

Oral History Interview
with
Bernadine Abbott Hoduski

Interview Conducted by
Larry Romans
January 25, 2009

Government Information Living Indexes
Oral History Project

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Interview History

Interviewer: Larry Romans
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The recording and transcript of this interview were processed at the Oklahoma State University Library in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Project Detail

The oral histories collected as a result of this project will preserve the voices and experiences of government information workers who have invested a good portion of their careers to providing and insuring access to government information.

This project was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board on February 15, 2007.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Bernadine Abbott Hoduski is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on January 25, 2009.

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About Bernadine Abbott Hoduski...

Bernadine E. Abbott Hoduski was born in New Deal, Montana. She retired in 1995 after serving as a professional staff member for Library and Distribution Services, U.S. Congress Joint Committee on Printing for nearly 21 years. One of her primary missions was oversight of the public access programs of the Government Printing Office (GPO), including the Depository Library Program, sales program, by-laws, and international exchange as well as cataloging of government documents. Lobbying and communicating with policymakers represent two of her many talents. These skills were called into action when she founded the American Library Association's Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) in 1972. She also was a charter member of the Advisory Council to the Public Printer on Depository Libraries, 1973-1975 and she organized the first Federal depository regional seminar in Kansas City in 1973.

Ms. Abbott Hoduski earned a M.A. in Librarianship in 1965 from the University of Denver, Colorado. Early in her career she was the Head Librarian for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Kansas City, Missouri. She was a guest lecturer at Central Missouri State University Library School and taught at Catholic University Library School in the 1980s.

Ms. Abbott Hoduski has received several awards spanning the length of her career. In 1973 she was awarded the EPA Bronze Medal for Commendable Service. In 1977 she was awarded the James Bennett Childs Award for distinguished contributions to documents librarianship. The American Library Association Government Documents Round Table honored her by establishing the Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award in 1993. In 1995 she was awarded the Public Printer's Distinguished Service Award.

In addition to service Ms. Abbott Hoduski has ma

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January 25, 2009
Denver, Colorado

Romans *Today is January 25, 2009 and I'm Larry Romans, a long time member of GODORT [Government Documents Roundtable, American Library Association (ALA)]. I'm here to interview Bernadine Abbott Hoduski who probably more than any other person has contributed to the great success of GODORT as an organization. She was a founder of GODORT. She was the first GODORT Councilor to ALA Council, and she has been involved in all parts of GODORT. Welcome.*

Abbott Hoduski Thank you.

Romans *I'd like to start actually with how did GODORT get started? You're known as a founder of GODORT. How many of you got together and how did it happen? Who initiated it and how many of you were in the initial group?*

Abbott Hoduski Well, GODORT started as a task force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table, and it started as the Task Force on Government Documents and Cataloging In Publication (CIP) because we wanted CIP in government documents. We were quite successful. We had buttons and so on, and we had a special exhibit. After we convinced the Library of Congress that they should do that, then we decided that we would become the Task Force on Government Publications, which didn't really set well with the Inter-Divisional Committee on Government Documents who didn't appreciate our setting up a rival group. Ours was a membership group and theirs was an inter-divisional committee. Some of the people that worked on the CIP task force and people like Maryellen Trautman and Lois Mills and others talked about needing a round table. We decided to send out a one-page flyer to every depository library with just a few questions asking, "Are you concerned about these issues? And if you are, sign this petition asking ALA to establish a

roundtable.”

Romans *Now did GPO send this out for you ...*

Abbott Hoduski No.

Romans *... or did you have to do it yourself?*

Abbott Hoduski GPO had nothing to do with this. This was entirely a Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) endeavor. Lois Mills was a member of SRRT, and I worked with Lois Mills, Candy Morgan, Mary Redmond, Geneva Finn, Deanne Holzberlein, and St. Louis Public Library documents librarians . We were the core group that decided we wanted a round table. Then Mary Ellen Trautman in Oklahoma was involved, but we’re the ones that put the flyer together, mailed it out. All of the petitions came to my house. I got to be good friends with the postman because we got a lot of response, including money. There were—\$50 from University of Hawaii saying, “I can’t come to the meetings, but here’s \$50 to get this group going.”

