OREGON HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY HISTORY PROGRAM

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW

WITH

Marie K. Wagner

Interviews conducted October 9 and November 6, 1997

by

Linda Weimer

SUMMARY

Marie Wagner, Librarian Emeritus of the University of Oregon Medical School Library, shares her memories of her early career in teaching, her military service in World War II, and her years at the UOMS Library in this interview. She begins by describing her hometown of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, where she was born in 1911. She then goes on to talk about her education at the West Chester State Teachers College and about the ten years she spent teaching in various locations around the state.

In 1942, Wagner joined up with the Women's Army Corps. She reminisces about the train ride to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and the basic training she underwent there. After attending both Officer Candidate School and chemical warfare training, she was briefly assigned to the Postal Battalion in New York City before heading to Wright Field in Ohio. She talks about her training, her two months in New York, and her duties as a supply officer with the Air Force squadron based at Wright Field.

Upon discharge in October of 1946, Wagner and a fellow WAC spent nearly four months traveling across the country to visit friends and relatives. They intended to find a city they liked, get jobs, and stay a while. In January 1947, they arrived in Portland, Oregon, and decided it would be the end of their road. Wagner applied at the state employment office, and was told of an opening at the UOMS Library. She describes her first meeting with Librarian Bertha Hallam, her responsibilities on the night shift, and the friendly atmosphere of a small library on what was then a small university campus.

Wagner was with the Library for nearly thirty years and saw many changes. She talks about Dean David Baird's push to add librarians to the faculty in the 1950s and how the change in rank affected her. She describes the role of local medical societies in supporting the UOMS Library and the connections between the Library and other local libraries. Also a member of the Faculty Wives Club, she talks about the membership and activities of that group.

Wagner was a longtime resident of the Marquam Hill area as well, having occupied a residence at Southwest Eleventh and Gaines almost continuously since her arrival in Portland. She talks about the neighborhood association and its relations with the University. She also touches on the town-gown controversies surrounding the siting of both the Veterans Administration and Shriners Hospitals on Marquam Hill.

Although she retired in 1974, Wagner continued to volunteer at OHSU through the 1990s. She describes some of the work that volunteers contribute and talks about the recognition events sponsored by the University. Finally, she addresses the perennial question about what she, as a librarian, reads for pleasure.

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WEIMER: This is the first tape of an interview with Marie Wagner, recorded on October 9th, 1997, in BICC at Oregon Health Sciences University. The interviewer is Linda Weimer.

I'd like to ask you, what do you remember about the place you were born?

WAGNER: Oh. I remember well, because I lived there for a good—about thirty years. It was a medium-sized city. At that time there was just one hospital, and it was a nice, big one with pillars. I went there many times after, because I'm the oldest of seven, so I went out to that hospital when the new ones would come along, and I always enjoyed going in there. I felt important. I'd find my way through the corridors.

My parents were interested in the people in the city, and I used to hear many things about the families. Now, they weren't one of the founding families, but they knew about them, and now I realize that that was important to me, that they talked about these families. At one time Williamsport—that was the town, the city, Williamsport, Pennsylvania. At one time that was a leading lumber industry city, and they cleared off the forests around there in a big way, very bad, but they didn't think about that then. But it did create wealthy persons in the city. So at one time there were more millionaires there per square foot [laughter] than any other city in the country at that time. I was born in 1911. Well, those homes are still there, so when I would go back to visit, I could still go down the main street, Fourth Street, and remember whose home that was, who built that, and I enjoyed that history part of it.

Now, the city later experienced, while I was still there in 1937, a severe flood, and we were on the radio from Philadelphia, and word went out that Williamsport was under water and on fire, which sounded silly, but there actually was a fire in downtown. We, my family, were, we always said, refugees at my aunt's home till this thing was over. Now they have built dikes, and they had one or two scares since then. It was the West Branch of the Susquehanna River that overflowed. It's in a pretty place. The Appalachian Mountains go through there, and we had one ridge of the mountains—Bald Eagle Mountain—went along here [demonstrates], and down in here was the river, and then the city went up into the hills. I knew it was a pretty place; I would not want to live there now. The city's okay, but I mean, I wouldn't want to live in the East. It gets too hot, it gets too cold and buggy, and I like it out here.

WEIMER: Did you go to early school years in Williamsport?

WAGNER: Yes, I did. Eight grades and high school, and there were two hundred and some students in my graduating high school class, so you see that it's not so small a place. And I think there were thirteen grade schools that fed into that. The high school building is still there, but they moved out into a bigger area. So a lot of the things that I grew up in are still there.

WEIMER: How about college?

WAGNER: I went to West Chester State College. Now it is West Chester State University. I think there are thirteen—that's where I may be off on that thirteen—state teachers colleges in Pennsylvania, and one by one in the recent years they have become universities. Anyway, I went to West Chester State Teachers College, which was twenty-five miles west of Philadelphia. And until I went there I had never been to Philadelphia.

We were oriented more toward the east of the state, so to Philadelphia rather than Pittsburgh to the west. We were out of the mining area. There was a lot of hard-coal mining in eastern Pennsylvania. Western Pennsylvania was the soft coal area.

West Chester State Teachers College I had never seen until the day my father took me down to start, because we—well, you just didn't travel around that much in those days. And I think of it often, how I never called home. You didn't use the telephone to call, then. That was only for real emergencies. Nobody called home; you just stayed there. Of course, there were a great many students in the College then who lived right around that area, a lot of the suburbs and the coal region towns. But for going home, a great many of them went home on the weekend because they were close enough, but I didn't. I didn't go home once until Thanksgiving. That's the way it was. But I always felt that they missed something by going home on weekends. There were always some activities on the weekend, and I enjoyed those. Music was the major—music and phys ed were the two specialties at West Chester. Each teachers college had one or more specialties.

Now, where I lived, I could have gone to Lock Haven Teachers College, twenty-five miles west; to Bloomsburg, twenty-five miles east; to Mansfield, fifty miles north, but I wanted to get farther away [laughter]. I wanted something different, and that's why I wound up with West Chester.

WEIMER: What did you study?

WAGNER: Well, this was a teachers college, so you decided what area of teaching, and I did the elementary grades. And it was two years.

WEIMER: Oh, just two years?

WAGNER: Then you could go two years, get a certificate and teach, and then it was up to you if you wanted to get more. I don't know what year it was that you had to have

more, but I went back to summer school and got the B.S. degree. I liked that, going back to summer school.

WEIMER: So you did teach?

WAGNER: Yes, I was a teacher for ten years plus.

WEIMER: What grade?

