

INTERVIEWEE: SHARON PUGSLEY  
UCI Archivist

INTERVIEWER: Samuel C. McCulloch  
Emeritus Professor of History  
UCI Historian

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SM: This is an interview with the UCI Archivist, Sharon Pugsley, on Thursday, May 3, 1990 in HOB-360. Now, Sharon, the first question is when did you become UCI Archivist?

SP: I started on July 1, 1977.

SM: Now, what did you do before you came to UCI?

SP: Well, just before I came to UCI I was at the University of Utah and I did manuscripts and archives there. I think I was there about four and one-half years.

SM: You're telling me that you were an archivist for four years at the University of Utah, but you did in addition, manuscripts?

SP: I wasn't the university archivist though. They had one person who was in charge of Special Collections and he was the university archivist. I was hired with the title of Manuscripts Librarian. It turned out to be more archives than manuscripts and I wanted to do manuscripts, too, and so that's why I was attracted to UCI. Before that I was at the New Jersey Historical Society and there I was the reference librarian, mainly; but the manuscripts librarian was gone and I got to pinch hit for awhile. I enjoyed that.

SM: Now you said you were in the New Jersey Historical Society.  
Is that the one in Newark, New Jersey?

SP: Right.

SM: And where did you live when you were living in New Jersey?

SP: Well, I lived in New Brunswick. I had just graduated from Rutgers, which is in New Brunswick, and so I took the train and commuted to Newark.

SM: So, in other words, you're telling me you went to the Rutgers University Library Program?

SP: Right.

SM: And got your what? Masters Degree?

SP: M.L.S.

SM: M.L.S., right. Because I taught at Rutgers for thirteen years, and they just had begun the library program. And they got a very fine person to head it up, who had been Assistant Dean at Columbia University, their program. He lasted about seven or eight years and then they had a man by the name of Shaw who was a fine director of the program, or Dean, he was the Dean of the Library School, a very brilliant man. And I've forgotten, I think a lady succeeded him. Of course, I left in 1960 and, I suppose, you didn't go there until the 1970s.

SP: Right.

SM: Yes. Aren't manuscripts a part of archives, usually? Or is it separated?

SP: There are manuscripts in the archives, so you work with manuscripts in the archives as well as published materials. And so archives have both published and unpublished materials, and the unpublished are usually manuscripts, unless they're AV [Audio-Visual] things. I forgot what you asked me. (chuckling)

SM: Well, (inaudible).

SP: Oh. The manuscripts and archives?

SM: What I'm saying, aren't manuscripts separated from archives in libraries or are they always together in the archives?

SP: Oh.

SM: Because you said you were doing only one and not the other, didn't you.

SP: Yes.

SM: At Utah.

SP: No, I did university archives manuscripts and other manuscripts. The other manuscripts would be things that are not records of the university but they are collections that we bring in from other . . . from outside the university. If it's produced by the university and it's a manuscript, then it's an archive. But if it's not produced by the university, and it's a manuscript--say, somebody's diaries--like, he was a prominent person in the city or an old pioneer, then they would count as part of the manuscripts collection. And those things are kept separate.

SM: So what, for example, in our archives, in which you are the Archivist, do you have many manuscripts under your supervision and control? Now, for example, you have all the oral history reports and the tapes, and when I started out I was informed that under the Regents' rules, all the interviews and tapes will be housed in the Archives.

SP: Right.

SM: And that's a rule, a University of California rule. Now, did you in New Jersey in that historical society separate, say, the diaries of some important people from way back in New Jersey? Did you have them in your collection or were they in a separate collection?

SP: Well, at the New Jersey Historical Society, mostly all I did with them was just reference. I didn't try to organize anything any differently; I just left it the way it was. Because after so many months, <sup>when</sup> ~~then~~ they got another manuscripts librarian so that they could, if they wanted to change the arrangement, they could. But, as I recall, there was an arrangement already there, so they probably kept that. Usually you don't change things around unless you need to.

SM: So how long were you at the New Jersey Historical Society?

SP: A little over a year.

SM: A little over a year.

SP: Yes.

SM: Okay. Then you went to Utah.

SP: Yes.

SM: And went right into a job that was advertised, was it, as Archivist?

SP: Right, it was advertised as Manuscripts Librarian.

SM: Advertised as Manuscripts Librarian.

SP: Yes, that's where I wanted to go. I didn't really want to do archives, but when I got there, after I had taken the job, then they made me do some archives, too. (chuckling) And then they kept making me do more and more archives. And that's partly why I wanted to come here, because, officially, half of my job here is the University Archivist and the other half is Regional History Manuscripts Librarian. And that's what attracted me.

