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<https://soundcloud.com/ames2001/john-metz>

Oral History Interview with T. John Metz,
Conducted over Skype
Conducted by Meg Miner, Illinois Wesleyan Archivist

Meg Miner: Why don't you first start by telling us your- your name and your position?

T. John Metz: Okay. Well, my name's T. John Metz and I was the college librarian at Carleton College. That was the last position I had. That was a retirement- I took a pre-retirement position. Before that I was director of Midwest Library Network.

Miner: And where was that based out of?

Metz: It's based out of Northwestern and included the Big Ten and-

Miner: Oh!

Metz: -libraries and the major state libraries and a- a couple of the major public libraries that were academically-oriented ones.

Miner: Oh, I'm sorry to say I didn't know- I've not heard of that- that group. So how long were you there?

Metz: About four years. I started- it initiated- Midlmet is his name. He had a- you can probably look it up. The archivist at the University of Chicago.

Miner: And what was that name again?

Metz: Midlmet. M-I-D-L-M-E-T.

Miner: Huh. Great! Yeah, I'll look into that.

Metz: Yeah, well, and I mean, it was a great idea when we started with it and sort of got receded after four or five years. I backed away from it. Before that I was the- the head librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, the founding librarian there-

Miner: Wow.

Metz: -did everything from hiring the staff to organizing the collection or acquiring the collection to setting the procedures. Just me when I did it.

Miner: Oh my gosh!

Metz: Very interesting when we were starting, a little bit more interesting than when they were done. Anyway, a lot of this is a long time in the past.

Miner: [laughs] When did you get to Carleton?

Metz: I came to Carleton in '72.

Miner: Okay. So you- you were ready to retire from there pretty much weren't you, when you did the report for us?

Metz: Yeah. I- it was only about a few years afterwards that I retired.

Miner: Wow. That's a- you've had quite- had quite a long career.

Metz: Have you by any chance do any work with Jerry Ham-

Miner: No, I-

Metz: -in archives?

Miner: -I did not. But I am such a fan. I mean, obviously he's-

Metz: Well, he was great friend of mine.

Miner: Was he?

Metz: Yeah. And we co- cooperated on or collaborate, I should say, on at least two archives sections in library buildings.

Miner: Oh wow!

Metz: Jerry was also the father of a Carleton student when I came here and she was an assistant in the archives.

Miner: Oh great!

Metz: And so I had a fairly close relationship with him over a long- many, many years.

Miner: So did he design- I'm sorry, you said you two designed archives together or wrote about designing?

Metz: Well, he looked at- he went over the plans with me and made suggestions, things like that.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: He eventually started from scratch with it, like he had a space and he- he tried to figure out how best to use it. I want to say he did the archives here also.

Miner: See, I was hoping to come up there during this project but they said they didn't really have a lot of...records for- nothing on Minor of course so-

Metz: I don't know what they would have. Probably not very much on the students I would think.

Miner: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So when you were Carleton librarian from '72 to- to about '93 you said?

Metz: 'Til about '97.

Miner: '97, okay.

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: So tell me a little bit about- see, so you developed the library at Green Bay but Carleton would have been well- well-established but you-

Metz: It would have been pretty well-established, yes. I was simply trying to keep the faculty aimed toward an ac- an undergraduate library rather than a graduate library.

Miner: And did you meet Minor before he asked you to do the report?

Metz: No.

Miner: Okay.

Metz: I only met him personally when- first met him when I went down there.

Miner: And so tell-

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Yeah. Tell us a little about how that came about.

Metz: Well there- I- I was mainly a building consultant. I didn't go down to evaluate the collection or anything or make suggestions there, although I did learn quite a bit. But I think the reason I was hired was that...Minor and the dean, I think her name was Ellen, I can't remember her last name.

Miner: Hurwitz.

Metz: Yeah. What was it?

Miner: Hurwitz: H-U-R-

Metz: Oh, Horowitz.

Miner: Hurwitz, yeah.

