United States twice. I had worked three years at the University of British Columbia, and in 1950 I came down to Portland. For me, there wasn't a lot of future in Vancouver. I was working at the university, and I wasn't particularly interested

in the public library, and there weren't things like special libraries, but I didn't want to be too far away. So I looked at jobs at both Seattle and Portland, neither of which was far from Canada, and it was much easier than trying to go to another part of Canada, where I would have been much farther away and it would have taken much more time to get back to Vancouver. So I came to Portland and worked at Reed College. We had some Reed College graduates working at the university that year, and one of them was in the library, so I got to know her, and she's the one who told me about Reed College. And I came here.

ROSENWINKEL: So what type of position did you have, then, at Reed College? What did you do?

McDONALD: I was the circulation librarian.

ROSENWINKEL: (Inaudible)?

McDONALD: Yeah. I handled all of the—well, the library is very heavily used there. I also helped with acquisitions.

ROSENWINKEL: So you did a variety of things.

McDONALD: Oh, and I did exhibits. We had done exhibits at the University of British Columbia also.

ROSENWINKEL: When you arrived in 1961, I know you became the “librarian” at the Primate Center. What led you to the Primate Center, then?

McDONALD: Oh, in between I had—my previous position was with the Vancouver Medical Association in Vancouver, B.C.

ROSENWINKEL: You had gone back from Portland after □

McDONALD: No, after Reed I worked for Multnomah County Library for one year, then I worked at Stanford Medical School for four years, then I was recruited for this job at the Vancouver Medical Association, and I was there for four years. It was a program that was being explored, and in the end succeeded, became supported by the doctors up there. It had been supported by

the doctors in the city, but by this time we had managed to convince the doctors all over the province to support it financially.

So, then, I guess it's just the same thing. I didn't want to be too far away from Vancouver, basically, so—I think I was wrong about Seattle. It was at *this* time that I looked at jobs in Seattle, as opposed to Portland.

ROSENWINKEL: Was this a new position that was created at the Primate Center?

McDONALD: Well, the Primate Center was brand new.

ROSENWINKEL: Oh, it was.

McDONALD: It hadn't officially opened yet; the buildings were not completed. And, in fact, I was not the first librarian. The first one was Margaret Jean Hooper, and I was hired as a research librarian. She came in August, and I came in the middle of October.

ROSENWINKEL: And how did that work out, she being the librarian and your being research librarian?

McDONALD: Well, Dr. Donald E. Pickering met—the day I came out to look at the Primate Center, he—Dr. Don Pickering was the first director. He had come from the University of Oregon Medical School. I was looking at opportunities, so I met him there, and I don't know whether he or she cooked this up, but they decided to offer me a visiting scientist position. And if you look at the record in the *Primate News*, it doesn't mention me, but at that time I was the first visiting scientist. And we did certain things that I was supposed to do, like giving reports. It was a wonderful opportunity because it gave me a chance to get caught up on my professional literature. We were establishing a brand new library; I had never had that experience before of actually helping start a library, the decisions that have to be made, such as classification, what classification scheme are we going to use here.

ROSENWINKEL: None of this was established when you arrived?

McDONALD: No. No, not at all.

ROSENWINKEL: You were going into a new building?

McDONALD: At first, we didn't have a place. We were put in an apartment up near the Medical School. We didn't move out to the Primate Center until March, I think, of 1962. We tried to move part of the furniture I think in February, and there was a snowstorm, so we had desks in one place and chairs in the other place, and we had to wait a couple of days to get them together.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, what kind of building did you move into?

McDONALD: We were put into what's now called the Administration Building. It was housing the business office, the director's office, the cafeteria, the computer, all the automated data processing.

ROSENWINKEL: But the computer was for the business affairs, I assume, of the Primate Center.

McDONALD: To tell you the truth, I don't know. I think it may have been what became, at least later, animal records, as well as business office. So I don't know what the initial thing was. Also, that department was going to train us in programming. We had classes in programming at that time. But the thing—the thought in 1961—I don't know if people remember the *Desk Set* as a movie and as a play. That indicated that libraries might be on their way out, totally.

But the computing in those days was so different because there were huge, monstrous machines, and the FORTRAN—we learned FORTRAN. But everything was a keypunch kind of thing. We had to manipulate these crazy machines. So it was rather, you might say, a primitive form of computer.

ROSENWINKEL: So we have you in a physical building, and we have you working as visiting scientist. What other staff did you have at this point?

McDONALD: There was a secretary. Mrs. Natalie Shump was the secretary.

ROSENWINKEL: And what about your—which kind of services did you run in the library?

McDONALD: Well, we didn't have an awful lot at first, because everything was just getting started. Dr. West, E. S. West, who had been the head of biochemistry at the Medical School, I believe, was a codirector, or he was one of the original applicants. He and Dr. Pickering, together jointly, I think, applied for this Primate Center, for the Congress to start this Center. As a biochemist, he had extensive journal files in his field, and he happily donated them all to the library. We had *Chemical Abstracts*, we had *JBC*, I think, we had *Journal of the American Chemical Society*. Anyway, they were major things. It was very helpful. And so initially, Mrs. Hooper was busy getting that stuff bound. It was unbound. There were some other donations a little later. It was mostly getting started; you know, buying furniture.