SM: Repeat that for me, please.

SP: Okay. Regional History Manuscripts Librarian.

SM: Okay.

SP: And so, some of the collections that we have as regional history manuscripts are not ones that ~~are not ones that~~ are produced by UCI. If they were produced by UCI, they'd be university archives. But some ones we do have that are in the regional history manuscripts collection are those of Charles Stark Thomas.

SM: Charlie Thomas?

SP: Do you know him?

SM: Yes. He's dead, of course.

SP: Oh, right. Well, it turned out that his grandson became interested in libraries and archives when he was at Berkeley and he asked us if we'd like his papers. We didn't really know what a treasure we were getting, but we got some really good things <sup>from</sup> of Charles Stark Thomas. Let's see, he started out . . .

SM: He was Secretary <sup>of</sup> for the [United States] Army under Eisenhower.

SP: Yes, he was Secretary of the [United States] Navy under Eisenhower.

SM: Oh, the navy?

SP: Yes. And before that, or is it after that? Then he was president of the Irvine Company.

SM: That's right.

SP: But before that, he had been president of Foreman and Clark and also president of . . .

SM: TWA?

SP: Yes, TWA. Good for you. (chuckling) With Howard Hughes and he had a really exciting life. His correspondence is filled with big names that he wrote to.

SM: Now, the most disappoint thing is that I never did interview Charlie Thomas. Because, of course, he gave the original deed of the Irvine Company of the land, of 1,000 acres, to UC Irvine. And I guess Dan was there and, I think, the Chairman of the Board of Regents was there and so on. We have pictures

of him, several good pictures. I knew his widow very well because we were on the same board of a private school. And I don't know what I could pick up, really, from her. I needed to talk to him and I realized I hadn't, and time went by and then he died.

Well, now, back to your job. You were hired as a manuscripts head for Utah, but you did a lot of archives work.

SP: Right.

SM: So, when you came here, you were promised that you would do archives work, and what about manuscripts?

SP: Half-time archives and half-time manuscripts.

SM: Half-time archives, half-time manuscripts.

SP: Yes.

SM: I suppose you get a double salary for that, do you?

SP: (laughter)

SM: I'm just kidding. Okay. You came to Irvine in what year?

SP: July 1977.

SM: July 1977.

SP: Yes.

SM: You have really answered three: What special training do you need for the job? You got that in your Rutgers University Library School. Now, I want to say, when you arrived here, I guess I didn't contact you and place all my manuscripts and tapes with you until I left for Australia in 1986. But have you any other oral histories in progress? Oh, by the way,

before that, I'll ask another question first. The question is: What do you consider to be the [Senator Thomas] Kuechel papers? Are they manuscripts or what are they?

SP: The what papers?

SM: The Kuechel, Senator Kuechel . . . He left all his Santa Ana paper, you know the newspaper that he was involved in--he owned--I guess. Senator Kuechel, he's dead now, but he's given us a very large collection. Only, really, the good ones somehow, I think, UCLA was able to grab onto and claim that they had a better promise or something like that. You don't know anything about that?

SP: No. No, maybe Roger has that, is working on it.

SM: No, Roger has then . . . All right, in Special Collections, then, under Roger Berry, we have Senator Kuechel, his newspaper; but the letters and correspondence of first when he was still in Santa Ana and then when he went to the Senate of the United States, those letters went somewhere else. Roger can tell me.

Did you know your predecessor here? Who was your predecessor?

SP: My predecessor was Roxanne Nilan.

SM: Yes, and where did she go?

SP: She went to Stanford University.

SM: That's very fancy.

SP: Yes. And I was just at an archivists meeting last weekend and found out that she is leaving that job and starting work on a Ph.D., I think in history, at Stanford.

SM: Well!

SP: So she's doing very well.

SM: Oh, good. How do you spell her name?

SP: R-O-X-A-N-N-E.

SM: And what's the last name?

SP: Nilan, N-I-L-A-N, I think.

SM: That's interesting. Well, now, who has replaced her at Stanford?

SP: I don't know. I'm not sure they've got a replacement yet. I think she hasn't left yet, she's just going to.

SM: Okay, she hasn't left yet, but she's . . . and they haven't got a replacement yet. But then you'll leave us now the way she did.

SP: No. (chuckling)

SM: (chuckling) Well, you might, you might. Have you any other oral histories in progress?

SP: No.