Metz: Yeah. She was- she was a cellist, and a very fine cellist as I recall. And anyway, she and Miner came about the same time and they both came from places like Carleton and Smith and they didn't know quite what to do about the library when they got to Illinois Wesleyan. It wasn't like the library at the places they had been and they didn't quite know how to- how to start to get there. So I think that's one reason they called me and the other was that- that I recall was that they wanted some assurance they were heading in the right direction and they were going to use the existing building for another purpose and design a new building, or else repurpose something for a new building. Anyway, that was part of it.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: And the third was- it was a- I don't know if you've heard of the U-Haul collection?

Miner: Yes, I did. It's-

Metz: Okay.

Miner: It's- it's rather infamous.

Metz: Well, that was a- they were a little worried about- I never met a person that didn't like Minor and the faculty were very protective of him and they were worried about his presidency after the U-Haul collection came.

Miner: Why was that?

Metz: Well, because they thought it was a mistake.

Miner: The faculty did?

Metz: Yes.

Miner: Okay. And when- when you say the faculty, do you mean the faculty on campus or the faculty in the library?

Metz: The fac- well, the faculty on campus.

Miner: Okay.

Metz: So that was- that was another component of it. I think we- they try to off it in same way.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: I'm not sure if they did or not. I don't even know what they did after I left. I guess they finally did have another library.

Miner: Yeah. That came about in 2002. But they started planning it in the mid-nineties so-

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: I was not involved with that at all.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Metz: I mean, I just made suggestions. That would probably be the way to go.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Metz: That's- that's- when I got here, the- well, it was a different consultancy that any other place I've had and that's what I remember fairly well. They- the library staff were all very academic. They all had Ph.Ds and they all were engaged in scholarly activities and one of the criticisms I would have made, I'm not sure that I did, was they were really not career librarians. They were career faculty.

Miner: Oh, you did that. You did say that and I thought very artfully, so-

Metz: Oh, well, I did better than I thought I did.

Miner: [laughs] It is unusual, isn't it? It was quite unusual.

Metz: Yes, it was quite unusual and- I don't know, I had never encountered that before. I didn't quite know what to suggest either 'cause I didn't know how to- how you would get from here to there to here without getting rid of the people you already had.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Metz: Apparently most of them are gone. I don't think that anyone was left from when I was there. I think maybe possibly the fine arts person?

Miner: Yeah. He's here and-

Metz: He's still there.

Miner: Yeah, yep. And he's the only one.

Metz: Then he'd be the only one.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: But anyway, that was...you know, staffing this was- I did not evaluate the collection, but I was, you know, a little bit concerned with the U-Haul collection. I didn't need to evaluate that. I knew it was- what it was more or less. It was a collection- apparently different parts of their libraries. And apparently they felt that...getting a lot more books in would be a big improvement for the library. Well, that's actually too much to process and things and justify and...so that was- that was one of the concerns. But I will say though, I never met a person who didn't like Miner.

Miner: Hmm. Mm-hmm. Oh no, he was very well known and I think- I think that's part of the challenge. I mean, just- you know, I wish I was an organizational psychologist because you know, there's a real cult of personality there.

Metz: He was a little strange but that's about normal for Carleton.

Miner: [laughs] Is it?

Metz: We don't have any normal people here. [laughs]

Miner: [laughs] Said with affection, I hope?

Metz: Oh yes. Oh yeah, he was very interesting and just a- just a wonderful person to talk to but I did not see his personal collection and I didn't talk to him about it. I know while I was there- I remember an antique cello bow came in the mail and he was impressed that I recognized that it was a cello bow and some coins came and I don't remember what they were. But that was about it. I didn't- I didn't look at his books.

Miner: So you were- I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Metz: So I don't know what kind of a book collector he was really, but I was definite- kind of, you know, he collected as a collector rather than a collection development person. [laughs]

Miner: Well, that's what's really fascinating to me was I- I'm trying to tease out that very thing 'cause he- he wasn't a member of any of the clubs that you would expect a collector of, you know, books to be a member of and-

Metz: Yeah. I just think he was kind of a- a general miscellaneous collector. I'm not sure how focused his collecting- collecting was.