ROSENWINKEL: So really basic.

McDONALD: Absolutely.

ROSENWINKEL: And that's what would make it exciting, I would think.

McDONALD: And what they had first—now, Dr. Pickering liked wooden shelves, and, of course, we didn't care for wooden shelves, but he had some made that were about—how high would that be? Four feet?—and that's what we started with. But as soon as we were able to, we got steel shelving.

ROSENWINKEL: And you also started services like interlibrary loan, reference services, and traditional things a library would do?

McDONALD: Yes, as much as we could. We really probably concentrated more on getting the serials list.

ROSENWINKEL: That was the most important thing?

McDONALD: Very important then, yeah. Everything just had to be started from scratch.

ROSEWINKEL: How important was the book collection to the Center?

McDONALD: Over all the years?

ROSEWINKEL: No, just the beginning.

McDONALD: That, I don't even remember. I don't know what we even had. I don't think—no, not too important, although that—it was to be my job to be cataloging them.

ROSEWINKEL: Oh, you had had extensive experience at that point in cataloging.

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSEWINKEL: So that was your specialty, then?

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSEWINKEL: As well as doing reference, for instance?

McDONALD: Oh, yes.

ROSEWINKEL: Well, you mentioned Dr. Pickering as the first director of the Primate Center. In what way did he support the library?

McDONALD: It's hard to say, really, because I remember in those first very few years for some reason we had no funds.

ROSEWINKEL: You had no funds.

McDONALD: Right. And Dr. Clarissa Beatty and Dr. Ruth Peterson were able to transfer some of their monies to the library to keep the journal collection, to get it started.

ROSEWINKEL: Well, that's very extraordinary—to establish a Primate Center and then to have library personnel, and not have the operating funds to continue buying journal subscriptions.

McDONALD: I guess I could say more, but I won't. I think he was not really supportive of Mrs. Hooper. That was the problem.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, our listeners are—people who will listen to this do not know, really, what a Primate Center is or how this chain of Primate Centers across the U.S. was established, so could you give us a very short history of how the Primate Center here or the Primate Centers in general were established and why they were established?

McDONALD: Well, they were established by the Congress because it was felt that more basic research needed to be done, and since the primate is the same—I mean, we are primates, and to have these other primates there, we would have models to work with. And the idea was not so much to cure disease as to learn about the basic biology of the primates. Well, that, and—yeah. Our emphasis always was really on the normal rather than the diseased state, although later on people did work on them, but it was still basic material.

ROSENWINKEL: So you do basic research, is what you're talking about?

McDONALD: Right. I have never read the original material that established this, but later on there were six more centers. Within the next two or three years there were three more, I think. So the whole program got going really fairly soon after we did, but we were the first.

ROSENWINKEL: Why was the Pacific Northwest, or Beaverton, in particular, selected, as opposed to any other place?

McDONALD: That, I have no idea, and I think the people in Seattle were surprised because we—Dr. Theodore Ruch, up there, was a known primatologist who had a book on—a bibliographic-type book on primates. And it's still a surprise to me that he wasn't awarded the first one, but he did get the second one, and it was shortly after we got it.

ROSENWINKEL: So there was a great deal of activity in the early sixties, then...

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: ...on establishing Primate Centers?

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: ...(inaudible) to bring this field to the fore.

McDONALD: Right.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, your library at the Primate Center is called a special library. I've heard it categorized that way. Is it a special library, in your estimation?

McDONALD: Oh, I think so.

ROSENWINKEL: And why would you call it special?

McDONALD: Well, we have a specialty, primates, so one of our collection goals was to get as much primate literature as we could.

ROSENWINKEL: So you have a subject specialty.

McDONALD: Yes. But, of course, in actual fact, the literature was not used all that much because most of these people were anatomists or physiologists or whatever.

ROSENWINKEL: Biochemistry books?

McDONALD: Yes, at first. That was not so important later on as it was at first. Biochemistry supported reproductive physiology.

ROSENWINKEL: You've mentioned journals especially as very important, and I know at Oregon Health Sciences University they have many journals in biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, et cetera, the basic sciences and the chemical sciences. What relationship, in the early sixties, did you have with the OHSU, with the library at OHSU or in general with OHSU?

McDONALD: Well, Bertha Hallam was the librarian at that time, and as people will remember, she was, I would say, a very service-oriented person. At

first I wondered what our relationship would be with that library, and I know that Mrs. Hooper would, of course, have discussed this before I ever came there, but I wanted to know too, and it appeared that we would be independent of the Medical School library. But they were such cordial relations. The library staff wanted to help us as much as possible and allowed us to come up and go through duplicates and various things to start building the library up. At first, you don't have very much, so you definitely have to depend on a larger library to supply things for you, and so we had a lot of interlibrary loans.