So we had 500 signatures right off the bat, and you really don’t need that many. We are the only round table that was established in one meeting. It was a mid-winter meeting in Chicago, and we went to COO (Committee on Organization) and to the Executive Board and to the Council, you know, through all of the hoops in one meeting. We were established at the end of that meeting. Then we had our first meeting the following Annual, and we’d reserved a room for 100 people. They had to move us across the hall because 500 people showed up ...

Romans *Wow.*

Abbott Hoduski ... including the head of the NTIS (National Technical Information Service) people from the Library of Congress, people from the National Archives, publishers who were interested in government information. It was an incredible outpouring of interest.

Romans *Did you have a steering committee that organized the meeting?*

Abbott Hoduski We set up an organizing committee and, before the annual meeting we

Trautman was not involved in the Constitution. She was. She helped us write it, but she didn't go on to the formal Constitution Committee. We set up a formal Constitution Committee. So other people took over, but we basically wrote the Constitution in St. Louis at the St. Louis Public Library.

Romans *And so at that first meeting, did you hold elections or was that later?*

Abbott Hoduski At the very first meeting, we decided how we would hold the elections at the next formal ALA election process. And we got people to agree to run for the offices that we set up.

Romans *So you ran for chair ...*

Abbott Hoduski For our first Coordinator. We called it Coordinator because we did not believe in chairs. We figured that this was a democratic organization and that documents librarians are very independent people and they would be coordinated. They would not be told what to do. (Laughs)

Romans *Did somebody run against you or were you the only candidate?*

Abbott Hoduski No one ran against me the first time. The second time, Geneva Finn ran against me.

Romans *But you won anyway.*

Abbott Hoduski I won. So she was not happy. Actually she disappeared. She was a wonderful, wonderful librarian, but she went off to get her PhD and we never saw her again. So if anybody knows where Geneva Finn is ... (Laughter)

Romans *Well that must have been quite an organizational challenge to be the first Coordinator. Who were the other people who were elected at that time? Who was on the Steering Committee?*

Abbott Hoduski Well, Tony Miele actually became the second Coordinator. He was at Illinois State Library. We had a treasurer and the different chairs of the task forces—people like Candy Morgan and Clare Beck. A variety of people held the offices. Maryellen Trautman was the first secretary for the Federal Documents Task Force and Mina Pease, who's now come back to be part of GODORT, was chair of the International Documents Task Force. It was just a wonderful variety of people from different kinds of libraries. Arne Richards agreed to be the editor of Documents to the People, which we started almost immediately. We were just like a family actually with all of the task force chairs and the officers.

We also worked it out so that we would meet all day long. So we had what we called “breakfast-less breakfast meetings” and “lunch-less lunch meetings” and “dinner-less dinner meetings.” We just met continually, and it was really like a big family meeting with everybody bringing every grievance they had ever had to discuss it with all these other people that cared about their issues. So everything we’re talking about now, we were talking about then—whether you’re going to have a separate Documents department or whether it was going to be part of Reference. Back then, most Document departments were part of something else. They weren’t separate, but they were pushing to become separate. Now it’s the other way around. They’re going back.

Romans *Now what were you doing to make money at this point? I mean you as a person, what was your job?*

Abbott Hoduski Well we got Al Trezza, who was State Librarian of Illinois and had been Executive Director of the Catholic Library Association before. He paid for printing *Documents to the People* part of the time. Then Jim Leathers, Director of the Mid-Continent Library in Jackson County, Missouri, paid for printing it. They both had their own printing presses. They took turns printing the newsletters for us. So we didn’t have to pay. I used the graphics people at the Environmental Protection Agency who helped me put the graphics together and my assistant, Connie McKenzie, would type up the newsletter. Arne Richards was my co-editor, and he worked on it. He was in Kansas.

Romans *So you were an editor of Documents to the People ...*

Abbott Hoduski I was co-editor ...

Romans *... at the same time ...*

Abbott Hoduski ... with Arne, yes ...