Miner: Yeah, he described it-

Metz: I can comment on that because I don't know.

Miner: Sure.

Metz: I know we have faculty like that, you could say. For example, one woman, an alum of Wesleyan I think she was, collected American first editions for years and gave them all to-

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: Well, this is nice you've got all these things that are pristine and in the wrappers and you can't use them for anything. All you can do is look at them and not something you want for an undergraduate-

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: -collection. I mean, I'm glad to sell them and use it to buy some books, but anyway... I don't- that's, you know, that's the kind of thing we would have gone into. We had a faculty member who just retired and was kind of a thorn. He always wanted any time there was any money around for rare books. Well, it's nice to have it represented the collection and you don't want to go very far with that at an undergraduate place.

Miner: Hmm. Mm-hmm.

Metz: Well, fortunately- this is something I do have a- Minor never looked at our special collections and we do have some really outstanding rare books here.

Miner: Really? He never did?

Metz: Yeah. We had a trustee who was a collector and he gave us things like Cal Scott's dove's edition.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Metz: And...parchment editions of important things and the...original copies of the first Homes of Bobby Burns, things like that. You know, we do have some nice things. But Minor- Minor never wanted to see our rare book area.

Miner: Huh. Well, what was his interest when he came up there then?

Metz: Well, we just talked about libraries in general. He didn't have any special thing in mind, we just hit it off as friends. He came in. He liked our library. He- I talked to him a little bit about how it was organized and things like that 'cause it was not- we didn't spend hours and hours together.

Miner: So this would be like alumni weekend or something like that?

Metz: Alumni weekend, that kind of a thing.

Miner: Okay. So he didn't make a trip up there just to see-

Metz: No, not just to see me, no.

Miner: Okay. Okay. Huh.

Metz: No, it was just an alum. He dropped over and spent a couple hours chatting and that was it.

Miner: Hmm. Well, do you recall his comments to you after you delivered this report?

Metz: No. I never had any feedback on it.

Miner: Oh my gosh! You're kidding me.

Metz: Well, usually you don't.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: Surprising. I usually do not- you know, I don't check back. I've- I've done a lot of these and I- I don't really know if my suggestions are taken up or not. And I've had other consultants come here and they said "Well, here's the report. Do with it what you want. I'm done with it." [both laugh] That's about the way they handled it.

Miner: Yeah, I- I guess what struck me as odd about this report was that he asked you to do it. So I guess I- and- and you very clearly stated at the beginning, you know, that...that his purpose in asking you to do it and I guess I sort of assumed since he asked you he would have replied to it so that's interesting.

Metz: Yeah. No, no, he didn't even refer to it.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: And I knew him for at least four or five years after the thing was done.

Miner: Huh. So how long- let's see, you were on campus for two days? Is that right?

Metz: Well, two or three. I think it was a little more than that. It must have been three days.

Miner: Okay.

Metz: It was extremely hot. I remember that.

Miner: [laughs] Yeah? [Metz laughs] You get in the middle of cornfields in summer and it'll do that.

Metz: Yeah. And I didn't meet any administration other than the...him and the dean.

Miner: So you didn't meet the librarian here at the time?

Metz: Oh yeah!

Miner: Oh.

Metz: I forget what his name was either too- also. He was a good, competent librarian. He had a- I think he had all types of problems there. He had- he had no notion how to solve. I really didn't either.

Miner: Hmm. So like the problems with the building or the problems with the-

Metz: The problems with the staffing and the kind of staff that he had, their high-powered academic staff that weren't high-powered librarians. And there wasn't a clear path on how to change that. And I don't really know enough about the collection to tell you how to begin to work on that either. I did not evaluate the collection.

Miner: Yeah. Well, he started here at about the time you started at Carleton. So he'd been here almost twenty years when you got here.