WAGNER: The first year was in the country, and I was not a country person. I was all right for a day to go visit, but I did not like living in the country, and it was hard. Oh, it was so hard. Every Wednesday noon I thought, "It's half over." So I did get home weekends. My father would come and get me, and then he'd take me back Sunday night. I lost twenty pounds [laughter], but I needed to because I had gained twenty pounds at school.

WEIMER: Were you teaching elementary grades?

WAGNER: Elementary. Most of the time, third grade. I didn't like them younger, but that just happened that it worked out that I got a third grade. I had two different times when I taught fourth. That was very good; I liked the fourth. They could do some things, and third could do a little something; but first and second, they couldn't read, they couldn't write much. I liked the teaching, but the discipline was hard for me. Now, growing up among these other children, you know, it shouldn't have been, but, I don't know, it got me. I was reading an old letter recently that I sent home, not from there but from here years later, in which I wrote I never was sorry I got out of it, because if I had stayed, I was sure I would have had a stroke! [Laughs].

WEIMER: You stayed how many years?

WAGNER: Well, it was the ten. I taught that first year in the country, and then I substituted in the city and was right at home. I'd just get these calls in the morning. You never knew when. But it was interesting because I got to teach in different schools and different grades. That went on for a year and a half, and then I got a full-time and was there ten years in the third grade in my hometown.

WEIMER: How did the Depression years affect that area and your teaching?

WAGNER: Well, that's very interesting, because I keep hearing about the Depression, and my friends, my contemporaries, they—oh yes, you know, they lived through it. They knew how awful it was. And when I think back, it did affect the city, but it never affected my family. My father was with the tire company, Goodyear Tire Company, and he was in business with two other men, and they had a service station. His part was to go out in the countryside and sell the tires for vehicles used in farming, and so on. Through that, I don't know, we just didn't have a bad time.

Oh, I knew there was a Depression, and I was teaching at that time right in my own neighborhood; and what I remember is that they had a sewing project for making clothes for the poor, and there was one little girl in my class who came with one of these dresses, and you knew it was a new dress. She had gotten it from this center that they had for getting clothing. So I knew it was there, but it didn't affect me. Oh, well, the salary, oh, yes. The salary at the beginning was a hundred a month, one hundred a month for ten months. The school board was hard up, so we had it cut right away, fifteen percent. So my first salary was at the rate of $850 for the year. Then they said, of course, in time they would be able to replace it, and in time they did. But I lived at home [laughs], and so I had food, lodging, and the use of the car. So that's why it didn't touch me, but it was there; I knew it. But I never saw anybody selling apples on the corner, that part. And we hadn't had money to lose in the stock market. We were not in the stock market, so we didn't crash.

WEIMER: Tell me about your experiences in World War II.

WAGNER: Well, that was my chance to get out of the teaching, the Women's Army Corps. Let's see. It was started in May of '42. That's when it started, May of '42. Well, it took me a while to think about it, and I read about it, and I was afraid to even mention it to anybody that I would think to do this. I didn't know how it would go over. But then I tried to find out about it, and I read articles, and one of the minister's daughters was in, and she was home on a furlough. I talked with her, and she said she liked it and all, but she wouldn't urge me to do this. And I found out afterward it was something you had to want to do. You couldn't tell anybody, "Oh, it's great," or not. You had to figure it out yourself. So I decided that I would do it, and I told my parents, and, well, they didn't object, they didn't fuss. But, then, I had to get three persons to be—what do you call it?

WEIMER: A recommendation?

WAGNER: Recommendations. Three. So then I had to face that, how I was going to tell these people. I was going to use the minister, and he was all right because his one daughter was in, but he also had a daughter who wouldn't have thought of going in. She couldn't have stood it. She could not be *told* what to do. Another was a high school teacher, and another was a friend of the family who worked in a bank, a reliable guy. So I got by that.

Then we went to Harrisburg for the interview, and then, I think, after—we had more than an interview. I mean, you were examined physically and psychologically and then sent home to wait for orders. I don't know what month I went for that interview, but it was late January when I got the orders to report to Harrisburg on a certain date. I went to the station that day to go. In those days we had good train service to Williamsport. It's all gone now.

There were seven of us went off at that time to Harrisburg. The first time I'd been down I had met up with a person who was from near York, Pennsylvania. She was much younger than I, but her name was Wolf, so the 'W,' that put us close together. Her parents were there at the station that night to see her off, and I learned later that they were so glad that I was there because I was a little older [laughs]. Frances had just finished college.

That night, then, we were boarded on the train and started off for Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and that was a wild night because there were all kinds of girls on there; I'll never forget. There were words I'd never heard used, you know, and they were batting around and joking over things that were off-color [laughs]—but Frances Wolf and I, we stuck together. It was an overnight trip down to Oglethorpe, and it was February, and I had thought, "Oh boy, it's going to be warm. We're going down south." Of course, I know now that isn't where it's warm. Georgia isn't that warm in the winter. I went off in my civilian clothes, of course, a suit and my camelhair coat, and I had to wear that for a long time because they didn't have enough uniforms for us to begin with. Now, a long time, I suppose it was a week.

The first thing when we got off at the station, we were piled onto one of those big trucks way up the back, up into the interior. Got out to the camp—and we were told what to do, a lot. Well, that was all right with me. I wouldn't have known what to do. I had no one military in my family, and so I didn't know anything. Like the saluting, I remember when I reported to our post office after I got the first orders to come home, and so on. I went then to the post office, that's where the recruiting was in Williamsport, and I said—there was a sergeant at the desk. I said, "I would salute you if I knew how." Well, you don't salute a sergeant. I thought afterward, I bet he was tickled [laughter]. So it went on from there.

That first night we were shown how to make a bed. And there was one big shower room, and that was a new one: to go stand out there in the middle of the shower naked, you know, as a—well, you just went into it and did those things. Then we got assigned to barracks. They were two-story barracks in those days at Fort Oglethorpe. At the end of the first day of really being in, we were marched out to see a retreat with the music and the flag lowering, and that was very touching, and, I mean, it was a good way to start. You were getting into it.

I was there one month, and the subjects were—well, that's where we learned about military discipline and customs. That's where we learned about saluting and dress, and, then, we had to learn a little on—well, right now I don't know what the other subjects were, but we went to school, to classes, all day. And we had to fall out first for reveille, and we lined up and learned how to do that, and marched to the classroom; and every morning we marched past the commanding officer of the post, and it would be like a review, and we tried hard to do that real well. We had to turn a corner, and turning a corner in a group is something you have to learn, how to step this way and that, and [laughs] we passed review.