Romans *... that you were chairing the ...*

Abbott Hoduski Yes. Arne was a wonderful man. He was a marathon runner. He was a
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regional administrator comes into the library and says, "I want every issue of *Documents to the People* delivered to my office immediately." And I'm going, "Oh, my god. What's going on?" (Laughs) and Arne comes in and says, "I was talking to the nicest man in the bathroom." (Laughter) So I'm waiting to see what my boss, Jerry Svore, says. So he calls me back and he says, "Wonderful newsletter. Now are the other EPA librarians helping you with this?" I said, "Well, no sir, they're not." "Well you should get them to help you with this." (Laughs)

Romans

Well that's great.

Abbott Hoduski

Yes. So he was very, very supportive. Both my first regional administrator, he was very supportiv

Romans

Abbott Hoduski

the program because they were not part of the program before GODORT started. We wanted the Library of Congress to do better cataloging. They did atrocious cataloging for documents, and so we figured if they were going to spend some resources cataloging, some documents would be better. We wanted government agencies to comply with the law, and they weren't—the majority of them were not. The USGS maps weren't in the program. The Corps of Engineers maps weren't in the program. CIA documents weren't in the program. A lot of census things weren't. National Aeronautics and Space Administration—their things weren't in it.

Romans *Well this must have felt really good to you that so many things are now just commonly accepted that you were really having to push for at that time.*

Abbott Hoduski Yes. I think that a lot of people don't really realize how far we've come from when the 1962 Depository Act was passed. I became a depository librarian in 1965. I became head of my department three months after I got out of library school, and I was ...

Romans *Where was this?*

Abbott Hoduski Central Missouri State University (CMSU) in Warrensburg, Missouri. I was part of the Reference department and then it just so happened that Dr. Ford, our library director, had been a documents librarian. He decided to separate out the Documents department and called me down to his office and said, "I'm going to make you head of the Documents department," and I said, "Have you told Miss Kibby, my boss?" He was dating her. They went to operas together. He said, "Well, you tell her." I said, "I'm not going to tell her." (Laughter) He said, "Okay, well send her down to my office." So I sent her down to the office, and she came back and I really felt terrible for her. She said, "Well, I'm still going to get the box that the books come in and go through them," and I said, "No, you're not. I'm going to be the head of the department and I am going to get the books and I will put the numbers on them and I will do the shelf lists and then I'll make sure that you see them because you're still head of Reference." So that was it.

Romans *So how long did you stay in that job?*

Abbott Hoduski I was there from 1965 through 1969.

Romans *And is that when you moved over to the EPA?*

Abbott Hoduski No. I went to the University of Missouri in Kansas City to be the serials cataloger, and I was there for nine months and then I was born again. It

was the most horrible job I've ever had, not because I don't like cataloging because when I was a depository librarian, I cataloged all the serials at CMSU. We were changing from Dewey to LC, but I convinced them to put everything back in SuDoc and use the SuDoc class number on the catalog card. She, head of cataloging at University of Missouri at Kansas City, was a stereotypical librarian who would not allow you to talk to anybody. So I wasn't allowed to talk to the people in Periodicals or Reference, but I was supposed to be doing a serials catalog. It just was not a good place to be.

I saw an ad in the paper for a job at the Department of Interior, Federal Water Quality Administration, and I went down and I interviewed and they offered me the job that day. I said, "Well, I have a contract with the University of Missouri and I need to work another month," and they said, "You are hired and you are on leave for a month." The guy that interviewed me had been a former CIA agent and he told me later, "The reason I hired you is you came into my office. Within minutes you knew every book I had," because I told him all of his water supply papers were upside down and out of order. (Laughter) He said, "and you had red hair

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making a presentation. I knew that I wanted to get them to do CIP for Documents so I wore a white dress and held red roses and sat in the front row. I was the first person up to ask a question. Bill said, "There, the lovely lady in the white dress with the red roses has the first question," and then I said, "What are you going to do for Documents?" Well then afterwards I talked to Bill Welsh. I followed him into an elevator up to his floor (Laughs) and saying, "What can I do?" and he said, "Well, you're part of SRRT, why don't you do something within SRRT?" So I went back to the SRRT meeting that night and said, "I want to start a task force on CIP," and they said, "Sure, Bernadine. You do whatever you want to."