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: Well, he was a good librarian, so I had no problems with him. It's just that he had- had a situation that was I felt very- rather difficult.

Miner: To be- to be in charge of people who were essentially teaching faculty?

Metz: Yeah, the teaching faculty and the- having the building that did not work very well.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: And I just think he was- I think he was just a little bit over his head. But he was a competent librarian but I think the dean felt the same way, that he was very good but he was just a little bit in over his head.

Miner: Hmm. Mm-hmm. So more about personnel though than about the collection.

Metz: Yeah. Not- we didn't really- like I said, I didn't know the collection that well.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: -I can't really comment on that. But I do recall the building was inadequate and I took a look at it. It was not really detailed enough to see that if they could get a new library and do something else with that building, that'd be the idea.

Miner: Yeah. Hmm. So Minor never talked to you about that U-Haul collection then?

Metz: No. He never referred to it.

Miner: 'Cause it actually came he because of him.

Metz: Yeah, I know it!

Miner: You did know that, ok.

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: Yeah. That was another problem the librarian had was

Miner: About an administrator who cared about it too much?

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Yeah. [laughs] I think- I think that remained an issue.

Metz: I've seen that in other places. They- they think they know a great deal more in an academic field. They don't pretend to know much about the library field. They think they know everything.

Miner: Yeah. So how do other people deal with that?

Metz: You just have to work around it- [laughs]

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: -as best you can. I've had, you know, I've had the same thing here. Well, I had another librarian who- not a librarian, but a faculty member. He was a- a faculty member when he came here and then he became president for a couple of years. And we were extremely good friends for about twenty years. But he was a little too interested in books. [laughs] And books are not his- a resource for students.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: And he just died the other day.

Miner: Oh dear! Oh, I'm so sorry.

Metz: He was just a great guy. He was a magnificent pianist and harpsichordist. He went to Skidmore. He was the president at Skidmore for several years-

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: -after he left here.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: We were correspondents just up until the last year or so.

Miner: Oh my. But when he was president and he was interested in books and would want you to like, buy things or he would get things donated or-

Metz: Well he would- he would mainly work towards getting things donated. And he- I brought in a large collection of Christian Americana and I had the donor who- and he was very interested in that. I spent a lot of time with him on it. It was a good thing. It was a good collection to obtain.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: He just took an interest in library things.

Miner: Hmm. So he was cultivating donors for you?

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Yeah. Yeah, that's kind of what happened here too.

Metz: Mm-hmm. And sometimes donors are good and sometimes donors are not so good.

Miner: Yeah. Well, you said at Carleton you had some faculty who didn't understand the difference between an undergraduate and a graduate library.

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Can you talk a little bit about that more?

Metz: That's kind of- well, that's kind of a battle fought at every undergraduate institution. The faculty want more of a research collection and we need more of a collection that will support the curriculum and support future curriculums. So, like, the faculty want things to be comprehensive. We don't need everything that an important person wrote. We need good representative examples.

Miner: Right, and you thought you- you commented in an email that you thought that was a characteristic of Minor's, or at least an attitude that Minor had as well.

Metz: Well, I thought he thought more as a collector than just a collection that was developing a resource.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Metz: And, I mean, that's common. That's nothing against Minor.

Miner: Oh, okay. Yeah, that's a great insight, because I don't know how other people react to- to this same kind of situation, so-

Metz: Well, many faculty had varying intensities. Some of them were very easily controlled, and others you really have to fight.

Miner: Yeah. Yeah.

Metz: Some of them you can't control.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: That's one of the good things I did at Green Bay, is I never had departmental budgets.

Miner: Oh. You think that's a bad- bad move?

Metz: It was a brand new university. They didn't start that way and we never did it, and it worked out fine.

Miner: So, did you have departmental liaisons at Green Bay too? Well, it was just you though, you said.

Metz: No. Well, that was way in the past. That was sixty years ago.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Metz: It was long before departmental liaisons were thought of-

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: -at universities. We were a university, but not that much of a university at that time.