SM: That's an easy answer. Now, all right, you have no other oral histories in progress. You know that the Oral History Program for Orange County is being done over at Cal State Fullerton.

SP: Right.

SM: And Shirley Stephenson is the Director, and so forth. And Gary Long is the person who does this work, and others, too. She's very good.

SP: May I say something?

SM: Just a minute now. I want to know what your precise duties are as Archivist.

SP: Okay. I brought my job description. Would you like me to go down that? Let's see if I can find it. Yes, here.

SM: Well, it seems to me . . .

SP: It's too long? (chuckling)

SM: We don't need to have them type it out. We'll attach that to this interview.

SP: Oh, okay. Instead of reading it, we can just attach this.

SM: Yes, but give me the highlights anyhow.

SP: Okay. Well, formulate the policies and procedures for the operation of the Archives; participate in the Records Management Program. Maybe you'll be interested in this. There's a University Archivists Council for the whole University of California, and we meet about once a year. Sometimes we meet with the Records Management people. Each campus has its own Records Management person as a representative to this council. At UCI it's Dowrene Hahn, and they work on records management. And then, of course, we're interested in what they do and they're interested in what we do, and we try to cooperate <sup>between</sup> the two groups. I'm told this has

been changed slightly, but it used to be that whenever the Records Managers met, as they go from campus to campus, the Archivist on that campus would meet with them. And then often the Chair of the Archivists Council would meet with them, too. And I think now it's just the Chair of the Archivists Council.

SM: Who's Chair of the Archivists for us?

SP: Well, you mean for our campus?

SM: Yes.

SP: Well, <sup>in</sup> ~~(inaudible)~~ the Records Management, Dowrene Hahn is our person.

SM: Yes.

SP: But see, for the Archivists Council, it's up in the air who's the Chair right now. I think it's going to be Phil Banton at UCLA <sup>who</sup> will be next Chair. And so then he would go to the next meeting of the Records Managers.

SM: Okay, now, it's agreed that you leave me a copy of your duties, so that we don't have to have them typed out here, but we'll attach them to the interview.

SP: Okay.

SM: Why is it that I heard that the interviews that are going on in some work at Berkeley and in Davis are given to the Bancroft Library? Why are copies given to the Bancroft Library? Do you know?

SP: Golly, I don't know. I don't know.

SM: Okay. Well, they are.

SP: You mean extra copies?

SM: The extra copies.

SP: Well . . .

SM: They would like us, for instance, when I'm through with all this and have written the history, they would like to have the copies of all the interviews.

SP: Oh, that's interesting.

SM: Yes, but Bancroft. And somebody told me at the meeting, you know, the seminar I'm attending at Berkeley each month, that copies of the records go to the Bancroft.

SP: Well, great. Then that's a second place they'll be saved.  
(chuckling)

SM: Well, (inaudible).

SP: Maybe it's taking up a lot of space. I hope they have it. Maybe they'll use them.

SM: Now, the problem, the next question is when will you get more help and space? I have an answer from the Librarian, Dr. Boyer. Oh, by the way, Dowrene Hahn spells her name D-O-W-R-E-N-E, Hahn, H-A-H-N, is it?

SP: Right.

SM: Well, Dr. Boyer said that as soon as the Science Library is completed and occupied, which he hopes will be 1993, then that frees up space in the present Library building and you'll be given more space. I've visited many universities in my

lifetime and I've worked in Archives in my lifetime, and this is the smallest Archives that I've ever seen. (chuckling)

SP: (chuckling)

SM: And Michigan, for instance, had a very large space. Rutgers University made, as you know . . . The library is no longer new. It was new to me. It was finished in 1954 and 1955 or 1956 it was opened. And so it was very good and new at the time. When I left to come west in 1960, it was a very satisfactory library, and they had room for the Archives. So when do you think you're going to get help and space? You've got two people working for you now, right?

SP: Right. I've been really glad to get them, because it's made a whole lot of difference already.

SM: Sure.

SP: I have two people now. One I've had about four years and one just about five months, and they're both really, really good. It's made all the difference. Each one is only half-time, so it's the same as one FTE, but they're both high-quality, really good, ambitious people that think, you know, and always have good suggestions. I'm just really, really lucky with them.

SM: Anyone with the name of Ellen, you see, has got to be good. That's my daughter's name. (chuckling)

SP: Oh! (chuckling)

SM: And you've got a Mary Ellen. Now, question seven: Do you have any words of wisdom for the UCI Historian? Should we do anything differently?

SP: Let's see, I wrote some notes.