Romans *That's great.*

Abbott Hoduski The way I got introduced to Mr. Welsh was that George Caldwell, who had been the documents librarian at University of Kansas (KU), was the first person I visited when I started my job at CMSU. My director said, "KU has a very good documents collection and they have a wonderful documents librarian, George Caldwell. You go spend a day with George." So I went and spent a day with George. So then when I was at ALA, he came and sat by me and he said, "Now you need to meet Bill

Romans

Abbott Hoduski

Library Council, and I want somebody on the Council that's not your typical librarian." She said, "I have exactly the person for you."
(Laughter)

Romans

And she did.

Abbott Hoduski

And she did. So she got on and I got on. So I suggested to Rosemary, she was staff director of the JCP (Joint Committee on Printing), that she should come to the Council meeting. She came and then she wrote a memo to Mr. Hayes, Congressman Hayes, and said, "There's this young librarian who is a member of the Council and she asks the best questions. She makes the public printer blush because he can't answer them." (Laughs) She said, "I think we should hire some new staff to look into the services from the Government Printing Office." So I went to lobby her in October of 1974, and she said, "Well the chairman has gotten the money for three positions"—which was really a miracle because it's 17 staffers and he got money for three additional staffers. She said, "We're looking for somebody who knows about library programs and stuff like this," and sh

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I didn't know that until later that that's why the urgency of starting in December.

Romans *Well I remember that Wayne Hayes was an extremely powerful representative. So was he chair of JCP before he was a Ways and Means Committee chair?*

Abbott Hoduski No, he was the chair of Committee on House Administration ...

Romans *Oh, okay.*

Abbott Hoduski ... which is a parent committee of the JCP and ...

Romans *Oh, okay.*

Abbott Hoduski ... and then Senate Rules is a Senate parent committee. House Administration also is a parent committee for the Joint Committee on the Library (JCL). So one year the House would chair JCP, the Senate would chair JCL, then they would exchange roles and then the staff directors would also change. He was a big supporter of the Depository Library Program. He introduced the first bill in 1958 which ended up being the 1962 Depository law. He was really the driving force of getting the 1962 Depository law, and that's why I went to work for him because he really loved the Depository Library Program and so did Rosemary, his staff director. They were very much committed to public access and improving services. They had been getting so many letters of complaint, not just about the depository program but about the sales program, that he said, "We just have to do something about all of GPO."

Romans *Be nice if we had advocates like that right now.*

Abbott Hoduski It would be.

Romans *Yeah.*

Abbott Hoduski We really need somebody.

Romans *Well ... the James Bennett Childs Award—how is it that it was named after him and that he got the first award? And how is it that you got the second award?*

Abbott Hoduski James Bennett Childs was a mentor to many of us in GODORT. He wrote hundreds of letters to us. He wrote a lot of letters to Geneva Finn, and I still have his letters. I have a big pile of letters. He was ...

Romans *Who was he?*

Abbott Hoduski He had a variety of jobs at the Library of Congress. When he was mentoring me, he was kind of retired but coming in every day and volunteering. He worked every day up until when he died in his 90s. He had been the head of Exchange and Gift. He had set up the exchange agreements with Russia and other countries to bring in government documents, and then we sent government documents to the Lenin State Library. He had also run Cataloging at one point. He was very much for improving cataloging for government documents. He sent me an incredible number of LC proof sheets with little notes on it showing me what was missing or what was wrong with it. He encouraged me to serve on the ALA/AACR-2 Catalog Code Revision Committee.

He called me every Sunday morning at 9:00 and I'm not an early morning person on Sunday morning but I would get up and talk to Mr. Childs and tell him what was going on the Cataloging Committee. I said, "Dr. Childs, they think I'm nothing but a troublemaker." He said, "That's exactly what you need to be. Keep being a troublemaker and sooner or later you will get what we want. I'm depending on you to get them to straighten out this cataloging problem with government documents." So he called me a couple of weeks before he died. He was a wonderful man. He'd written so many letters to so many people in—the GODORT founders, that small group of people—that we decided that he should be honored for all the encouragement and work he'd done. There was a committee set up. We set up an awards committee and they decided who should get the first one and he got it. Then there was an awards committee and they honored me with the second one. So I wasn't involved in deciding who should get the award.

Romans *Was he still alive when he got the first award?*

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it and then let me know when they decided, when they did it.