And I remember I was still wearing my own coat, and I learned there how to fold your coat. You didn't just take it off and throw it down. And I still don't do that today. You turn it like this [demonstrates], get the sleeves here, and it folds nice and neat [laughs]. That was good.

At meals you marched to the mess hall. You didn't have to march back to the barracks. One experience there was one I've always told many times. It was this Frances Wolf. We were in the same barracks, of course, and we were both on KP the first weekend.

KP in the WAC was not a punishment like for the men. You know, that was awful to be put on KP. But for us, it was just a duty that came up as you were assigned to it, and it rotated.

So we were on KP that day, and the meal was chicken fricassee. Well, that's messy-like, you know, and a lot of the girls just didn't—they didn't eat it. They didn't clean their trays. When you left the mess hall, you went out the back door, and there was a big can at the end, and you scraped your tray in and put the tray down. So Frances and I, that afternoon, were sent out back of the mess hall to look into those cans because they gave the leftover food to the farmers around there for their pigs. So here was all this chicken bone in there, and that wouldn't do, so we were sent out back to get the bones, the chicken stuff out of the garbage. Can you imagine? It was cold, but it was bright, and we had just our little what were called fatigue outfits of cotton, striped things. And we were cold out there, but we were hanging in the cans where it was warm [laughter]. Oh, dear, that was a good story to tell many times after.

WEIMER: [Laughing] After it happened?

WAGNER: Yes.

WEIMER: Did you get sent overseas?

WAGNER: No, I didn't. I would have liked that. Many of us would have liked that. But they never sent anyone who did not want to go, only WACs who wanted. But, then, there were just so many, they didn't need so many over there. So I never got to that.

At the end of the four weeks of basic, we were asked if we were interested in officer training. Well, heavens, I didn't know anything. How could I think of going to be an officer? But Frances was interested, and so she influenced me to apply. And I'd had a letter from a fellow that I knew back home, and he said I should do that. So I applied, and, lo and behold, at the end of the week here was my name on there to go to OC [Officer Candidate] School, and that was in Des Moines, Iowa. The day we went on that trip there was a different group, a big difference on the train from the bunch that went to basic. It was different, because they were just a little upper class, I suppose you'd say they were, and everything was all orderly and quiet [laughs].

We went out to Des Moines, and, then, I was there for five weeks. I went on sick call the morning after my throat was so sore, and they sent me back to duty, so all that day I was in misery, and that night it came on again very bad, the sore throat, and I went to sick call the next morning, and that time they put me in the infirmary. Anyway, they put me in there, and I was in there a week, so I fell back from the class I'd started with, so I was five weeks in OCS.

Then, after that, we got assignments to go hither and yon, and I was sent down to Daytona Beach, another training center. Oglethorpe was the first WAC training center, and Daytona Beach was the second, and the place in Massachusetts was the third. I forget the—

but anyway, I went down to Daytona Beach, and that was an experience. By then we had had graduation, I got my second lieutenant bars, and my clothing change. The officers buy their clothes. So it was an overnight trip down to Daytona, and we arrived in the middle of the night. I'll never forget the feeling. I'd never been to Florida, and it was sweet-smelling and warm when we stepped out into that station. It was so striking. And, then, to barracks again, with other officers.

We didn't get any particular assignment for quite a while. They suddenly had too many WACs. So there we were, and you can't just do nothing, so you go to classes. In basic we had never gotten around to the class on chemical warfare. Chemical warfare, we'd never had time to get that, so I didn't know. So here I was down there, and they had a chemical warfare class, and so that's where I learned about the gas mask and all the different poison things. At the end of that class, I know they said, "If anybody thinks they would want to go to chemical warfare school, just come up and speak to me." And I thought, well, why not? There wasn't anything down there going on much, so I would sign up for that. So that's where I spent the month of August 1943, at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland, and that was the chemical warfare school, and I was there for a month. There, there were a hundred men in the class and six WACs. So we had quite an experience.

WEIMER: [Laughing] Very good odds.

WAGNER: Yes, it was.

We marched to class, and we were in a big classroom. And I remember I never felt very at ease with the men, but somehow I must have been talking too much, and the instructor in charge asked me to move, to come up front and sit over here on the front, because these guys were getting too noisy back there [laughter].

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

WEIMER: This is a continuation of our interview with Marie Wagner on October 9. This is side two of tape one.

So you had the guys kind of talking a little bit.

WAGNER: Oh, a little bit too much, yes.

Anyway, one part of that was, in the morning, we had class; in the afternoon, we went out into the field, where we practiced some of these things or learned about how to put that gas mask on. We would stand at the edge of this big field, and they'd tell us that the gas was out there—phosgene, it was—and so we had to go out into it, so you quick learned how to get that gas mask on. And you knew that it really worked because you'd—you know, there you were, and you survived it. And, then, we had to drill with the gas masks on [laughs] up and down that field—oh, my goodness—and we all had a turn at giving the orders. But it gave you a great deal of confidence that you could do these things.

After that month, then back to Daytona, and that was just September, so I was in Daytona until December. There, I was an officer of a group—but I can't think of the name it—of these new ones learning their basic, so I was teaching the basic things.

And, then, in December one day I got orders to go to New York to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Well, another gal and I got the same orders. Oh, we got all excited. You know, maybe we're going to go overseas [laughs]. So we went up to New York together and out to the Navy Yard, and there we learned that the place we were reporting to was just the headquarters for the outfit we were to be with in New York City, which was the Postal Battalion. We were housed in a hotel on West Thirty-fifth Street.

And the job—the hotel was full of WACs, and their duties were to sort the mail, the VE mail. You heard about the VE mail? People would write letters, and they had to be made smaller so they could send them overseas. Well, that was the process, up in one of the big post offices in New York. I didn't ever remember what street that was on, but as an officer I was one—we had six officers there to handle this—that would march the group that was to go on duty. We'd march them uptown and then leave them. That was a twenty-four hour outfit going on up there sorting that mail, that VE mail; so, then, there'd be a group coming off duty, and we'd march them back home. I don't remember how far it was, but it was a good march. Well, march, but we walked in—we were not marching in strict order, but we were in order, but you could walk, together. Sometimes that was in the middle of the night. We were bringing these girls back, and we'd get back down to the hotel, the food there was in the cafeteria style for the hotel, though there weren't any other people in the hotel but the WACs, and they'd have their meal and go to bed.

Now, then, I had a couple of other duties there. One was to visit the sick. And out of I forget how many were in that hotel, there was always somebody in a hospital, and you were—you know, to be cared about, and that was one thing I'd do a couple of times a week.