Miner: Hmm. And you had departmental budgets at Carleton though?

Metz: Oh yeah.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: Yeah, we had a little- but we did not pay a lot of attention to them.

Miner: [laughs] You said that when Minor visited, he liked what you were doing in your library. Can you talk a little about what that is, what that would have been?

Metz: Well, he liked the building mainly.

Miner: Oh, okay.

Metz: And that was the major reason I was brought there in the first place. I just sort of hung on afterwards.

Miner: [laughs] So you built their library?

Metz: Probably should have left when they got the building up.

Miner: [laughs] Oh, so you were in charge of planning that library.

Metz: Yeah. I had very good- complete control of that. It was a very great experience. Everybody was very cooperative and very supportive, and I didn't have to fight- well, in some of the consulting jobs I've had, for example, some of the problems that- that- St. Thomas. They had to have a department for Father Murphy in the stacks. That was an unusual building requirement.

Miner: What in the stacks?

Metz: A department for Father Murphy.

Miner: Oh! [laughs] Oh goodness. I get it. Okay.

Metz: Another one I consulted on, the donor wanted to keep the same profile and the same footprint of the building, and have a new building. Well, what do you do? You go up and you have a tin attic.

Miner: Oh my gosh. Oh man.

Metz: We didn't- we didn't have anybody writing that kind of a hobby after that. Right across, there was a lot of other places.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: The trustees have ideas and you have to go along with that. You don't get the money.

Miner: Yeah. Yeah, the things they don't-

Metz: St. Thomas had a beautiful central campus when I came here, and I got a donor who gave them a huge brick center and the only place he would put it was in the center of campus.

Miner: Oh my.

Metz: Well, it's not a beautiful campus anymore.

Miner: Oh my.

Metz: I mean, it's nice, but at Green Bay we had the idea that the library should be at the center of campus. That should go right at the center of campus. Well, we had enough of a library that we had people coming in at two different levels and four different directions-

Miner: Oh.

Metz: -and a huge patrol problem.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: If it's off at the side going in at one door, you'd be okay, but not directly in the center of campus.

Miner: Hmm. Hmm. Yeah, that would create some real headaches.

Metz: Yeah, we found it was some difficulty. It was a nine story library when we got done.

Miner: Good grief! Wow.

Metz: It was the tallest building in Green Bay at one time. [both laugh]

Miner: That's kind of amazing. Did anyone from- from our campus come to visit you when you started planning-

Metz: No.

Miner: -earlier? Well, actually, that would have been right towards the end of your time there. But that was the sort of thing you would talk about with Minor then.

Metz: Yeah. I have no- I didn't- I don't know what they did after I left.

Miner: Hmm. Well, you got us a beautiful building that's for sure.

Metz: Well, that's great.

Miner: Do you know Fred Schlipf at all?

Metz: Fred Schlipf?

Miner: Yeah. Schlipf.

Metz: It sounds slightly familiar.

Miner: He does library buildings and he's a Carleton alum.

Metz: Uh-huh.

Miner: He was a contemporary with Minor. Yeah.

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Just curious 'cause we're talking buildings. [Miner laughs]

Metz: Yeah. Well, I said buildings are my specialty and that's really what I did. I didn't- I did other things but not very much.

Miner: Hmm. Mm-hmm.

Metz: I didn't have a pretty broad background in collection development and that sort of thing too.

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: That's- at Green Bay, it was open "We're going to open in two years. We want sixty thousand dollars on the shelves." And at that time we didn't have computers.

Miner: Hmm. My goodness.

Metz: You just had to use the old voice network and get around and get the collections in and like that.

Miner: Yeah, I think- I think we rely too much on email. I feel like there's such a lag there, you know. Just pick up the phone for crying out loud!

Metz: Yeah, well, I don't- I don't have anything to do with social media. Neither do most of the retired faculty over here.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: You know, I don't have to know if somebody had breakfast.

Miner: Yeah. [laughs] Well, from a collection standpoint, I mean, you've- you've made the observation that Minor sort of looked at a library as a collector, but he was a collector of- of very particular time periods, so-

Metz: Mm-hmm.