Romans *That's wonderful.*

Abbott Hoduski Yes. Jeanne was at the Government Printing Office, she ran the sales catalog. She was the person who had the creative ideas about how to automate the sales catalog and other things. She didn't get the credit, really, that she deserved. I worked with her almost every day. When I went to work for the Joint Committee on Printing, one of the first projects that we did was to set up a working group to automate the monthly catalog, and she was part of it as well as, you know, Jay Young and Jim Livesey and a bunch of people like that.

Carl LaBarre wasn't the Superintendent of Documents when I started, but he soon became the Superintendent of Documents. Carl LaBarre, I think, other than maybe perhaps my friend, Francis Buckley, was the greatest Superintendent of Documents, I think. He was a visionary, saw that to serve the public we needed to automate the monthly catalog, we needed to go after publications, and we needed to talk to librarians and listen to their advice. He's another Montanan. He grew up in Forsythe, Montana—very tall man, about 6 foot five. He said it was great being tall because he could walk and look into everybody's cubicle and see if they were working. (Laughs)

Romans *During your tenure on the Joint Committee on Printing staff, what are some of the highlights of things that happened?*

Abbott Hoduski Well my very first project was to visit all 55 committees on the House and Senate side to convince them to allow the Congressional Committee prints to become depository. I visited every one of them, and they had to sign off because those committee prints belonged to the committees. I knew every underground tunnel between, you know, all the Senate and House buildings, the Capitol. My office was in the Capitol. I spent a lot of time visiting all 55 committees. It was a wonderful education. I met the staff director of every committee. I met the printing officer and the publishing officer of every committee. I had to convince each one of them to do this. Now they had been sending the committee prints to the Library of Congress and they'd been providing them to Congressional Information Service because Estee Adler had gone around to every committee and was getting the committee prints. This is what made Arne Richards so happy. That had been his dream.

The other project that I enjoyed incredibly was chairing the Serial Set Committee, and that was my idea to set it up. Representative Frank Thompson, Jr. agreed to set this advisory committee up and I chaired it. In fact, I'm probably still the chair because they've never abolished the

anyway because it was the Missouriians that were drinking at the Palmer House and I would have been right with them. (Laughs)

Romans

I first saw you when you were giving a report during the Saturday Updates, and I know you did that for quite a period of time. During what years, more or less, did you provide that update?

Abbott Hoduski Well I started providing updates shortly after I started at the Joint

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Abbott Hoduski

on Printing entirely, but Senator Ford and Senator Stevens said, “No. You have to have Senate agreement, and we do not agree. You need a joint panel to arbitrate certain issues, and this is a support committee, oversight committee, so we do not agree. You have the authority to fire staff because it just so happens you have the chairmanship this year and that’s the way the rules were written.” They regretted then that they had written the rules that way. So they did attempt to totally abolish the Joint Committee on Printing. Later they did eliminate the separate office and the separate staff, so there’s a staffer on House Administration and on Senate Rules. The JCP still exists, still has their meetings, still sets the policies for GPO, still reviews their budgets, still decides on any waivers to the law. JCP is still there.

Romans *I know that Senator—was it Wendell Ford?*

Abbott Hoduski Yes.

Romans *... was one of the great government document supporters. Were there others after Representative Hayes who are particularly memorable to you?*

Abbott Hoduski Yes. Frank Thompson, Jr. tried to revise Title 44. He was the first one to write a bill to provide electronic government information to depository libraries, and unfortunately Chairman Thompson was ensnared in the ABSCAM. It was an undercover operation, which I am still convinced that the chairman did not do what they said that he did. I mean, they said he took \$25,000 which never showed up. I don’t believe that he did. I think he was entrapped and that he was not guilty. We had worked for four years on revising Title 44. We had an excellent bill and it went down the tubes because there was no way that you could take a bill to

access.

Romans *After 1994, when did you start getting re-involved in GODORT?*

Abbott Hoduski I never stopped.

Romans *Sure, but you couldn't hold any office or ...*

Abbott Hoduski Well, that's right. I don't really remember when I ran for office again. I just kept going to the GODORT meetings and attending everything. You learn as a congressional staffer that the best way is to do things in the background. You don't necessarily try to hold an office or something. You try to educate other people to see your point of view and then let them carry forward what you'd like to see happen. The secret to getting anything done is to convince people that it's their idea not yours.

