Q: It is November 7, 1995, and we are in the home of Ruth Hartman, interviewing her today. She was at Central from the years 1965 to 1985. Now Ruth, before we actually get started, give us just a little tiny background of your life before you came to Central. Where you were raised, what you did before you came to Central.

RH: I was raised in North Dakota. I did my early education there, and then I went to Minot State College, and went into the field of elementary education. I did my degree in several parts. I started teaching right after the Second World War. I taught in rural schools for two years, and in small town schools in North Dakota for two years. Then I went back to finish my degree, and I – while I was doing that, I started working in the college library as a student assistant. And the college librarian wanted to encourage me to become a librarian, but I got my BS in Education, and I always felt that I was going to continue as an elementary school teacher, but then there was an opening in a high school library, and I had a minor in Library Science, so then I got a position in Valley City, North Dakota as high school librarian, and I worked there for four years.

And then my brother was in California, and he wanted me to come out to California, so I thought, “Well, I’ll apply for a position there.” He gave me the application papers for a public library in Glendale, California, and I filled them in and sent them in, and they offered me the job. So then I went out there, and I worked in the summer, then I decided I was going to continue working there, so I resigned from Valley City high school. I worked there for four years, and I had – while I was at Valley City I had started working on my Master’s in Library Science at the University of Michigan for a – on the Master’s Program. And when I was then in Glendale, during the summers I finished that degree. Then I wanted to go into college work, because I didn’t – wasn’t really happy with public library work. We had to read so many of those novels which I wasn’t really interested in, and so then I applied for a position at the University of Nevada. So I moved there, then, in 1960, and I stayed there one year.

In 1961 I got a job at the Fresno State College in California, and I worked there for four years. At that time I wanted advancement, and there were about seven people that had seniority, so I knew that it would take some time before I would get any advancement. So I started looking for another job, and while I was at Fresno I was working in the Reference Department, and – part-time, with the Government documents – and I became very much interested in Government documents. And in 1962 Congress passed a law that made it possible for college libraries to apply for becoming depository libraries, and Fresno State College had applied for this, and they started getting their material in 1964. So it was exciting. And then – I was looking for another job. I thought, “I’m going to try to see if I can get into working with Government documents.” And here was an advertisement from Central where they were looking for a documents librarian, and I applied for it, and I was surprised because they offered it to me immediately.

Q: Now you must have had very good qualifications. And it sounds like it was that right – you were at the right – you had just gotten yourself trained at the right time, it sounds. So you came to Central, then, in 1965, and tell us a little bit about – what was your title, when you came?

RH: I was hired as a – as to take care of the documents collection and set it up. They, too, here at Central, had applied for becoming a depository library, and [inaudible] from Mateo had started coming in 1964, and this was in 1965. And at that time, they saw that they needed somebody to organize this stuff.

Q: And that was you?
Q: So you came –

RH: So then they hired a person to take care of that.

Q: Oh, so you – what – I didn’t hear what your actual title was.

RH: Oh, I – I – I was – I came in at the rank of Assistant Professor, and I was – they didn’t really say what I was going to – I had this – take care of the dormant documents, so I suppose it was supposed to be a Document Librarian. But at the same time, I was to help with – to cover the records.

Q: I see. So that your entire day wasn’t taken up with documents at that time?

RH: That’s right, yeah.

Q: Now tell us just a little bit about what a Documents Librarian does. The Government’s documents come in. Obviously they have to be cataloged. Just give us a little idea about your work day.

RH: As I came, they had all this stuff shelved, and it had to be organized. It had to be checked in, so that you had a record of what you had, and also it needs cataloging, but the nature of it – it’s heavy, bound books, and it can be just little pieces of paper. Like for instance every public law that’s passed by Congress comes out in a – called slip law, and then later on it’s cumulated into bound volumes. So it has to be handled in a different way than books. You can’t handle every little item.

Q: So what do you do with all the little slips of paper that come in?

RH: You have what you call the – the Government Printing Office puts out what they call the Monthly Catalog, which is a listing of what has been published, and this has an index. So that is your main approach to the collection. During the time that – so there are a lot of Government documents that it’s in the – it’s in the mind of the person who handles it, as to what it is to be bound. So these Government Document Librarians are kind of like the Encyclopedia.

Q: Well do you have a lot of autonomy, then, it sounds like? You can make decisions about –

RH: How it’s to be handled, that’s true.

Q: Now were you in your entire 20 years here – were you with documents the entire time?