I was there from December—or, January, really. How long was I there? I guess two months. I think it was March when I got orders to go to Des Moines again. Well, that's when they had too many officers again. So we got out there and had to go to classes. You couldn't just hang around the base. Then I got reassigned, and this time it was to the Air Force in Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. That's where the big meeting was held before the Bosnia business. Remember, they got together to decide how they were going to do this and that, the high-ups? Well, that was at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, and that's where I was for two and a half years. That was the Air Force.

That was interesting because it was an experimental place. They had a lot of research going on. I was an officer for a group, again, and these women went off all over the field to do different jobs. Some worked on the flight line, and they saw the action, you know, and some in the offices. My job there was supply officer. So there was a CO and an adjutant and a mess officer and a supply officer. At one time we had six officers, and we had six hundred women under our wing in this squadron. We were in this squadron then.

So being a supply officer suited me because I handled things. Handling the people, I didn't think I was going to like that, because we did have discipline to contend with. We had to see that the girls didn't wear the hair on the collar, hair off the collar, and, then, when they went off the base, that they looked right. There were other infractions sometimes, and I didn't have to get involved with those; I just knew about them.

My supply, I had my own building there with piles of blankets. One of the funny things about that supply was that the Air Force, or anybody else, had never thought about women needing more toilet tissue than men. So we'd run out, and I'd have to call. I'd call one of the men's outfits, "Could we please have some of your toilet tissue." But it's true, you know, they just didn't think of that, that they were going to need more.

WEIMER: So you were a supply officer until the end of the war?

WAGNER: Almost the end. The war ended in '45, in August '45, and immediately they began to let people go. I was in no hurry to get home because I didn't know what I'd do. I did not want to go back to teaching. You know, anybody who left a job, they had to keep the job for you until you would come out, but I didn't want to do that. So a lot of them left, and the squadron became very small. Then they moved us to another field right nearby, and the first thing you know, I was the only one left, and it was a small squadron. So I was the CO and had the whole works to do. I didn't want to get out then, so I thought, "Oh, I'll be out—in about six months I'll be out." But the six months went by. I did not get out until October of the next year, and that's when I went home and resigned my teaching job.

Well, I'd never been west of Des Moines. I'd gone south, but not west, so I wanted to get out here somehow. So a friend in the WAC was out too—and I had bought a car, an old car—and we decided we would just go touring around the country and see some of these people we'd met, all the way around. And maybe, if we liked a city, we might get a job and stay. So we went down the East Coast and visited, and we got down to Florida and then across to Atlanta, I remember we visited someone; then we went on through Mississippi—seeing the sights along the way. Then, we had a friend in Texas, in San Antonio, so we went there, and we figured then we'd have to decide are we going any farther, or are we going to go back? Well, we didn't think we could stay in San Antonio, so we decided to go on because we had a friend in California [laughter].

We went on, so I saw the Carlsbad Caverns, and then up to the Grand Canyon. It was January by then, and not too cold, but it was cold. You wore all your clothes. It cost seven dollars to go down the canyon on a mule. Well, seven dollars was just too much, so we walked down, but we only went down four miles—it's six to the river—and we went down there and back. I'll never forget crawling out that—as we came up, it was getting hard, and we got up and just over the rim. Oh, I was done in and dehydrated, really, too. We had taken some food, and I remember we kept an apple to eat on the way up. We went to the hotel there for dinner and had salad—that's all I could think, that I would want something cold and wet—and stayed the night in a cabin, and the next day took off and continued west. Well,

having done that day before, that walk, and then nothing to limber up—well, I had a hot shower, but—and getting right into a car and sitting, when we did get out in the middle of the California desert, there, to go to a restroom, I could hardly walk. I could hardly get away from the car. I just went along like this [demonstrates]. I was stiffened [laughs].

Then, we went to L.A.—that's where our friend was—and she was not planning to stay there. She was married; she'd been married when she went in. We didn't want to stay in L.A. We went down to San Diego, and that was quite nice, but we just went for the day and just were not prepared to make a choice, and we didn't really have anything there, but it was nice. Then we came up the coast.

Next would be San Francisco, and there I had a friend who had been in officers' training school with me, and she was using the bill of rights, the GI Bill for tuition. And she was studying podiatry. She was liking it, but she said not to live here. It's okay to be here, but I wouldn't want to live here. So we spent the weekend looking around.

Then, the next thing north, you know, was Oregon. We went over the Golden Gate Bridge, and we were on our way to Oregon. Well, I had a friend in Oregon City. She'd been our driver—I guess that was her title—at Wright Field, but she'd been out quite a long while. Well, we got to her home, and her mother said that she was back in the WAC. She didn't like being a civilian! She went back, and she was in Colorado. So she called that night while we were visiting her mother. Well, what a surprise.

Well, her mother was a native, she was an Oregonian, and we got the feel of Oregon from her mother, and we thought—you know, we felt good. We went into Portland and had to find a place to stay. We went to the Y finally, and they suggested rooming houses. So we got a room in a house and then went to the employment office, the state employment office. Well, my friend, she had decided she was going to go to school here, and I—what had I done? Well, I had taught, which I certainly didn't want to go back into, or couldn't have here without more training; and I had clerked in a department store one summer; and I had worked in a branch library just off and on. It was a branch with one room in Williamsport. It wasn't the main library, it was just up in a suburb, and all I did there was stamp the books, put them on the shelf. I knew nothing about librarianship, but I put that down, library.

Well, when I went back the next day, I guess, or so, they had a job in a library. And I really didn't want to work in a library. To me they were quiet places. You had to be so quiet. I never could study when I was in school; I had to be where the girls were. But I went up to find out about it, and that's how I got up here on the Hill. The librarian, Bertha Hallam, was ill at home that day. She'd had something wrong with her leg. So I remember Margaret Hughes was the person I talked with, and I said, "Well, I wonder if I could see her at her home?" because I was getting eager to get a job—I can't just go along like this. So she called Bertha, and Bertha said it was all right if we wanted to come out. So, then, to find my way to Northeast Twenty-eighth, and I thought, if you went out this way [demonstrates], you get to Twenty-eighth, then you go over this way. But the gully was in between. It was called—oh, it's where the freeway is.

WEIMER: Was that Sullivan's Gulch?

WAGNER: Yes, Sullivan's Gulch. That's it. So a lot of streets didn't go through from here. So I figured that out and got over to Twenty-eighth and had an interview with Bertha. Well, I guess I was just what they were waiting for, because I was older, and I'd had responsibilities, and I was available. It was for the evening job, and, of course, that didn't make any difference to me then. I had no connections; I thought that it would be all right to work evenings.