Starting GODORT and going through the whole ALA process, I have always been a lover of the ALA Council. From the very beginning, I attended all ALA Council meetings. I attended a lot of other meetings, too, within ALA. I learned that there are people who are not elected who

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Abbott Hoduski

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from administrative assistant to professional staffer, which is a little safer designation because supposedly you're hired for your qualifications, not for your political connections. But the truth of it is that everyone's a political staffer and everyone is subject to termin— they used the term “termination.” You were “terminated.” I survived 21 years, and I attribute it to the fact that I'm a librarian and I never let them forget I'm a librarian. Very hard for a politician to fire a librarian, except for Newt Gingrich. He had no problem with firing a librarian. (Laughs)

Romans *Tell me a little bit about your friendship with Fran Buckley and how you two managed to work together to make things happen.*

Abbott Hoduski Well Francis and Lois Mills, they were involved in the GODORT

Richard Leacey was another one, from Georgia Tech. He's really

Romans

Abbott Hoduski

there are some people at the Washington office that thought that GODORT was too narrowly-focused, but I disagree. We're concerned about all kinds of government information.

Anyway we managed to take over GIS most of the time, GODORT members. As a JCP staffer, I had a unique relationship with the Washington office in that Anne Heanue was hired as the lobbyist to deal with government information issues, and before that it was Sarah Case. I had a wonderful relationship with the key staffers from the very beginning who dealt with government information issues. ALA was tremendously respected by the Joint Committee on Printing, and I did a lot of conferring with the people at the Washington office, probably more than my committee realized. (Laughs) For example, when we would write statements about appropriations, I would advise them on the kinds of things they needed to include in such a statement in order to get the Appropriations Committee to support the funding, and that wasn't something that we let be known. I mean JCP didn't have a problem with my giving advice to the Washington office to do that because we wanted the Appropriations Committee to give GPO a lot of money. T4.775 0 -.0011 T gn.5 T03

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Romans

always the same ...

Abbott Hoduski No, they're not.

Romans *... and also you've had great service on the Committee on Legislation. What is your experience from GODORT and from the Committee on Legislation relative to the Washington office?*

Abbott Hoduski Well GODORT has always had to be very vigilant, very aggressive, in getting the Washington office to follow through to support that. I think that GODORT is the most effective unit within ALA in getting the Washington office to do what they want to do. Now some years have been less effective than other years, but I think GODORT spent a lot of time educating the Washington office staff, working with them, providing them with back-up information that they really needed to do their job. I think that it became more effective when you managed to get a Councilor, a GODORT Councilor—I mean, I think that was a great step forward and really helped get things through Council, to have somebody on the Council who could ask the Committee on Legislation or follow-up on things if they didn't deliver the way they should. I mean, you need those balances back and forth.

There's always a tension between the staff of an association and the members. I know that from being a JCP staffer, that I worked for 10 members of Congress. I was a staffer. I was not a member of Congress. So there was a balance there of trying to keep 10 members of Congress happy, work with 10 members of Congress' staff. I was very well prepared for that from working with ALA. The greatest training ground in the world for going to Congress is to be a member of ALA and to work through the multiple units. It's just like Congress, all kinds of committees and units and all kinds of different people competing for what money there is.

Now I don't think the Washington office frankly is giving the attention to bread-and-butter issues. To me, the Depository Library Program is a bread-and-butter program. It's \$30 million or more appropriated each year and it's too much taken for granted. They're too focused on library services, the Technology Act. They're too focused on "No Child Left Behind"—these kind of issues. Of course we did a lot with the Patriot Act which was very important. So oftentimes their attention is not on GODORT's issues, and that's why GODORT can't be totally dependent on the Washington office to carry forward their wishes and their issues and their programs. GODORT has to be aggressive in doing its own lobbying and education, no matter what you call it. We have a lot of new Congressional members now that don't even know what the Depository Library Program is. We've got a lot of new staffers that have no idea,

including Senator Schumer from New York who's gonna be the chair of JCP. He has a new general counsel who doesn't know anything about libraries, and he definitely doesn't know anything about depository libraries. We have to get in there and educate them.