RH: Yes. I was also supposed to take care of the maps, because the maps – a lot of Government documents – maps are published by the Government, like the US Geological Survey has a lot of maps, and when you become a depository library, why you’re [inaudible] to receive these. So those have to be taken care of, too, and I remember when I first came, and they put me into a conference room, they showed me what they had, and they had a great big table where all these piles of maps were just draped helter-skelter any old way, because they had just come, and they didn’t know what to do with them – they had to pile them up, and then they were [inaudible]. So here I had to try to get that organized, and support help was hard to get.

Q: Was it a daunting job? Was it depressing, or did you find it a challenge?

RH: I found it a challenge. I was interested.
Q: Over your 20 years, were there any big changes in either the way the documents came to you, or the number of documents? Did your – you know, your handling of Government documents – did it change much, over that 20 years?

RH: Well this was an exciting time nationally, because at this time there were so many new libraries that went into this, that hadn’t had any documents collections before. And I 1972 – I liked to go to the American Library Association meetings conferences, and in 1972 we met in Chicago. And at that time a group of us got together, and we wanted to start an organization within the large organization that would be with the Government documents. So we started what we called the Government Documents Round Table.

Q: This was – was it an informal organization, or highly organized

RH: Well it was – it’s organized. So it became a part of the ALA – American Library Association.

Q: Mm-hmm. So that your could address specific problems that came your way, instead of the more general problems.

RH: Yes, mm-hmm. Yes, yes, and talk to people who understood what you were talking about, because so many times when you tried to explain to other people that hadn’t worked with documents, they didn’t want anything to do with it. But it was nice that way. I had much authority to do whatever I wanted to.

Q: That’s a nice situation. What was your rank when you retired in 1985?

RH: Associate Professor.

Q: Associate Professor. Now, there – I can anticipate there must have been a great number of problems associated with a job like this. What kind of problems do you recall in your tenure here at Central?

RH: Well I think the biggest problem was the space. And then also, to get help to take care of this volume of material.

Q: Did you finally get enough help?

RH: Well, I got an assistant, I believe, in ’69, after I had been here four years, and that was Mary Larsgaard, and she came in there as the – to help with the maps. So that was her responsibility from then on, to organize and give service with the maps. Another thing that was a problem was to have professional help to take care of the public, or the people who came in and needed help. And we had to put our classified staff to help on the desk at times, because our hours tend to be quite broad.

Another thing – I might mention this – that a lot of the Government documents, as time went on – in the early Fifties when I was at the University of Michigan, the – putting Government documents on microform – microforms became popular at that time – in the late Forties and early Fifties when they started producing material on microforms. And this, of course, was a great advantage because some of these older documents were not available in paper, and people who wanted to research and use these older documents had to go to the institutions that had them. But this made it possible for libraries that didn’t have them to purchase them.

Q: I see.

RH: And make them available. So this was a big thing. And Central had purchased some of the documents like the serial set, which is this – made up of Congressional documents – and there are indexes that make these available so that you can search, and find out where they are, and so on. It’s hard to
explain. And so this was one way of getting to them, was to buy these indexes, and as microforms became more and more available, there were companies that specialized in producing indexes for this type of a thing, and when this – we have – Central purchased a lot of microforms for their newspapers and magazines, and so on, and then there were Government documents, and I felt that we needed to have the Government documents microforms close to the documents area, so that I could service them.

Q: And did that happen?

RH: Well, when we were planning for a new library – in the old library the space was very limited, and I helped with the microforms both for the magazines and the Government documents. So when we moved into the new building, when we were planning that, the question came up, “Where shall we do – what shall we do with the microforms, and where shall we have them?” I didn’t want to give up the Government documents microforms to some other area, and so, then, I got stuck with all of them. So that’s – I became a documents librarian in charge of maps and microforms – all the microforms. So then we planned for a special room there for the microforms.

Q: But you were – you were able to be in on the planning, and then – so it’s – you probably ended up with a work situation that was very much to your liking, I assume?

RH: Yes, yes. It was advantageous, also, because they brought in all these other people who were just interested in newspapers, but they were brought into the documents area, so they saw all this other material that was available to –

Q: What was the year that the new library – you were moved into the new library?

RH: Nineteen seventy-five.

Q: Nineteen seventy-five. And during all this, did you find that the administration was supportive of your part of the library, or did you have problems with the administration not wanting to buy enough things for you?

RH: Well – I felt that I had pretty good cooperation, but you had to make your point known.

Q: Mm-hmm. Surely – you could state your case.

RH: State your case and stick to it.

Q: Are there particular administrators or faculty members that you can recall that were important to you in your work while you were here? That were helpful to you?