Miner: It was- his statement was that he was interested in the eighteenth century, but of course he collected quite a lot more than that. But it was always sort of curious to me that he didn't really build a special collections library. He built a library.

Metz: Yeah, I don't really recall seeing anything like that when I was there.

Miner: Yeah. It's a wonderful space. It's very- it's certainly adequate to our mission-

Metz: Mm-hmm.

Miner: -but it's not anywhere near the focus of the library, but- so you- you're- when you say he had a collector's attitude towards the library, I mean, is that all about quantity?

Metz: Well, collectors like to have everything to do with something, and you don't have to have everything at an undergraduate library.

Miner: Right. Yeah, and that's the challenge, isn't it?

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: Hmm. Well, what else do you think we need to know? Is that kind of-

Metz: Well, let me see. I had a list of topics here. We've covered the building. We've covered- we've just about covered it all. I'm trying to think if there was anything else besides- I picked up while I was down there at the time that might be useful. I would say the general attitude though was very positive towards Minor, and also- but also very protective.

Miner: Interesting.

Metz: I don't think they were concerned if he had a successful presidency.

Miner: But- but some people were concerned that he brought in such a collection like the U-Haul.

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: And they thought that it might hurt his presidency?

Metz: They thought that that might be detrimental.

Miner: Hmm. Yeah.

Metz: Yeah, there's apparently quite a bit of controversy about that which I wasn't even a part of. It's what I heard.

Miner: Well, I haven't come across it. It's interesting. I saw an announcement about it, but I didn't see any backlash, so I'll have to dig back a little deeper.

Metz: I don't know whatever happened to it. I don't know if they just quietly disposed of it, or if it got processed or-

Miner: Oh.

Metz: -what happened to it.

Miner: Yeah, sadly not. We-

Metz: I saw the boxes. That's all I- I know about it.

Miner: Did you? Oh my gosh. Yeah, it was here for quite some time, and the scars- I will just say, the scars of- of a lot of those decisions- well, I guess you couldn't say they were decisions. The consequences linger. [laughs]

Metz: Yes, they do.

Miner: Let's just put it that way. They got a shelf life.

Metz: Yeah. That- that was a big controversy on campus while I was there. Of course, I did not talk to the faculty about this.

Miner: Yeah. Yeah. Well, I'll look somewhere and we'll see what we can turn up, but it speaks to- it speaks to what I'm interested in, is how these things play out, especially when you have someone who's perhaps too much of a fan.

Metz: Well, I- I mean, you never know. I mean, I was at Lawrence when when the Milwaukee-Downer collection was merged, and I was the one who went down to Milwaukee-Downer and walked away with a whole shelf. It was a sad day for the library.

Miner: Oh! What was-

Metz: But anyway, there were- we had beautiful editions of things that were- a lot of the stuff we did not take.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: They ended up- they said they got a grant from some place in Africa, and- well, about ten years later, I was in New York and I was talking to a dealer friend of mine, and he said he just opened a box that came from Africa and the- the whole thing was full of bowls and smelly and so on. And then it turned out that it was that collection that had never been opened.

Miner: Oh my word! Oh, what a coincidence that you were there for.

Metz: Yeah. I mean, it's amazing how these things come back to haunt you.

Miner: [laughs] Do you recall something here called the Les Arends collection? It was a special collections item.

Metz: No. I don't think so.

Miner: Mm-kay.

Metz: I don't recall anything to do with special collections there, and I'm kind of surprised that it's always been kind of an interest of mine.

Miner: Well, you-

Metz: It would.

Miner: Sure. Well, you did write about it, and it was a congressman- it was a congressman's collection here, who was a trustee of ours. But you said, "When politically expedient, the Arends

collection should be moved to a much larger Illinois archival center, or at least out of the library,” because- and then you went on to say that it takes up an inor- an inordinate amount of space.

Metz: Oh yeah, I remember a little bit about that. Yeah.