The thing that's so interesting, and hard to believe today, but when we needed material, we used to phone up there, and the person up there would be writing down all the things we needed. We didn't have proper forms. But it seems ludicrous today to even think of such a thing, because nobody has that kind of time to be reciting it over the phone or to be writing it down.

ROSEWINKEL: But we didn't have computers or anything like that.

McDONALD: Oh, no, no, no. We didn't even have photocopying.

ROSEWINKEL: Well, what did you do?

McDONALD: Well, the journals would be sent out.

ROSEWINKEL: The physical journal was sent to the library?

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSEWINKEL: So you had a courier service or some kind of pickup service.

McDONALD: Yes. I don't remember the first one now. One of the major things that we had to do with the library was determine how to convey them, and we had one of our—one of the men who went up there regularly to pick up other things besides books decided he would design a sack for us, much like a postman's big sack. It was made of leather, and it may still be used. No, I guess we went to something else later on, but that was an important thing.

You asked me before what the relationship was, and I forgot to mention

to you that Dr. Pickering had said that even though Mrs. Hooper was the librarian and I was the research librarian, that we would be equal as far as the administration was concerned, that I would have exactly the same travel benefits as she did, for instance. And in the first year, of course, she went to convention and I went to convention.

ROSENWINKEL: Oh, you both went to the Library Association meeting.

McDONALD: She also went to Special Libraries, but I didn't want to go to that.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, eventually I know you became the librarian, the head librarian. When did that happen?

McDONALD: In the fall of 1963.

ROSENWINKEL: And what responsibilities did you have then that were different from what you had previously?

McDONALD: Well, I had responsibility for the whole library, because Mrs. Hooper had been given another position and she wasn't replaced.

ROSENWINKEL: So you had one secretary...

McDONALD: Well, by this time I think we just had one full-time assistant, not a secretary.

ROSENWINKEL: So you had administrative duties, you had reference questions to answer, cataloging, all these things...

McDONALD: And the budget too, of course.

ROSENWINKEL: Oh, yes. It seems like a big plate, a lot of time and energy and long hours, and so forth. Is that correct?

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Let's move on to 1974. This was when the primate

library was well established, I would think, by then, and this is when, on Marquam Hill, the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center was created. Previous to that, the Schools of Dentistry, Nursing, and Medicine had been separate entities with their own separate deans, and it was felt in the medical community in general that it would be better amalgamate these and create a new position of the presidency. So the Health Sciences Center got a new name, the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, and also got Dr. Lewis Bluemle as the first president. How did this amalgamation of these schools and this new organization affect the Primate Center?

McDONALD: Well, I don't remember—if it did, I would not know. But as far as the library was concerned, there was no change that I can recall. The relationships were always—almost always very good with the Medical School library. I mean, we depended on them, and they were helpful in every way they could be.

ROSENWINKEL: In the early seventies we have a new technology coming in, like the AIM-TWX, which was the predecessor to Medline and other online databases. We also had photocopy machines and so forth. How did those new technologies affect the Primate Center library?

McDONALD: Well, I believe that the Medical School library—I'm not sure about the AIM-TWX thing, whether we actually—whether they did it or whether we went directly to someplace like UCLA. I'm not sure. I believe that it must have been two months before we got anything back.

ROSENWINKEL: You're talking about a request that you sent?

McDONALD: Yeah. I think it went to Los Angeles.

ROSENWINKEL: So you sent a request to UCLA on a particular problem...

McDONALD: That's what we were supposed to do.

ROSENWINKEL: ...and, then, they used this AIM-TWX, which was a teletype technology, and then you got the answer back a couple of months later.

McDONALD: Yeah. It did not impress us. Photocopying I'm sure made a difference.

ROSENWINKEL: That would mean we wouldn't be sending you the journals...

McDONALD: Not necessarily.

ROSENWINKEL: ...but we would be doing the service for you, is that correct?

McDONALD: Yes, I think so. But often, sometimes, in later years we would just get the whole volume.

ROSENWINKEL: I can remember you, Isabel, coming up to the OHSU, as it's now called, with very esoteric questions and very strange things that most of us had never heard of. Could you give us an example of that kind of thing?

McDONALD: Sure. In the early days we had a person with a master's degree in parasitology. He wasn't hired there as a parasitology. He was very interested—he worked in the animal area, and he would want material. Well, we had very little at the time—later got more—but you had a reference tool that was very helpful to me. It was in the room upstairs that was locked off. It was reference materials that you didn't want to get rid of but didn't use very much. And so I was delighted that you had it, and I was able to use it to verify the citations of the material he wanted on interlibrary loan.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1/Begin Side 2]

McDONALD: ...translate a different word in another language. That was no barrier at all.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, it sounds to me as if you had very specialized requests, a specialty in primatology as well as a variety of requests from, perhaps, foreign scientists as well as your own scientists.

McDONALD: We had a lot of visiting scientists, too.