The reason I like documents librarians is they are much more rounded people. When you had the separate documents departments, documents librarians learned everything from acquisition to cataloging to reference to budgeting. They understand better the process of who's controlling what, and so they understand better how the process works in government, that you have an appropriations process, you have a budgeting process, you have an authorizing process. They're so much better equipped to talk to congressional staff and members of Congress. Documents people tend to have a lot more guts than other kinds of librarians, I think. I don't know why. I don't know why they're attracted

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Documents lost his job as a result. That's their primary customer, and you keep them happy.

If you get a senator or a representative who is in love with the Depository Library Program, then that becomes important to the Government Printing Office. That's why I loved Wayne L. Hayes, because it was a very important program to Mr. Hayes. That was one of his primary programs that he supported. So even though he went down

money on Congressional Printing and Binding and make them look like they were spending less money than the White House. They used to compare just the cost of running the White House to the cost of running

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Abbott Hoduski

relationships I've had with directors of libraries. ALA is a place where you can come and you can talk and work with anybody—Librarian of Congress, the head of the National Library of Medicine—we're all equal when you come to ALA, as far as I'm concerned. There are no restrictions on your interacting with all kinds of other librarians. There's just this common love of libraries that brings us all together. So even though I should have been intimidated when I started, I never have been because I've always loved librarians and I've always thought that they were the most wonderful people. I'm so glad I chose to be a librarian over any other profession.

I really wanted to be an ambassador, but I have become an ambassador because I chaired the IFLA Official Publications Committee. I was on that committee for 20 years. I helped people in other countries initiate Freedom of Information Acts and depository library programs, public access programs and so on. So I really did become an ambassador. I think being a librarian can lead to such amazing things that you never thought of. When I was in library school, I never dreamed I'd be working for Congress. Never occurred to me to even go east of the Mississippi River let alone work in D.C. because I'm a westerner. All I

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Abbott Hoduski

She's reading them to me, and she can read any books she wants to in this library. You are not to restrict her to any area." Here my little mother from eastern Montana stood up to this librarian, and I think that's—and then I worked my way through high school. I worked in the high school library. I worked my way through college at Avila and then at Kansas City Public Library. I was the reader services page. They had closed stacks. You have a reader services librarian. You go to that librarian and they advise you on books, and then I was the person that went to find the books in the stacks. I never gave up. They always sent me because I could find all the books.

Romans *So you did this while you were a student?*

Abbott Hoduski While I was a student at Avila, I worked my way through college at the Kansas City Public Library and also working at the college library.

Romans *When did you decide you wanted to be a librarian?*

Abbott Hoduski When I graduated from Avila, my mother said, "You need to get a job," (Laughs) and so I went down to the public library and they hired me as a children's librarian.

Romans *What made you decide to go to a library to get a job?*

Abbott Hoduski I always loved public libraries. They had the most incredibly interesting people that come to public libraries. They had the street people. You've got the genealogists, you've got the psychos. You just have an incredible variety of people, and I've always loved fiction. They hired me as a children's librarian at Central branch because all they asked me—all the library director asked me was, "What do you think about black people?" and I said, "I don't understand what you mean." "What do you think about black people?" I said, "I love black people. I live in a black neighborhood. I grew up in a black neighborhood." "You're hired. We need a children's librarian at Central and it's a changing dynamic there. There are a lot of black children coming." So I went over to be the children's librarian at Central, and I had a wonderful experience.

Then I got married and had a couple of children, and after my second one I decided I was gonna go back to graduate school. So I went down to see Miss Gooch, who I had worked for as a reader services page, and I said, "I want to figure out what masters I'm going to get," and she said, "When are you going to realize you were born to be a librarian? Don't even think about anything except library school." So my husband at the time—we had some friends that we always played cards with every Saturday night, and they were gonna go to Denver to move and go to school. I said, "There's a library school there, and I can go to library

school there and then you can get your education.” He was not happy because we’d been married for a few years and he didn’t have a red car or whatever else he wanted. So I went down to Miss Gooch and she said, “You go out to the University of Denver and do an interview.” I know that they greased the skids for me because you don’t get into library school by going out in July and getting admitted for August, with no testing, no paperwork, no nothing.