SM: While you're hunting for that, I'll turn the machine off and ask you to look through your notes. And if you'd like to add certain things there, please do.

(tape is turned off)

SP: I guess the only words of wisdom that I have for you for the history you're working on of UCI is that there is a lot of stuff waiting for you to come look at in the Archives.

SM: To answer that, Sharon, I am planning to get these interviews finished by, hopefully, the end of July or the middle of August. At that point, I'll start coming in every day and hope to get through that research in six months and then start to write. Now, is there anything on those typed sheets you've got there, anything you'd like to say for the record?

SP: This is to answer your questions about the workshops I went to. While I was going to Rutgers, they didn't have any classes about manuscripts, but there was one . . . So that summer between the semesters, when I was at Rutgers, I went to Case Western Reserve University where they were having a special seminar on how to deal with manuscripts. And they had big, big names. There was Clifford Shipton from Harvard.

SM: S-H-I-P-T-O-N.

SP: Right, S-H-I-P-T-O-N, and Philip Mason at Wayne State Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. And, of course, Ruth Helmuth.

SM: How do you spell that?

SP: H-E-L-M-U-T-H, at Case Western. Archivists, like everyone else, I guess, require continuing education. And so, a few years later, I went to the Ohio Historical Society, and then a few years later, took the course offered by the National Archives in conjunction with the American University, which included academic credit. Then I finished my thesis for my M.A. <sup>in history</sup> after coming to UCI.

SM: Yes, I read it.

SP: Oh, that's right, you read it. (chuckling) Which was very kind. Let's see, then there were meetings and special workshops in the Society of American Archivists and the Society of California Archivists. Just last week, I was to a meeting of the Society of California Archivists. And it seems like things are changing all the time.

SM: Did you room with that wonderful archivist at San Francisco State University?

SP: Yes. I roomed with Helene Whitson, and we talked about you.

SM: How do you spell that?

SP: H-E-L-E-N-E W-H-I-T-S-O-N.

SM: I know her. I like her. That's great.

SP: Yes.

SM: (inaudible)

SP: She came here and we wanted to come see you, but you were gone right then, or had to leave or something. But, anyway, she says she's coming back because we didn't get everything done that we wanted to do. And so we're going to make sure <sup>you're</sup> here when she's here. (chuckling)

SM: Right, right, you've got to do that.

SP: Because we both talk about you. Both of us know we're really lucky to have been around Dr. McCulloch.

SM: Well, flattery will get you everywhere.

SP: But that's true though. (chuckling) Let's see, you want me to tell about what my library assistants do?

SM: Yes.

SP: Okay.

SM: You know, I think what I want is this.

SP: Okay, that's ~~just~~ Jane Emerald. Jane Emerald is our computer authority <sup>in</sup> ~~of~~ the Archives. She's had a lot of experience with computers and with the different programs. ~~Mostly~~, Mary Ellen and I have pretty well learned WordPerfect, but that's the only thing that we really feel competent with right now. So ~~Mary Ellen~~ <sup>Jane Emerald</sup> communicates with the Library computer people about the hardware and with people in Central Records. Are you familiar with the Central Records Office? What they do is they get records from all over the university.

SM: This is Dowrene Hahn?

SP: It used to be. She's not there anymore. They've had about three changes in leadership since I've been here.

SM: Yes, I met the last one before this one. Who's the one now?

SP: Oh, golly, her name just escaped me. Maybe it'll come. *Penny White*

SM: It doesn't matter.

SP: But anyway, each one [new leadership] they change a lot of things and now . . . It used to be that they got records . . . Say, if a letter came to UCI addressed to the president or addressed to Chancellor Peltason, then unless it says confidential or something like that, then it gets opened in Central Records. This was the way it was explained to me. And then they look to see what the person is writing about or what kind of question he's asking, and then they send it to the appropriate department to answer, instead of sending everything to Chancellor Peltason. Otherwise, I guess, his office would be flooded with everything. So then they direct it to the right office. That's part of what they do. But then, also, different administrative office<sup>s</sup><sub>1</sub> have their records kept in Central Records. And so, in the past, they devised a numbering system that classified all the different subjects that people could write about and then they filed them by the subjects. And so, when you look for something, you look through their list of subjects, find out what the number is, and then go look for it there. But then they were getting really crowded, and so when they're through with things and

nobody asks for them anymore, then they send them to the Archives. And then, of course, people do ask for them who are interested in the history of UCI. And so that's how we got quite a number of our records.