ROSENWINKEL: Can you tell us a little bit about that?

McDONALD: Right from the time Dr. William Montagna came as director we had a very active visiting scientist program. He, himself, I think, arranged for a number of men to come from Japan, in his own field. Also a few came from Italy. But there were other scientists from other countries who came to use us as a place to study or even use our little, modest library.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, I'm sure it wasn't just modest in the middle seventies as when you started.

McDONALD: Oh, no, because the one thing I ever wanted was build up the reference collection.

ROSENWINKEL: The book collection.

McDONALD: No, the reference collection, the indexes, the bibliographies. Since I had been a reference librarian also, I knew the value of these things, and I felt handicapped without them. So that was something that I felt was important for that library.

ROSENWINKEL: I know one of your major contributions over the years was the primatology index that you...

McDONALD: Oh, yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Could you tell us a little bit about that?

McDONALD: We started very early on to index articles on primates that appeared in journals that we had in our library. It was restricted to that; it wasn't what might be somewhere else, but what we actually had. In those days there was really no way to duplicate the material, so we used about five slips, put carbon paper between them, and made three or four copies of it. There would be one filed by the first author, one by species if there was a prominent species in it, and the third one would be by subject. It seemed to work pretty

well, even though it was a lot of work.

ROSEWINKEL: It sounds like a tremendous amount of work.

McDONALD: It was a lot of work.

ROSEWINKEL: You're identifying the journal article and then you're typing it up, I would think?

McDONALD: Yes. And we often were given outside help, I mean from—some other secretary would type them up, so it meant a lot of checking.

ROSEWINKEL: How long did this project continue? We're at the middle seventies, now. Is it up to the present date?

McDONALD: Oh, yes, and it has changed a lot. It's now all on computer. They're still putting in the older material that I had done, it's going into the computer program, but it's been expanded to everything they can get their hands on, and chapters in books. It's very valuable. But we only did what we could manage to do.

ROSEWINKEL: So you were not absolutely comprehensive?

McDONALD: No.

ROSEWINKEL: You geared this to the needs of the Primate Center itself?

McDONALD: Yes. But it was still extremely valuable. I remember one time when I was at the convention Dorrie Towne, who is my successor, had a call from the University of Minnesota regarding oxygen, or something, levels. She went to the file—I wasn't there—and found it, you know. It was just wonderful, and impressed the people in Minnesota so very much. So even though it was very broad, once in a while there would be a more specific subject. Now, of course, it's much, much more valuable.

ROSEWINKEL: I bet, especially for the retrospective. Nobody else was doing this, as I recall.

McDONALD: Right. And you have to have it. For instance, when B virus, or Ebola virus was found in a monkey at the zoo here, I was called by somebody at the state—at the state level, I think, about this, and the librarian had said she had gone into Medline, and I said, “Well, it’s not going to be there.” The literature was before that, but in the time that I was there, and I remembered indexing it.

ROSENWINKEL: (Inaudible.)

McDONALD: Yes, it was useful.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let’s pass on to Dr. William Montagna, who was, I know, a longtime director of the Primate Center. What were his interests, and how did he support the library?

McDONALD: Oh. Well, of course, when he came, that changed probably the subject areas somewhat at the Primate Center. We were not into the basic biology of skin at that time, but with him coming, we certainly became involved, and he was very generous about donating books to us in his field, because he received often things from his colleagues, and he thought they were better placed in the library. I would say that on the whole he was extremely supportive of the library, and he did make a lot of use of the library.

ROSENWINKEL: That’s a wonderful situation to be in.

McDONALD: Yes. He would not allow me to have a library committee, though.

ROSENWINKEL: And you wanted one?

McDONALD: Yes. In a sense, yes. I always thought library committees were good things to have. But he did, in a sense, did give me somebody, and that was Dr. Ted Grand, who certainly helped me, particularly with the historical books that we purchased with some monies that had been given to us.

ROSENWINKEL: On primates?

McDONALD: Yes. It was historical primatology books.

And I would say more than that. When he knew he was going to retire, he was concerned that the library had really outgrown its space, and he wanted us to have more space, and he felt that a successor, whoever that would be, might not support the library to the degree that he would, so he saw to it that we got to move downstairs, and we got more space that way.

ROSEWINKEL: When was this?

McDONALD: It would be early 1980.

ROSEWINKEL: So it's wonderful to have a person, a director, especially, who has so many responsibilities for a large center like this, to be very supportive of the library.

McDONALD: Oh, yes.

ROSEWINKEL: But that's not always the case.

McDONALD: No. Well, he really did know the value of it. And I have to tell you that when he first came, he used to talk about a Mrs. Carson, who had been the librarian he used most at Brown University, which is where he had come from. So I kept thinking, gosh, he keeps comparing me to Mrs. Carson. I wonder if he'll ever think if I'm as good as she is? I was very happy to meet her at a Medical Library Association convention in subsequent years, and so we had a great time talking about this. But after a couple of years, I think he felt I was as good as Mrs. Carson (laughter).