Romans

When was this?

Abbott Hoduski

This was in 1964, and so I started library school in 1964. It’s a year-long program there and I took Government Documents from Dr. Frost. He was the most incredible documents librarian. I loved him, and I decided I wanted to be a documents librarian. I had dealt with documents in college and all, but the main reason, not only was he a wonderful documents teacher, but that was the most difficult area that you could go into at that time. That was before there was a lot of automation and so on, and I thought, “I really need a challenge,” and government documents are a challenge.

The dean of Central Missouri State was getting his PhD in drama at the University of Denver. He looked at my resume. He interviewed me in the hall and hired me, and we went back to Missouri and my husband went to school at CMSU. So I was a faculty member and my husband, who is the same age as me, was a student—freshman. It was a very interesting library because there were several libraries on campus and C.B. was the director of all of them. When we came, he hired four new librarians who had ALA-accredited degrees. So the first week we just went around and looked at all the different departments and then sat down at a table and he said, “Well what do you want to do?” He didn’t say, “We’re gonna assign you to this.” The other three pointed at me and said, “She wants Documents,” (Laughter) and so I got Documents. It was part of Reference, and then three months later I was the head of my own Documents department, and it was a wonderful experience.

Central Missouri State University (CMSU) taught me a tremendous amount, not only because it had a wonderful Documents collection and I cataloged all of the serials and so on, but because American Association of University Professors (AAUP)—we had a chapter. One of the librarians was on the board, and he left and got another job. He said, “Oh, Bernadine, you go on to the board. It’s not much of a deal.” It did turn out to be much of a deal because we had a revolution on campus, 120 faculty ended up losing their jobs, including me. I was not fired. I was leaving anyway, but if I hadn’t have left, I probably would have been fired. I became the sponsor for the Black Student Union and for the first black sorority on campus. I was on the board when AAUP bailed 16

didn't know what to do. (Laughs) So he said to me, "Well, you're his generation. Why don't you answer?" and I said, "I'm not leaving town until I get this committee to censor the Missouri State Library." I said, "As far as I'm concerned, we should ask Mayor Daley to leave town. Chicago belongs to us. This is ALA headquarters. I'm not leaving town until I get done what I came here to do." Then he went down the hall to

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Abbott Hoduski Well I wrote the book, “Lobbying for Libraries and Access to Public Information,” and Norman Horrocks, who was a charter member of GODORT, called me up as soon as he found out that I had left the Joint Committee on Printing and said, “You no longer have an excuse not to write a book for Scarecrow Press. He was the president of Scarecrow. Eric Moon had been the president before then and so I agreed to write the book. Mary Redmond invited me to come and speak to the New York librarians, so I tried out my idea for the book which would be that no matter how well you had prepared to lobby and to get a bill passed, you know, you could do all the research, you could write the best bill ever, but if the chairman went to jail, forget it—or if the chairman had resigned, forget it—or if they changed, you know, they got a better assignment, another committee. So I tried it out on them and I talked about Mr. Hayes hiring me and all the different things.

Then when I went back to Norman, I said, “Well how about a book based on my experiences of lobbying and being lobbied?” So it’s partially a history of getting electronic information to the depository libraries from the very beginning because even Mr. Hayes was looking at getting electronic information to depository libraries from the very beginning, not just microfiche. Now I’m writing a book called, “New

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were involved in that. It probably was not the best time for GODORT. There was a lot of divisiveness, but I think GODORT came out stronger as a result of it. I had a lot of respect for you standing up and taking all that flack from people.

I have a special relationship with everyone in GODORT because I'm the mother of GODORT, basically. They all forgive me a lot, but they won't forgive other people. They'll just say, you know, "That's Bernadine. She's the mother of GODORT so we have to tolerate some of the things she does." That's not necessarily the way I think about it. I mean, I'm not going to change what I believe in, but I believe that documents librarians are all basically wonderful people who care about the public's interest and that's why I love documents librarians. They are the best people, and I'm very happy that I chose to be a documents librarian and to work with such wonderful people.

Romans *Well thank you.*

Abbott Hoduski You're welcome.

----- *End of interview* -----