But it turned out that the person who was doing it was the wife of a medical student who was graduating, and, of course, she wanted to keep it till he left in June, and this was March. So I said, "Well, I have to have a job." Well, what they did, they scurried around and they got me a job in the clinic to carry over until June, till she left. I worked in the outpatient clinic as a clerk, interviewing people before they were admitted to that. I remember there were so many from Missouri. They'd come here from Missouri, and they had come during the war to work in the shipyards, a lot of that. So I learned a lot about the kind of people who were out here.

Finally, I had my job from 4:30 to 10:30 and Saturday. Well, as I said, I didn't have any connections, so I took it. Then I had to find—then I wanted to get a better place to live than the rooming house downtown, and it took a while because housing was short up here, and finally—I had applied one place, and Mr. Grace owned a lot of these places, and he called me one day and he said he had an apartment. He said, "You're the queen bee." I'll never forget. He knew how happy I was to get it, and the two of us—this old friend, we were still together, and she was down at Northwest School of Commerce, it was called then. So we lived up here on Eleventh for two years. Then, I can't remember why—well, it was small quarters—she got through school and got a job with State Farm Insurance Company way out in Northeast, and it would be better for her to live there. So we found a nice place out in Northeast, and I would drive up here. See, at 4:30, that was not traffic time, and going home at 10:30 there was no traffic, so I did that.

Bertha had never thought that I might get tired of that schedule, and it was ten years before I could tell her that I really would like to be free in the evenings. That's when I found she had not thought about it, because she had known nurses who had night shifts, and they liked it for years. So, then, I got a better schedule. I was free on Saturday afternoons, and I worked days until 5:00. Then we began to have to have students for the evening, and that all changed.

WEIMER: What was the first job responsibility you had here?

WAGNER: Here? I was in the circulation department. I think in a great many libraries the circulation person is not a professional, but here—well, I wasn't at first, but there were only five of us employed here. There was a cataloger and Bertha, the head, and the assistant, and one other, who was in the same boat as I. We were not library-trained, but we did the

circulation.

Well, the Dean [David Baird] at that time was eager—for the prestige of his medical school, he wanted everyone to be professional, and so we were made professionals. We got the same benefits then as these others, a little longer vacation and so on. I just fell in to that, and it was lucky. And Lolita [McElveny], who was the other one, she and I were the ones who got all the benefits of being a professional. And we learned on the job. I never did learn the catalog stuff. I helped in the catalog—I still worked one afternoon there—and did things, but, you know, that's a separate thing to know how, the know-how necessary.

WEIMER: Do you think we should call it quits for today?

WAGNER: I think so, don't you?

WEIMER: Yes, and then we'll do one more session some time?

WAGNER: Yes.

WEIMER: This is the end of our tape for today. Thank you very much.

[End of Interview 1]

Interview with Marie K. Wagner (Interview 2)
Interviewed by Linda Weimer
November 6, 1997
Site: Crestview Rehabilitation Center
Begin Tape 2, Side 1

WEIMER: This is our second oral history interview with Marie Wagner. This time we're at the Crestview Rehabilitation Center. The date is November 6, 1997. This is tape two, side one.

Marie, last time we talked, we finished up when you got up to the University of Oregon Medical School. You had just been hired, after your adventures in World War II and then your cross-country trip, and I'd like you to tell me about the library in those days. It was a small library, I understand.

WAGNER: The building was the same. It was that nice building.

WEIMER: The old Library/Auditorium building?

WAGNER: That's there now. And, of course, the auditorium was only a part of the building, it was not part of the library. You entered the big lobby and went up the steps into the main lobby of the library. And it was spacious, and it was not necessary to be very, very quiet in there, because that was a social area. If you wanted quiet, you went into the rooms. There were four rooms with nice doorways and glass doors, and that's where the studying was done. And the Periodical Room was one of those. But out in the lobby there were big tables, and some kids studied there and others visited there. I know of two couples in particular that—well, they later married, but I can't say what they did. But anyway, I'd see them out there in the evening, because I had the evening shift, from 4:30 until 10:30.

And along about ten, 10:15, I had to begin to think of the closing, and I had to do the closing. So I went all around, up and down, turning out the lights, and as I went, I knew if there were people there, and I remembered, so when I got back and they hadn't come out yet, I went after them. And, then, at 10:30 the doors were locked. And there was a night watchman, and he and I got to be real buddies. He was an old fellow, and so, you know, we'd have a good little chitchat each night, and I always knew he was there and around to do these things. And he would lock the front door, then.

But I had to go into the furnace room to turn off the heat, and that was way down and down and down in there. I turned the bright lights on in there. There were cockroaches!

WEIMER: Oh, in the basement.

WAGNER: [Coughing] They didn't bother me, but they were big, and I hadn't had any acquaintance with cockroaches up until then, but I always remember that [laughs]. The night watchman—I forget his name; how could I have forgotten?—would wait at the top of the steps when I did that closing, and then we'd go out the front door, and I would go out, and he'd lock up behind me, and that was 10:30.

Now, occasionally—oh, about once a month—the Portland Surgical Society met in the library, and they met in the far room, which was called the Faculty Room, I believe, and they—well, they started about 8:00, I suppose. But ten o'clock, 10:15 was early for them. I had a little difficulty sometimes to get them to go. But, it was all very friendly, but I'd just say, "We're going to close now. Five minutes, and I'm going to close." Oh, they were nice guys, the surgeons from those days. And I don't know that any of them are left now. One by one I knew what happened. They retired or died off. And there was one I remember, a very sad case. He [Dr. Wayson] was a good looking man, good surgeon, and his wife was a physician, and they had about five children, and he came in the evenings to the library a lot, but in his later years not too late, though. He was a young man yet. He was stricken with that nasty disease that—I don't know what the name of it—it wasn't the amyotrophic something or other.

WEIMER: ALS [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis]?

WAGNER: Yeah, it wasn't that, but it was a steady, downhill going. He just—and he was in this facility for years, for years. I never saw him over here, but he was one of our pets.

So, then, on Saturday I was there for the day. In the morning, Margaret was often there, too, sometimes Bertha. But in the afternoon, I was on my own. And—well, it was quieter, but I was at circulation, and I liked that circulation. It was something you had to do, you know. It would drive you crazy sometimes about the books that were out and should have been in in the morning, you know, but they came up and asked at the counter for it. You got to know them; you'd know the kids. That's what I remember about the early days in the library, that we did *know* the students. Not all, and some, of course, didn't come as regularly, and, then, some just did—they were there a lot. And Dr. [Frederick] Fraunfelder was one of those. He was the Head of Ophthalmology at the OHSU until very recently. He resigned because he wanted more time for research and, then, not the paperwork. But he did become the Head. But he was a student in those days.