ROSEWINKEL: That's wonderful.

McDONALD: And I was very happy.

ROSEWINKEL: Well, technology does not stay still; neither does the Primate Center or OHSU. I want to talk a little bit about—or ask you a little bit about—the time between, let's say, the late seventies and the eighties. This was a time when Dr. Leonard Laster became the president of the University, and from what I have read, he wanted more funding for OHSU, and he wanted more combination between the public sector and the medical sector; in other words,

town and gown to amalgamate. And he especially wanted more extended research for the University. What effect did some of these goals have on the Primate Center in general?

McDONALD: I don't think that they had a great deal of effect. Not as far as I could see.

ROSENWINKEL: So during this time period, then, we still have the Primate Center as being its own entity with affiliation ties to OHSU, but no integration or anything like that?

McDONALD: Not a formal integration, although the Primate Center—I should say the Medical School was always the host institution, and all of the Primate Centers had to have a host institution. The administrative arrangements were different with every one, though, I think, depending on whether it was on the same campus or some distance away or something like that. But there was a lot of back and forth with the Medical School all through the years. A number of our scientists taught classes up there.

ROSENWINKEL: So there was an integration, then, to some extent?

McDONALD: Well, there was certainly cooperation.

ROSENWINKEL: Cooperation would be a better word.

McDONALD: And there was with the library, too. You know, we would sometimes have journals that the Medical School didn't have, for instance.

ROSENWINKEL: So the OHSU library would borrow from you?

McDONALD: Occasionally, yes. Definitely.

ROSENWINKEL: Now, there's one thing we haven't mentioned in our discussion so far, and that is about the primates themselves. What kind of primates did you have that the scientists did their basic research on?

McDONALD: Okay. When the Center first started we actually had some juvenile chimpanzees. They were there for a few months, but they decided they

would not use them as models because they took up too much space and too much manpower. So from then on, all of the primates that we had were below the level of apes. They were the monkeys and, then, the prosimians. The prosimians are the very— much more simple kind of primate. We had a variety of them, depending on who worked then. But the major animal was the rhesus monkey.

ROSENWINKEL: And do you remember anything they were doing with these, what research projects they had on their rhesus monkeys?

McDONALD: Probably mostly reproduction. A lot of reproductive studies on both fetus and infant and adults.

ROSENWINKEL: I remember taking a tour once and seeing this huge, barricaded area. Can you tell us a little bit about that, where the monkeys were?

McDONALD: You mean the corral?

ROSENWINKEL: The enclosure, the—yes.

McDONALD: Okay. Well, for one thing, we had some Japanese monkeys. They had their own corrals. They were brought over from Japan, and they might have been destroyed had they remained in Japan. I don't know what studies were really done (inaudible), although there would be students from Portland State and (inaudible) University of Oregon who would come over and observe those animals.

ROSENWINKEL: So they were observing behavior of these animals and studying their social organization?

McDONALD: Yes, keeping records of who gave birth and that sort of thing. The animals were all identified with tatoos, and they were—I don't think I ever went out to where the rhesus were. We could see the corrals from the library for years, but—well, they used to do reproductive studies a lot, I would think. Also—well, there were other studies that were going on. Dr. M. R. Malinow's work with atherosclerosis involving different diets. There were some other studies that went on, some viral disease, but I don't know which animals were used for those. And, of course, Dr. Montagna's group did things

on hair and sweat glands, skin...

ROSENWINKEL: Wound healing?

McDONALD: Oh, yes, that was part of the skin research.

ROSENWINKEL: So they were doing very important studies with the primates that would then be applicable, in some cases, at least, to human beings?

McDONALD: Oh, yes. That was the real point, actually.

I have to tell you something that was a really exciting thing for me. I knew how valuable the Surgeon General's Catalog was—I needed it all the time—and I wrote to National Library of Medicine and asked if there was any way I could get a set. They put together a terrible looking set, and I had the entire thing. Their reasoning—they sent it to us and said because of the important work the Primate Center was doing, they were giving us the entire set, which we, of course, had to have bound. It was all falling apart. But we used it the day it arrived. But that, you know, said something about the Primate Center.

ROSENWINKEL: That's a wonderful story to tell.

Let's go back a little bit in the seventies and early eighties, middle eighties, and talk about technology, and I mean as far as this affected your job. I'm talking about Medline, the development of Medline, or maybe OCLC [Online Computer Library Center] or various cooperative library networks. Could you comment on those and how it affected the Primate Center library?

McDONALD: Sure. Well, the moment Medline really began and the Medical School had started with—the library at the Medical School had started searching using Medline, we would send our requests up to the Medical School.

ROSENWINKEL: For research or reference service?