RH: Well there was – there were certain departments that were very much interested in Government publications, like Political Science, the History people, Geology and Geography – like the US Geological Survey puts out a lot of material that the Geography people are interested in, and the Geology people. And as time went on, there was more and more interest in that kind of a thing, so there were some of these professors that were in these fields that were very supportive of the Government documents.

Q: They were very happy that you were there.

RH: Yes, yes.

Q: But you don’t have particular names that you want to record?
RH: Well, I – I could, I guess: Dr. Kaatz, and Dr. Hammond, Dr. Ring, Dr. Franz in the – working with statistics and so on. Oh, there are so many of them.

Q: Surely. Problems, also, between faculty and administration, or students and faculty – do you recall, during your 20 years any particular contentious problems that arose between students and the library, or faculty and the library?

RH: Well we – we tried very hard to please the faculty as to what they wanted, and if there were things that we didn’t have, we tried to secure them. I remember one professor saying that while he was very much interested in the older documents – historical – and if I wasn’t there to help him find them, he was very impatient. He said, “What anyone would do when you aren’t here – [inaudible] retired!”

Q: So in other words, you were performing a very valuable service, and he recognized it.

RH: Yes.

Q: Did you find that students were hesitant about using the documents area of the library? Did they need a great deal of help from you and your staff?

RH: Well, when they got introduced to it they were surprised that there was so much material there that was available, and our student assistants did a good job of advertising what was there, because they worked with it. We had students who – who opened the boxes, and labeled them, and stamped them – put the station stamp, and so on – and they saw all the – what was coming in, and so they told some of their fellow students, “Oh, I know where you could find that kind of material!”

Q: Word of mouth is sometimes very, very helpful. Now there’s a long list of items on the question sheet here that I need you to respond to, or just simply say that you don’t have much to say about it. Did you have any particular comments or attitudes about the salary schedule while you were here? Did you think you got paid for what you did well enough?

RH: Well, um – I wasn’t too much excited about that part. I felt that this salary scale was – I thought – pretty good compared to other places.

Q: And you had been other places.

RH: Yes.

Q: So you had a point of reference there.

RH: And we did have a personnel committee in the library like all departments did have, and I worked with that committee. I was even chair of it for a couple of years during that time.

Q: So did you get involved, then, at all, with the faculty code in working with that committee?

RH: Well yes, to a certain extent. Yes.

Q: Mm-hmm. What about the Board of Trustees or the legislature? Did you have any complaints or compliments about them while you worked? Did you feel that they were supportive and helpful?

RH: Uh, well we did have [inaudible] depository library. We were supposed to serve the public, too. And when Nat Washington was Senator, he’d frequently come into the library, and Mike McCormick would, too.
Q: And – of course, you were involved with a lot of research that went on on campus, because there would be people coming to research a great deal. While you were in your position, were you – did you ever receive any awards and honors, as the documents librarian?

RH: Well, um, as each document department in the University – when you’re connected with – with the Government – the Government Printing Office – especially after we started this organization of Government Documents Round Table with ALA, and I frequently went – I went to – to most of the annual meetings, and even some of the Mid-Winter, when I – I was elected to be one of the officers. We had the – it divided into different categories of interest, like international documents, or state documents, or federal documents, and so we had officers for each one of those sections. So I was elected to that – to some of those. So then I went to the Mid-Winter meetings, too, which they have in January. The others they have in – either in June or July, where they had – and this was very much interesting, and I felt that I gained a lot of information that was useful for the college.

Q: Mm-hmm. And this was a national organization, so you were an officer in a national –

RH: Yes. But then you met interesting people, too. And we did have – within the state of Washington we had an organization of documents librarians, also, and we did have – I helped organize – we met once a year at different places – institutions within the state, and Central was the host during my tenure for this three times, I believe.

Q: So you were involved in getting that one organized?

RH: Yes. Yes. Organized, yeah – setting up the conference, and – and on two of those meetings we had people from Washington D.C. I felt that it was much because I was involved with that Government Documents Round Table at ALA, that I was able to get these people – because I became acquainted with them.

Q: So I should say. That was a feather in your cap, then, wasn’t it? To get those people here.

RH: And in 1968, I think it was, I was invited as – that was before Mary Larsgar took over the map part – I was invited to University of Southern California. They had a – not University of California, UCLA – they had a map library institute, and it was – they selected 15 librarians throughout the United – Western part of the United States to attend this, and it had a stipend with it. So that was kind of a –

Q: That sounds like a very great honor to me, you bet, to be selected. How many were selected?

RH: Fifteen.

Q: Fifteen, and you were among those fifteen.