[Coughing.]

WEIMER: There is a portrait of Bertha Hallam in the History of Medicine Room. Could you tell me about her?

WAGNER: See, when I was over there—what was going on recently that I would have been in?—oh, I was in the big room downstairs, and the portraits are all around the wall, and I looked for her, and I thought, now, where was she? She used to be in the Periodical Room, which is now, I forget what—there on the north side.

Well, Bertha, she had never graduated from library school; that, I remember. That was remarkable, because in those days these people who were up into the business were graduates of library school, but she had done so well just on her own. Small, she was a little person, but very quick, very agile. The doctors all loved her, little Bertha, and they called her Bertha. And for a long time—I don't know how many years—I called her Miss Hallam, and one day she said, "You know, you don't have to call me that, you can say Bertha." But it took a little doing, because you don't talk to your superiors like that, or you didn't. [Coughs.]

We were like a little family. There was Bertha and Margaret [Hughes], who was a professional librarian, and she and Bertha were Episcopalians, and there was Lolita [McElveny]—well, the other professional was Ora Goodman. She was the cataloger, and she worked in the back room, and, of course, she wasn't as much acquainted with the students; and her hearing was poor. So it was better that she had that job, and she liked it back there. And most of us at one time or another worked with Ora, or for her. Part of my forty-hour week involved two hours on Thursday afternoon in the Catalog Department, so that's where I learned anything about cataloging that I knew. [Coughs.]

[Tape stopped.]

And then, as I said, there was Lolita, and Lolita was—she was like me, she just learned it on the job. And she and I were at the circulation desk a lot of the time. But she helped here and there, too. We all did everything. One of the things that we did was put up the books, put the books up on the shelves. And we did get some student help, but one of my responsibilities through the years was to be sure that there were students to do that each day. See, whole truckloads of books that had come in, you know, they had to get back on the shelves. Now, I'd done a lot of them myself, too, putting up the books. [Coughs.]

WEIMER: Did you have a lot of student help?

WAGNER: Not a lot, no.

WEIMER: Not enough?

WAGNER: Probably not, but—well, it was uncertain. That's the trouble with it, you know. You had them, but then maybe something came up that they couldn't be there that day. So you were hung up. But we didn't have—at any time I don't think we had ten, and it was putting books up. That's what the job was. Well, we called it shelving. [Laughter] I forgot that word, shelving.

WEIMER: I understand that Bertha Hallam had good relationships with the students.

WAGNER: Yes, she did.

WEIMER: Could you tell me a little bit about her support for them?

WAGNER: Well, it was all quietly done, so I never knew what she did for them. I don't know.

WEIMER: She was a private person?

WAGNER: Yes, for her—for any helping that she did for other people. She did it quietly. I didn't really know, but I wouldn't be surprised if there were students that she helped financially.

WEIMER: Tell me about career development at the library.

WAGNER: For ourselves?

WEIMER: Yes.

WAGNER: Well, I don't think there was any special effort, any planned attack on it. It was—well, that came later, you know, when they had these different grades for library assistants. And, of course, Lolita and I, for a long time we were state employees, and we had a category, Librarian I or something like that, but, then, when I—as I said, the Dean wanted the School to have faculty people in his library, and so we got to be faculty without any special training. By the way, the Dean at that time, Dean Baird, you hardly saw him. Many of the students didn't know who he was [laughter]. That was always a joke. He just was around, but he wasn't anyone that anybody got to know.

WEIMER: Did the library have any contact with other medical libraries at all?

WAGNER: Well, we had in Portland an organization called Portland Area Special Librarians, and Bertha was a founding father of that group, and that had happened just before I was there. And it was librarians of different libraries around the city, all kinds. They met about four times a year. We'd have a dinner meeting and we would visit a library, especially if anybody had a new one, and we all went to visit that one. But it included business and industry, and, then, the school ones and college ones, and medical. Well, the hospitals didn't have medical librarians then. That was a while before they had—but we were right in there on the bottom with that.

That was a good organization, and I think it still exists, but I don't know who to ask—oh, I could ask Heather [Rosenwinkel]. Portland Area Special Libraries: PASL. And, as I said, we visited the new libraries, and it was very good for both sides. Then, once in a while we were hosting it. But we always had a meal first somewhere that was convenient, and then visited the place. And it was very good because it gave everybody an idea of what else went on in that field around the city.

There was one for the advertising organization here. We did that one within ten years ago. Advertising Library—that wasn't the right name—but it was an organization that had to

do with advertising, and it was downtown. And, well, the industrial ones, that was interesting. We went to the—what's the big company that had the lifts, that lift big things?

WEIMER: Hyster?

WAGNER: Hyster, yeah, Hyster. They had a library, and we went there, and we went to Vancouver. That must have been to the Vancouver—what library did they have?

WEIMER: Fort Vancouver?

WAGNER: Fort Vancouver. I guess it was. But I know that we went over there. And, then, as far as the librarians at other libraries, the national Medical Library Association—they didn't say national, it was called Medical Library Association, and it was the national. Well, you know about that.

WEIMER: The MLA.

WAGNER: MLA. For many years Margaret or Bertha would go, but never both of them. I don't think it could be afforded. But the School did pay something, and they went, and it was just something that Lolita and I, we—you know, we wished [laughs]. We wished we'd hear about that. We did often ask when they got back, "Please tell us what went on," because they didn't always do that. They didn't realize that that was part of it. So then finally came a time when I could go. I don't think Lolita ever did. Oh, you know, it was in Seattle several times, and Lolita went up to that one the first time we had it there. But my first one was in Boston in 1966, and Ora went to that one, and I remember we flew back together. Bertha did not go to that one.

Bertha became the president of MLA, and I don't know what year that was, but she became president, and she was so small, they had to have an extra box there by the podium for her to be up to do her thing [laughter].

WEIMER: Did the library have any contact with the medical societies, like Multnomah County?

WAGNER: They contributed money each year, but I don't know how it was decided how much, but I know that when Margaret retired, she was made an honorary member of the medical society—what would it have been? Oregon Medical Association? Oregon Medical Society?

WEIMER: Oregon State Medical Society.

WAGNER: Yeah. And I'm sure Bertha must have had something like that, too. I have forgotten.

WEIMER: When you first got to the Medical School, it was very small. Did you get

to know pretty much everybody on campus?