McDONALD: For Medline service. And we paid for it. Patty Davies at one point came out and did a demo on Medline, and you could tell that the

scientists loved it. They were very much in favor of it. But it took me five years to get any kind of equipment to do it. It was not until 1979 that we got a used printer terminal, TI [Texas Instruments], printer terminal. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven (laughter). And that meant that I could take training. So in 1979 I went back to Bethesda for the National Library of Medicine's Medline training there, and followed up with the advanced training in Seattle that fall. That was wonderful. Now, the photocopying, we never, ever had a brand new photocopier designed for a library. We got hand-me-downs, and we took what we could get.

ROSENWINKEL: I guess you were lucky to get what you could get.

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: I know you have an interest in cataloging, and OCLC has been online for quite a while.

McDONALD: Yeah. We hoped that one day we would be into those systems. I was very impressed with WLN [Washington Library Network], and so we were able to search on that for a while, and it helped us. The language, everything they did, was beautiful. Beautiful cataloging on WLN. I didn't think we would go into OCLC. I mean, I liked it, but then, as time went on, I realized the database on WLN was really too small.

After Dr. Montagna had retired and Dr. Vaughn Critchlow became our director, I got a library committee, and I had, of course, a different— instead of reporting directly to the director, as I had previously, I had to report to the associate director, which was different. For a while, he would not deal with me (several words inaudible), but that fortunately changed over time, and he became very supportive of the library, for which I was very grateful.

The library committee helped a lot, and one of the things that it did was to get a grant to hire Sally Wermcrantz. We hired her to look into the question of OCLC and WLN.

ROSENWINKEL: (Inaudible.)

McDONALD: Right. And it was really—as she worked with it, she

realized that we had to go OCLC.

ROSEWINKEL: And so that (inaudible)?

McDONALD: Because of being on this database. See, we had a lot of foreign books that weren't in the WLN, and, yet, WLN was still accessible to us, at least for information and online, and we did use it. But it had to be OCLC.

ROSEWINKEL: So now we have you with Medline doing advanced Medline searching, we have you doing OCLC with the many millions of records that that has, and your unique collection as well. The eighties were also a time of cooperation, great cooperation and cooperative systems between libraries, different networks. Would you tell me what networks the Primate Center was involved with and how that helped you or didn't help you?

McDONALD: Well, I suppose the regional one.

ROSEWINKEL: You're talking about the regional medical library network?

McDONALD: Yeah, through the University of Washington, was the major one, really. But also we worked with the Washington County Cooperative Library Service.

ROSEWINKEL: I'm not sure what that is.

McDONALD: Well, it's an arrangement of public libraries, mostly, with a few special libraries involved. We actually contributed catalog cards to that for a while until they became automated. And, then, of course, once we went to OCLC, the newer things, they would have access to that information. There was also the Portland Area Health Sciences Libraries and the Oregon Health Sciences Libraries Association. I think the first one had librarian members, and the Oregon one, had libraries, as members.

ROSEWINKEL: But the point was that you contributed quite a bit to these library networks, and, in turn, were used by them.

McDONALD: Yeah. But all those groups started (inaudible) with serials,

which was so important to us, the Region Six, the University of Washington, and the Oregon one. And I served on committees of both.

ROSENWINKEL: Why was this so important to the Primate Center people?

McDONALD: For interlibrary loan purposes. We could never—no Primate Center library could have enough of everything, and, as you referred to the European literature and the foreign literature. We had to have access to it.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let's pick up to about 1990, when you're about to retire. I'd like you to give me a sense of what the library was like in—the Primate Center library was like as far as, let's say, staff and budget and support. Just a general picture. What was the library like when you retired?

McDONALD: Well, certainly it was a lot larger.

ROSENWINKEL: So you had enlarged space.

McDONALD: We had enlarged space. We have an OCLC terminal (laughter). I think we have our second one, actually. My staff was one full-time person and two part-time persons. But we were sort of down from what we had been in the intervening years. Gramm-Rudman, in 1986, made us—cut out one of the full-time positions. I had two full-time people at that time, besides myself.

ROSENWINKEL: So we have enlarged space, we have you with more staff. What has happened to the book and journal collection at this time?

McDONALD: As the subscription prices have gone up, we were cutting back all the time, and particularly with Gramm-Rudman, they cut all the budgets, and we didn't have increases for years, sometimes. Same budget for—I think I had about the same budget from 1986 until 1990.

ROSENWINKEL: That's (inaudible).

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: And were you offering the same kinds of services as you always did when you retired?

McDONALD: We tried.

ROSENWINKEL: Did you add anymore services in addition to the traditional reference or interlibrary loan services?

McDONALD: I can't think what kind of services they would be. The only thing that—I will say, from wherever we started in the early sixties, Mrs. Hooper used to buy books for the scientists, but when she left the library and I became librarian, I cut that out entirely, because it was not worth it, and the people did not appreciate what we had to do, and it took too much time (laughter).

ROSENWINKEL: One of the issues that is current now, as well as going back maybe five to ten years, is that of animal rights. This has gotten a lot of press. Most people, thinking people, are aware of this, and I know the Primate Center was involved with this. I'd like to hear a story or two about what happened at the Primate Center, because I know there was some involvement there, but I don't know the details. Could you tell us something?