RH: I was one of the fifteen, yes.

Q: Belated congratulations to you.

RH: So I attended that.

Q: Were there ever any emergencies in the documents section – like I was thinking for – with the move, or anything? Did that go smoothly, or did you have any problems with that, when you moved to the new library?
RH: Well we did have problems with that, because it – it was difficult to get the material from the old to the new.

Q: How did you do that?

RH: Well they – they had book trucks – large book trucks where you put the material on it and then you shoved it into a truck, and so I moved it to the other building. And there was conflict sometimes when it arrived, you know, that you weren’t – it was hard to coordinate. You had to be at both places.

Q: In other words, if it arrived at the new site, perhaps, you weren’t ready for it at the new site, and that would create a backlog. I can just see these book trucks piling up, and your not being able to handle them. It sounds so much like a very serious job. Do you remember any humorous incidents that happened in the documents section of the library?

RH: Well I don’t know if there was anything exactly humorous.

Q: You’re telling me it was a very serious place, is that it? [They both laugh] And perhaps justly so.

RH: I can’t think of anything very exciting about it, but –

Q: That’s fine.

RH: There may have been some.

Q: It would seem to me that – especially since it was new when you came – that the documents section indeed made tremendous contribution to not only the library, but the University. Could you put that in more specific words for us? I’ve made a generalization that I’m sure you agree with it. It seemed very valuable.

RH: Yes, it was a valuable addition to the collection. Very much so. Because much of that material would have had to be purchased. Well of course, this way it was given to you, with the obligation that you should care for it, and provide it – give service in giving out the information to those who needed it.

Q: You said that you worked on the Personnel Committee. Were there other campus committees that you worked on?

RH: Yes, I worked on a number of them. That sheet of paper I gave you –

Q: Here.

RH: I was on the Long-Range Planning Committee from ’74 to ’79, Interdepartmental Major Committee ’76 to ’77, and the Professional and Scholarship [inaudible, sounds like “Leave”] ’77 to ’80, and Affirmative Action Advisory Council from 1982 to ’85. I was on that on that they were searching for an Affirmative Action person.

Q: So were you involved with the actual search?

RH: Search, yes.

Q: And that meant that you were interviewing candidates?

RH: Yes. And then the Campus Space Committee, ’82-’85.
Q: Of all of those committees – and they certainly are important committees – do you have a favorite?  Was there one that somehow you enjoyed working on more than the others?

RH: Well, they were all very interesting, and the advantage of being on those committees, I felt, was that you got acquainted with other people on campus, and faculty.

Q: Certainly. Extend your horizons beyond stocking a section of the library. Did you ever – you didn’t ever serve on a building committee, then, when they were making a new building, or –

RH: Well, when we were – when we were building a new library we were all involved in that.

Q: They asked all of the people to –

RH: Yeah. Of course I wasn’t exactly on the building committee –

Q: No, but –

RH: That was made up of – of faculty, too. But we had our regular meetings when we were planning that building.

Q: And that must have been a good feeling, to know that you were involved with your contribution to the building, and apparently they did some of the things that you asked, and that’s also very gratifying. Um – when you came to Central, were you already married at that time, or did you get married after you moved here?

RH: I got married in ’67, after two years.

Q: So Ellensburg, then, is the town of your married life, then. That’s wonderful.

RH: Well, when I – I liked California. When I took this job, I thought, “Well, I can always go back to California after two years.” [Laughs]

Q: But somehow you didn’t ever feel the need. Or was it because you found this gentleman here?

RH: I met – my husband and I – we got married in the [inaudible – sounds like “nether”] horse. He had a ranch here, so –

Q: Ah.

RH: And it was time for me to settle down, anyway.

Q: And you had found a good place to settle down in.

RH: And I liked my job.

Q: Are there other things that you want to talk about your job that I haven’t covered – and we’ll ask Gene to jump in with some questions too, here.

RH: [Inaudible] we can have a break.
Q: Twenty years, you obviously worked under at least two, or maybe three different Library Deans. Tell us about either the differences or the similarities of working under those various Deans, if you will, please.

RH: Well when I – I was hired by George Fadenrecht, who was Director of the library at the time. And I felt that he was very understanding and supportive of what I was – what I was doing. And after that, I worked under Richard Waddle. His approach was a little different, but I felt that he – he was supportive, but didn’t always tell you so. He was more aloof. And then Dr. Schneider was altogether different, but I felt that he gave me support, too, in what I was doing. I did have some conflict with him about upgrading a classified staff. Of course, he saw it from the administrative point of view, and I saw it from the point of view of the work that this person had to do – that she did need to be upgraded. So I fought that, and I was successful.