WAGNER: Yes, we did, when I think about it, because most everybody came to the library for something or other. And that was one of Bertha's special training items for us was she always learned their names, and then when they'd come in, she'd say, you know, "Oh, good morning, so and so." And you began to pick up those names by seeing them. And they did come, so we did feel that we knew the faculty. And the people in the labs, though there weren't that many, you did know them. And, of course, the [OHSU] Hospital wasn't there until '55, and Multnomah County Hospital, now the North Hospital, it was there, but we didn't have—well, we knew a few nurses from over there. But we were a smaller group.

WEIMER: What was the socialization like after working hours, or even during breaks or lunch hours?

WAGNER: Well, the lunch hours were short. We had a room in the library down on the first floor. We had a little kitchen, and we had a fridge, and, of course, it got out of hand sometimes. Somebody had to clean up. And that's where we always had a birthday party, and no matter when it was—the person, of course, knew, but never let on that they realized this was the day. But everybody else knew, and it was done. And, then, sometime in the afternoon somebody would call from downstairs, "Can so and so come down? Miss Hallam wants to show you something," or some excuse to get down. And, here, everybody would be. And we'd have cake and coffee [laughs]. So it was a nice, family group.

WEIMER: Was there a local grapevine?

WAGNER: No, I don't think so.

WEIMER: Basically your information was found—

WAGNER: Well, how was it found? There was no campus paper then like there is now. I don't know. I can't think of what common place there was that we would pick up news.

WEIMER: Was there a cafeteria at the time?

WAGNER: Oh, we had a cafeteria over in the basic science building, now Mackenzie Hall. And it was small, of course, and operated by some private concern—in fact it was a doctor, or he became a doctor, I guess [laughs]. It had soup and a few things at noon. It was a noon thing. But, yes, the cafeteria was important, and there was no other one.

WEIMER: Did you have anything to do with the Library Committee?

WAGNER: No, I didn't.

WEIMER: Do you know anything about the Library Committee? I understand there

was one.

WAGNER: That was for what?

WEIMER: Like overseeing the library activities.

WAGNER: I guess there is one, but, no, I never had anything to do with it. The only time I ever heard of it, to realize there was such, was when they needed to replace the librarian. Bertha retired, and it wasn't just automatic that the next one moved up, and they had a search committee—even way back then they had a search committee—and Margaret did get the choice that time. But there were others who came from here and there who spent a day and were interviewed.

And, then, when she left, then there was another search committee, and that's when Jim [Morgan] got the job. Then things changed, because when Margaret was librarian, and Bertha, their office was right on the main floor, in the back, but it was there, and they'd be out occasionally. But after Jim came, he was upstairs, and he never showed. People didn't know him from Adam. I liked Jim, I liked him a lot, but he never did have that touch, and didn't feel the need of it, I guess.

WEIMER: You told me that you have lived in the neighborhood around OHSU since, basically, you got here. Can you tell me how the neighborhood itself changed over the years?

WAGNER: Well, there were no sidewalks. There are still no sidewalks to speak of there [laughter]. It's really country. Eleventh Avenue is a very, very busy thoroughfare, and no way can it be made wider, that you can see. And for people walking, with no sidewalks, it's a dangerous place. But that's where I went from the library, then, after I moved back onto the Hill. Then I was up there on Eleventh and Gaines, and I'd walk at night from here [demonstrates], up here, and across to the place. And it wasn't paved for a long while, that last part, and there were a few lights, I guess, but it was farmland. It had been a farm where the building is now where I live. It had been a farm, and there were old apple trees down in the gully, and gradually they've died out.

WEIMER: I think you mentioned once that you were a member of the Neighborhood Association.

WAGNER: Oh yes.

WEIMER: What was the relationship between the Neighborhood Association and the University?

WAGNER: Well, you see, Portland is divided into neighborhoods, and we're part of the Southwest—I forget the unit name for the southwest neighborhoods, but ours is Homestead, our particular one, and that includes the University. And because the University is a part of the neighborhood, they always have a representative to come to the meeting and

report on what's going on with the School, because that's important to some of these homeowners. There are still a few homeowners living up there, and they care about a lot of those little things.

The meeting is held once a month. Now it's held over in the CCD [now Child Development and Rehabilitation Center]. The fellow who's the president, he lives up there. A young man. It involves traffic and, oh, safety, security. I remember one time there was a great commotion about the helicopters coming to the helicopter pad [on Gaines Road]. Because they'd come in over that gully back where I live. It did make a lot of noise, and the people were complaining who lived down around in there. I don't know how they resolved that because the helicopter pad is still there.

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

WEIMER: This is side two of the oral history with Marie Wagner on November 6th.

WAGNER: We are definitely a part of the neighborhood, and we must remember that. I mean, OHSU has to remember that they are part, and do nothing to disturb the neighbors [laughs].

WEIMER: It's a fairly small neighborhood?

WAGNER: Well, it extends up to Council Crest, I think, on up there and around. It's irregular looking because of the hill. I don't know how far over it goes, over this way, because I'm up here [demonstrates].

WEIMER: Through the years were there any points of contention between the University and the neighborhood?

WAGNER: Well, there was about the Veterans Hospital, when they were going to build the new one. It was in the city, the contention with other parts of the city that wanted it, and I don't know who put the pressure on from here. Hatfield, maybe? He was a great one to get the stuff we needed or wanted, you know, so that it wound up being built up here, where it had been. They just tore down what was there. Then Shriners, that was another one. See, Shriners was way out in northeast—you know where it was? On Northeast 82nd.

WEIMER: Yes.

WAGNER: So when they were going to need a new place, then there was a commotion. But again, OHSU won out to have it up here. And those things calmed down and you don't hear anymore about it. But the people who were involved, they don't forget [laughter]. I never had any property up there that's a care, but there are several people, up there who own quite a bit. Maybe they aren't living there, but they—like the Krippaehnes—because a lot of buildings, apartment buildings, belong to the Krippaehnes. Now, did you know the Krippaehnes at all?

WEIMER: No.

WAGNER: No, of course you wouldn't have. When I was new there, working the evenings, Marion Larsen was a student, and when the war was over—well, the war had been over by the time I was there, but people were not all back. Bill Krippaehne had been overseas, and he came back, and I remember she brought him in that evening to introduce him, but by then he was her fiancé.

WEIMER: We have seen, in the last few years, a lot of changes in technology, and how it was used with the library. I know that there was probably very little technology when you started, but could you tell me what type of technology there was, if any, and when it started?