McDONALD: Yes. I can't tell you when they first started commemorating April 24. That was the usual day, but some years it was different. The first time we were protested I will always remember. We all felt like prisoners inside because they had to fence the 250 acres. It must have been an enormous cost for this wire fence.

There was some cooperation, believe it or not, between our administration and the animal rights groups. They told us they were going to protest us, and there was no place for them to protest us, but the administration allowed them part of our property and said, "You may do your demonstration on so many feet of the entrance to the Center out on 185th." The administration arranged with the county for a sheriff to be there the whole time, the whole twenty-four hours.

Everybody else was galvanized. One man, one scientist, with his large dog and his Jeep patrolled that fence all night long. And there were times when the fence was cut. They found they had tried to get in there. The buildings

themselves had to be fortified, the computer area had to be extremely fortified. You could never, ever get in there without buzzing. I mean, that was too important, those records of the animals were too important. We had cameras set up everywhere.

It was a very unpleasant time, and I recall, either the first or the second time they did it, that as I tried to leave that night in my car, they came up to my car, and they were going to bang on the car. The sheriff, fortunately, was just sitting there, and he bellowed at them to back off. That was one thing. But they also deliberately tried to block our view of the road. I had to make a left hand turn. They had their placards up there right at eye level, which was really terrible.

It affected the library a lot because we then had to collect—we had to spend money to buy their literature. Yes, we had to have it there so we would know, you know, what they were bargaining for, and that sort of thing.

And I will say the Primate Center cooperated a hundred percent with those people. As time went on, they were given extensive tours, nothing held back, absolutely. Their leaders were—but they still went ahead and protested us.

ROSENWINKEL: What were they protesting, exactly?

McDONALD: Just animal research, using animals. And, of course, they say that it was cruelty. But, of course, we had to agree to the federal laws. We were checked...

ROSENWINKEL: You were accountable, then.

McDONALD: Absolutely. We would never have gotten the money, the funds, for the Primate Center if we didn't comply.

ROSENWINKEL: So the view of these people was that animals have rights and they should not be used at all, whether it was a lab rat or whether it was a primate. They should not be researched, period. Is that correct?

McDONALD: Yes. And they would have liberated them, I'm sure, if

they could get in the buildings.

ROSENWINKEL: Was the security ever breached?

McDONALD: No, other than the fence. But the fence, that's the only thing I really knew about or heard about.

ROSENWINKEL: So, essentially, these were demonstrations outside your fence, outside the perimeter.

McDONALD: It was on our own property.

ROSENWINKEL: On your property, but it was basically people walking up and down with placards and shouting and harassing the Primate Center employees.

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Is this an annual event now?

McDONALD: I think there have been a few years when they didn't, but it's almost an annual. Certainly, the last two or three years it has been. In fact, they also—there would be a counter-march in later years. Some of the scientists themselves went out and marched alongside them with their signs.

ROSENWINKEL: Oh, I hadn't heard about that.

McDONALD: Yes.

ROSENWINKEL: Would this...

McDONALD: I was going to mention, one of them told us—they heard what these leaders were saying to them, which was—a lot of it was absolute lies about what was going on inside, and they—some of the people who had been allowed into the Primate Center to see the research. It was so unfair.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, did this make you—were you afraid of these people? I mean, did one get nervous working at the Primate Center during these

times?

McDONALD: No, but I think it went through our minds that we hoped they never got our names, that they would, you know, do something to our homes or anything like that.

ROSENWINKEL: So it was kept on a professional level in the sense that it was only at work and didn't go beyond that.

McDONALD: I hope so. But, you know, I went to one of their meetings that was open to the public, and I was terrified. I was *terrified*. There was a big, open meeting at Lewis & Clark College I went to. At the time there had been some animals liberated that morning at Santa Barbara.

We also worked with the National Agricultural Library, by the way, that has collected a great deal of material on this. And, in fact, they sent us material on—a working manual of what an animal rights person could do. You know, how they could harass an institution, the dirty-tricks kind of thing they could do. It was a bible. And that library let us have that, a copy of it.

ROSENWINKEL: So that means that the Primate Center could defend itself, so to speak, or at least know what actions to take.

McDONALD: Yeah. In my own job I was often having to get information on the leaders, national leaders, so I would have to find biographical information on some of these people.

ROSENWINKEL: That means you were using resources like Multnomah County Library or other resources around to get information?

McDONALD: That's right. As a matter of fact, the county—I mentioned Washington County Cooperative Library Services. It developed a reference service, which later was being held down—and still is—at Multnomah County Library, where we could get material on the things that were not so medical. So that was a great help to us.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, it seems like the animal rights people have been one of the biggest issues...

[End of Tape 1, Side 2/Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

ROSENWINKEL: Isabel, we were talking about issues similar to the animal rights activities that you saw in the late eighties and early nineties, and I was asking you if there were other similar issues that the Primate Center over time had to deal with.