But now, this third regime that's been there since I came in 1977 is starting a whole different system. And what they're doing is, instead of having these numbers, they're working out a system in which they put each letter that comes through, they'll put who it's to and who it's from and subject terms, and then their computer is supposed to be able to find all these letters from all these subject terms.

Also, let me tell you about one more thing. They're having a system to photograph each letter and so, when you choose these subject terms, you not only find out that there is a letter somewhere, you can call it up on your screen, the letter itself. Does that make sense?

SM: Yes, oh, yes. I think that's marvelous. But what about way back? Say, for instance, Dean March or Dean Reines or Dean Steinhaus? What about these letters or my letters when I was Dean? Would they have gone to Central Records?

SP: My guess would be that some of your letters have gone to Central Records, but they won't do a retrospective. I'm not sure now, maybe. I don't think they're going to do everything they've ever done. Well, no, because they haven't asked for ours, the ones that have been put in the Archives. Now, I

think what they'll do is the ones they . . . They'll probably have somewhere where there's a cut-off--I don't know when it is--but they'll probably, from that time, then they'll copy each letter.

SM: Now I take it that that's all you have to say about the last question, number seven?

SP: I think so, yes.

SM: Okay.

SP: Jane is the authority on those and Mary Ellen does AV material. Oh, wait, I said a minute ago that I didn't know if we had any other oral history tapes. Well, we have gobs of audio tapes, and so it's been just a big job for Mary Ellen to just go through and try to get them together, intellectually, if not . . .

SM: Who was talking to whom on the tapes?

SP: Well, just a minute. They're not like oral history. Some of them are and some of them are not. One of the tapes, for example, it has historical importance, but it's not an interview, and that's the speech that you gave a few years ago when you were up at the University Club, when Chancellor Peltason introduced you as the University Historian. Okay, we have a tape of that, but it's not an interview.

SM: You have a tape? I thought the tape recording wasn't turned on at that talk.

SP: Well, I don't know. Something came and it's labeled that.

SM: Well, it'll probably be blank.

SP: I'll have to check it to see.

SM: Well, if it is . . . What happened was this, the tape recorder, in all the excitement--I was staggered to see 110 people and I couldn't believe it--so I just forgot in the excitement to turn on [the tape recorder]. Now, what I did, therefore, somebody was castigating me for not turning it on. So I, in the next couple of days, I used this machine and I had fairly elaborate notes, and I made a tape--that talk is now recorded.

SP: Oh, okay.

SM: So it's now recorded fully and it's roughly sixteen to eighteen double-spaced pages and it's in your archives. You've made a copy of it for me. I'm carrying a copy around, which I'll use next week when I go to Berkeley to give a talk about what I've done here at Irvine. But is there anything more now? I interrupted you then.

SP: Well, I just wanted to say that she thinks we have about 300 audio tapes. She's been going through and just giving each one a number and then recording what it says on the outside of the box, but she hasn't been playing them. And some of them don't have much of anything on the outside of the box. But just as a preliminary step, she's trying to get them all together and giving them a number and then recording what it says on the outside of the box. Then, of course, what she

has to do afterwards is take each one individually and play it, to find out what's really there. But that's a huge task and I'm just really glad she's<sup>4</sup> there, but she does the audio-visual for the whole Archives and it's a really big help.

SM: Well, that's very helpful to know that. In other words, now, we've pretty well covered all the material and I'd like to thank you very much for coming over and suffering through this machine.

And I think, to conclude, the oral history manuscripts and tapes are always sent over to you immediately for storage. And I don't particularly want them to be used until I finish the history, although they are open to immediate scrutiny. Each person I interview, if they put zero on that legal form we have, then it can be opened. But I don't think anyone has come up to look at them, and I hope they don't until I get this thing finished. Then there is this question as to whether we should make copies to send to the Bancroft [Library]. And I'll try to sort that out next week when I have this seminar completed for the year. It has had some very high-powered people who want to know how to go about writing a history of UC Berkeley. And now they're really very pleased that I'm doing what I'm doing, and they would like to do a whole history of the nine campuses. And they've applied for a very substantial grant, which hopefully will come through in the summer, and they'll gear up . . . I don't

think I'll be needed to go there anymore, but it's been a very pleasant five meetings I will have attended. So thank you very much, Sharon, and I'll turn this bloody machine off.

END OF INTERVIEW

Archivists at UCI:

Edwin Tomlinson, Evelyn Houston, Jane Kimball, Elizabeth Karshner, Roger Berry, Roxanne Nilan and Sharon Pugsley.