Q: Very good. I think that’s always important, that we give that kind of worker the help that they need. So you actually did have support from three different Deans.

RH: Yes, I felt that I did, yes.

Q: Now even though you perhaps weren’t in direct contact with various Presidents that were here at Central while you worked, can you give us a little bit of an insight into their different styles and how it may have affected your job, if it did?

RH: Well, James Brooks was President when I came, and I didn’t really have too much to do with him. I didn’t really get acquainted with him until he went back to teaching. Many of the Professors, and you one of them, brought their classes to the library, and I gave them a presentation about the use of Government documents, and so on, and James Brooks did this, so I got more acquainted with him during that period as a teacher than I did when he was President.

Q: He needed your services at that point, didn’t he?

RH: Yes.

Q: And then, President Garrity?

RH: Well I didn’t really have too much to do with President Garrity. When I worked on that campus – the Affirmative Action Committee, he did meet with us, and he wrote me a good letter supporting what I did in that committee.

Q: But you didn’t have any direct job contact with him at all?

RH: No.

Q: Tell us a little bit – tell us in detail – about the evaluating team that came from Washington DC to look at the document section of our library, and how you rated with them. When was that, first of all?

RH: Well let’s see – it was twice. I can’t recall exactly which years it was – it’s in the record. Anyway, at both times they gave us “Excellent” as evaluation.

Q: And they actually came here in person?

Q:  From the Government Printing Office. One person?

RH:  One person.

Q:  And what did they actually do to arrive at your excellent grading? Did they look at your collection, or how it was displayed? What did they do?

RH:  Well yes, they did look at the facilities and saw what you had done, and asked you questions as to how you organized it, how you kept track of what you had received, the records, and so on. And then also how you serviced it, and what hours you had the collection available to the public.

Q:  Did you actually get a lot of the general public coming in to use the documents, or was it mostly University people?

RH:  Well it was mostly University people, and students, of course – faculty and students – but there were times when – when the [inaudible] people would come, and many times, I think, it was in connection with if they had consulted some Government agency that told them that there’s a repository library in your community where you can get this material. And there were several times there were – there were people that came and wanted to use the Code of Federal Regulations and the Federal Register, and see when they were having hearings on different things, and so on.

Q:  How many of these libraries – depository libraries are there in the state? Do you know that? Are there many?

RH:  Well, there – [inaudible] – I could look it up for you. All the colleges have it – State institutions – and there are several public libraries, like in Seattle, and Tacoma, and then of course the State library is a repository.

Q:  Do you have any idea of how the size of Central’s collection compares with the collections at other State Universities? Do they tend all to be about the same size, or not?

RH:  Oh, they’re different sizes. When you become a depository library you’re given a listing of things that are available, and you select according to the needs of your patrons. Of course, the older institutions like University of Washington and Seattle Public Library, Tacoma, and so on, would have the stronger collections or the bigger collections, because they have been a depository a long, long time. And in the early part, when they first started with the depository libraries it was given to only two or three within each state, but in 1962, when they passed this other law and made it available to more institutions, and that’s when many more institutions [inaudible].

Q:  So that was the watershed year when all the State institutions, then, applied. They didn’t necessarily all become, but –

RH:  No. They applied, yeah. The listing of them within each State tells them when to tell us – exactly when they became a depository.

Q:  Well I think you can feel very proud that you’ve been involved in a watershed time in document librarian’s work, and it’s obviously very important work. We thank you, very much.

Q2:  I have one question.

Q:  Go Ahead.
Q2: Ruth, I don’t know whether you remember when in the faculty code we recognized library staff as faculty, with all their privileges, and that had been an issue, I believe – and I can’t remember when that came about, but do you – do you feel that when you did work there in the library, did you have any sense that – that you were not treated as a faculty member with – you know – or did you feel there were any problems there, or could there have been any changes that you feel might have made your situation a little bit more advantageous to you?

RH: I think it took place before I came – I think. Dr. Brooks had something to do with it. That gave the librarians faculty status. And that was one of the reasons I came here. We didn’t have it at Fresno State. But we did have tenure, so I had tenure when I was at Fresno State, before I came here from California. But I felt that when I saw that, that they had faculty status – I felt that that was – that was an asset, and it was advantageous to come here.

Q: There weren’t any problems that you saw?

RH: I think we were very well accepted by the faculty.

Q: Good. That’s good to hear.

RH: In my estimation, yes.

Q: Thanks, Ruth, very very much.

RH: You’re welcome.