McDONALD: I don't suppose anything was on the same scale as that. It still exists today. You know, when you have to go through a locked gate to get into a place. I remember going to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory one time when we were back east and being able to walk around freely on the campus, and I hadn't realized how much it had gotten to me personally, you know, to be at a research center and not feel safe at all.

ROSENWINKEL: What you're describing now about the Primate Center is locked gates, security cameras, maybe a guard asking for your ID as you enter. This is still true now.

McDONALD: Well, the guard—there were times this year when the gate had been permanently closed and a hired security person sat outside and would only open the gate when he was convinced that you had a legitimate reason to enter the grounds.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, let's look—let's conclude this interview and look at 1990 when you retired and look back over your career for just a minute.

What do you think your most meaningful contributions were as a librarian to the Primate Center?

McDONALD: I think that I built a good collection, a good reference collection, very much so, and I think the primate index was important. It's hard to say, there are just so many things.

ROSENWINKEL: Any comments on reference services you provided?

McDONALD: I think we did a very good job on that, because we were

part of a family. If we couldn't answer the question that day, it never was solved as like a detective on a case, and we would continue until we did find an answer. It would often turn up in the strangest place we'd never expect to find an answer.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, that would enrich your life, in a sense.

McDONALD: Oh, yeah. We were real sleuths. Also, I think I gave very good training to the people who worked for me. A lot of them, of course, had not worked in libraries previously, but they gained a lot of knowledge and a feeling that they were contributing, too.

ROSENWINKEL: When you see the Primate Center now, at seven years since you've retired, and things at Oregon Health Sciences University have changed as well as at the Primate Center, what kind of relationship do you see now, standing back and not being involved in the Primate Center except as a good friend to the Primate Center and to the Primate Center library, what relationship do you see currently between the Primate Center and OHSU?

McDONALD: Well, I think it's still on, you know, very good terms. But there is talk now of a merger. Of course, things have changed in that the Medical Research Foundation, which was our fiscal agent, blended with the OHSU Foundation, which certainly brought things closer together. I think that the library—I hope, if the current talk about merger goes through, that the library can still maintain its own identity, in a sense, because I think that its collection is just—it will complement, in many ways, things at the Medical School. But I don't see it as—well, I see it in a sense more like the Dental School library because it needs to be a separate library with its own collection, still under the head of the OHSU library director, and that may be what will probably happen. What I suspect, is that there will be a much closer working thing. And I think some of it would be good. We always tried to work with the serials librarians, particularly, and we would hope they would subscribe to journals we needed but didn't have. If there were two new journals in the field, that we each would buy one of them, but it hardly ever worked. They would buy it and we would buy it.

ROSENWINKEL: It seems like unnecessary duplication, but sometimes it was necessary because of the nature of the clientele, I'm sure.

McDONALD: Yeah.

ROSENWINKEL: Do you have any concluding thoughts you'd like to leave with us?

McDONALD: Well, one thing I just didn't ask about, which I think is extremely important to this library was being awarded a grant from National Library of Medicine. The National Library of Medicine started giving out grants to medical libraries back in the sixties. One year Margaret Hughes, who was then director of OHSU—well, it was not called OHSU then—that library got a good, sizeable grant for that library, and I think that year National Library of Medicine gave to the larger institutions. They were then on their way with their five-year grants (inaudible). The next year, the little ones, like ours, decided we were going to apply. Well, Margaret Hughes was a gem. She showed me what she had done to get this grant, and she helped me with the wording of it, and it went through. So that made an enormous difference in the Primate Center library. I don't think I would have stayed, I'm sure I wouldn't have, because there were too many restrictions on budget and, you know, not enough help, and I wasn't able to go anywhere after about the first five years there. It was very discouraging. The grant made all the difference in the world.

ROSENWINKEL: So that meant you could travel and you could...

McDONALD: Oh, we were able to buy - we bought films, we were able to add some steel shelving, which we desperately needed, I was able to attend ASIS [American Society for Information Science] meetings. This is a different kind of thing. There were just—we were able to add journals, we were able to add books. It was a godsend. And for me, of course, it made all the difference. I mean, there was no point in staying the way it had become at first with the restrictions those first few years.

ROSENWINKEL: But you did stay, and you did surmount all these problems and have a remarkable career, I think.

McDONALD: I had a lot of fun.

ROSENWINKEL: That's what it's all about, isn't it?

McDONALD: Yeah. I think I've had one of the best jobs you could ever...

ROSENWINKEL: Well, that's wonderful to hear, since you were there twenty-five years or more at the Primate Center.

McDONALD: And the other thing that I felt was, it was exciting being tied so closely to the National Library of Medicine and the remarkable things that it was doing at that time that no other library in the world was doing. The beautiful programming they were doing with Medline, and that eventually, was absolutely wonderful. I'm so glad I had the experience of going through that with them. It did great things for all the medical libraries of this country.

ROSENWINKEL: Well, Isabel, thank you very much for a wonderful and enthusiastic interview.

[End of Interview]

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