WAGNER: It probably would have been filing. The filing had been changed. You know, filing, that's the kind, you know, the bit-by-bit kind, and that's what the old-timers did not like to see go, including me. It was the—well, was that the computer that took over the filing?—well, to locate things. I guess the computer—you got it on the computer.

WEIMER: Now, do you remember a thing called AIM-TWX?

WAGNER: No.

WEIMER: Okay. I was told by Heather that that was something that was one of the first things.

WAGNER: Ah. See, that was after me, then.

WEIMER: Okay. I wasn't quite sure what the year was.

WAGNER: No. AIM-TWX, I hadn't heard that one.

WEIMER: Tell me about the Faculty Wives Club [now Medical Faculty Auxiliary].

WAGNER: Oh yes. Well, there was a recent celebration, fifty years. They put out a little booklet that has it all in there about it. So that's what I should find for you, that booklet.

And we had a dinner in BICC. We had a committee, and then decided on who would cater it, and how we would invite them, and they sent out the invitations. I've forgotten what the attendance was, but it was a swank affair. It was very nice. And I live so close, but I got there late. I missed the social—you know, the cocktail part out there in the lobby, and just slithered in and got a seat at a table that didn't—that had a place that, luckily, left, so I made it. But, you know, here I was, right on top of it, but I—

That has been in existence for fifty years, and they published a booklet, and it listed

all the presidents, and the last—the present president is Robinson, Leslie Robinson.

WEIMER: What are some of the activities?

WAGNER: That we did?

WEIMER: Yes.

WAGNER: Well, we always had a bazaar, and we were in charge of the receptions after commencement. The commencement was in the Auditorium up there, and then they'd come up into those three big rooms, and the Faculty Wives Auxiliary had this—they were in charge, and they the tables set up and saw to the tea and cookies or whatever, and that was a big thing. And, then, they had one for—well, it was just the Medical School.

Then, what else did we do? Oh, we had a picnic in those days, a nice, family picnic. Then we also contributed to different funds that involved the Medical School, like there was one time they refurbished the women's lounge room over in the basic science building. Now, each year they give three scholarships to juniors, probably, that they give in the spring. Five hundred dollars, I think. They've been doing that for a number of years now.

We always were involved with any reception. There used to be a faculty reception for downtown physicians, the clinical faculty. That was held in the activity building. So these things have gone on a long time, but they seem so recent, in a way.

WEIMER: Who could belong to the Faculty Wives Club?

WAGNER: Well, the wives of the faculty, and a few exceptions, like me and the Dean of Women—well, she wasn't Dean of Women; she was dean of the admissions, I guess—anyway, Caroline Pommarane [the Registrar]. There were a few exceptions, but, you know, on the whole it was the wives, or the person herself, if she were a faculty person, and so we had some of those. Dr. Oginski, Evelyn Oginski was one like that, and I guess that's where Margaret and I fit in, too.

WEIMER: After your retirement from OHSU, you still were involved—I mean, you're still involved with the University. Tell me about your volunteer activities.

WAGNER: Oh. Well, when I first retired, it was '74. And I went away for the year and came back, worked a little bit more in '75. Margaret retired, and we both went off on a long trip. And when I came back from there, I don't remember how long it was before I began to volunteer. I don't remember. Margaret began right away. She was over at the hospital, and we had the information desk. And what it was, it was just a table, a little table, and we sold the candy from the table [laughter], boxes of candy out there.

So, as I say, I don't remember when I began, and therefore I don't remember how many years I volunteered. I have a pin for two thousand hours, but that doesn't really indicate

the years. Edie Ryman was the head of volunteers then. Now it's Ivy Nelson.

And what do volunteers do? Well, it's amazing how many things they do over there. I only know about the few things that I have done, but once a year the School gives a luncheon to recognize all the volunteer hours, and it's a dandy thing. It's a big affair, a very nice luncheon at some other place, and there are awards and gifts and flowers. It's very, very good.

So that is a going concern now. But it amazes me, the box where they keep the record for the hours is on the information desk out front there, and I see kids come up there and get in, and, oh, my goodness, I'd say, "Where do you work?" Well sometimes it's over in some lab. And, then, there are the ladies who rock the babies up in the baby department, and there are some of those that I never see in between times. It's quite a group now.

I hate to think that I'll never get back to it, but I can't imagine I'll never be able to go back and walk, and if you can't walk any of it, you might as well not do it. I don't know, Ivy might have a job. [Editor's note: Wagner had broken her hip on October 23, 1997.]

WEIMER: Oh, I think you have to give yourself a little time to heal.

WAGNER: I think she would hate to have me go for keeps, because I am handy, and I've been quite steady. [Coughing] But for a number of years I went off every summer for at least six weeks on a trip with a friend. That stopped about five years ago. He just was older, and he got to the point where he couldn't do it anymore, and it was time, because pretty soon I couldn't, either. [Coughing.]

[Tape stopped.]

WEIMER: Marie, you worked so long in the library, and it involved books and people, of course. Could you tell me what the role of books in your life has been?

WAGNER: [Laughing] When I was in high school, you remember, we were to read books and report, and you got five points if you did a Dickens, and I always chose the lesser ones, easier ones. I never tried hard to read a big one, a good one. So, then, I went on. I went through the period of the romance books. I think I liked books, but I never really got deep into them.

And then, about ten years ago, the Faculty Wives, that's one of the things they had is a book group. We meet once a month, and we meet in the morning at someone's home and have coffee and something and talk about the book. We all read the same book, and then we talk about it, and then choose another one for next time and choose a place for the next time. So I've been doing that for ten years, I guess. So that made me more interested in books. But it amazes me how the other ladies in that group read. They must read all the time, and, yet, they are all busy women, you know, that have other activities. They're younger than I, and they read other things. I do well if I get the one read for the month [laughter]. I'm a slow

reader, but I'm not happy if I don't have some books around. I want to pick one up to read.

And, of course, when you work in a library, people think, "Oh, you know all about the books," and we often had to tell them, "We know where they are and how to get them, but we don't know what's in all of them" [laughter]. But we do know how to find them.

WEIMER: Well, our hour is almost up, and I'd like to thank you very much for this second interview, and I do wish you a very speedy recovery from the broken hip.

WAGNER: Oh, I'll be glad to speed it up somehow. I am very disgusted. But thank you for coming again and for putting up with such a rough passage here. I'm sorry.

WEIMER: No problem.

WAGNER: And this morning I thought, now, she's coming. What is it that we're going to talk about it, what—and it just went out of my mind like that, so I didn't gather any thoughts together, so on second thought, you know, I could do a better job.

WEIMER: It's been fine. Thank you again.

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