Miner: It’s a- it is so true. But when you were talking about development earlier, I was thinking specifically about that, because it’s one of those things that we, you know, we got because the guy was a trustee-

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: -and he was a politician and I mean it’s phenomenal. I have- I have tried, you know everything, including a rain dance to get people to come here and use it and- but it’s just- it’s- it’s very difficult.

Metz: It’s too specialized for-

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: -and people don’t know about it so it’s- one of Lee Ash’s interests was in publicizing the extent of these kinds of collections.

Miner: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I guess we do what we can, but-

Metz: Yeah, guess it-

Miner: -sometimes it doesn’t work out the way we want. [laughs]

Metz: No, but we have to- we have to ride with the tide sometimes.

Miner: You certainly do. Yeah.

Metz: Everything’s like- when I came here, there was no way that you could get a computer into the library. The faculty was just adamantly opposed, and the big concern was, “Well, if you get things in an electronic format, then people can change that and manipulate it.”

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: And I see that happening once in a while now. There are certain Library of Congress things that are in the printed records but not in the machine records, like making bombs, stuff like that.

Miner: Mmm.

Metz: And I had heard a bit from the faculty about it, even to get some of the retired faculty tried to take some interest in it and they don't. I think if I were a little younger, I would probably be writing a paper about it.

Miner: Interesting. Yeah. But you don't have too. [laughs]

Metz: No. I can say, "Well, what happens is going to happen." I don't pretend to be up on library affairs anymore.

Miner: Yeah. Well-

Metz: I've got other things to do.

Miner: I was going to say you're probably quite busy enough. Well, are there other things that we should-

Metz: Well, I'm trying to think. I- I have not had contact with anyone down there. When Minor came to Carleton, but I haven't had contact with anybody down there-

Miner: Hmm.

Metz: Except the time I was there.

Miner: Well that- that in itself is very interesting to me and- and revealing, so- that you talked to him afterwards and he never said anything about your recommendations.

Metz: No, we never really talked about that- what they were doing about our recommendations like that.

Miner: Yeah. Yeah.

Metz: We'll talk about certain general library organizations, a little about collection development. I'm kind of surprised. I don't recall having talked about rare books with him.

Miner: Hmm. That's funny. Well, I can tell you that the next librarian who came in certainly did try to do those things that you recommended, and in fact there was another site visit in probably seven or eight years later, but this time at the request of the provost.

Metz: Mm-hmm.

Miner: So yeah, it's a- it's certainly of keen interest to the administration what kind of library we should have, and it's always been sort of interesting to me that they didn't trust their librarians to know that.

Metz: Yeah. But-

Miner: But- 'cause usually- usually isn't it the head librarian-

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: -who asks for site visits? Yeah. Yeah.

Metz: Well, a lot of the time I'm guilty of having site visits in order to avoid having to ask anyone else for them. [both laugh]

Miner: Pre-emptive.

Metz: Yeah. One year, we had a lot of extra money for departmental evaluations this year that we were not sure what to do with, and I said, "Well, why don't we have a library evaluation?" And we had the most fair-going library evaluation you've ever heard of. [Miner laughs] We had some wonderful people here.

Miner: Oh, that's-

Metz: It was interesting and it was about the time- it was a little bit before I left, and thought, "Well, I'll save one problem for the future librarian, so I'll get it done now."

Miner: So- so when you say it that way, that you wanted to sort of do it ahead of the curve-

Metz: Yeah.

Miner: What sort of advantage would there be in that?

Metz: Well, it would be one thing that- that we would not have to worry about.

Miner: Okay.

Metz: It would have been done, 'cause sometimes these things come up and they come up for the wrong reasons.

Miner: Yeah, that scramble at the last minute, right?

Metz: Yeah, and we would get the new director and it would be a while before they could handle that probably.

Miner: Hmm. Well, I- I will just say to you that a lot of your recommendations have been implemented. I couldn't vouch for exactly when it all started happening, but there are- are

Metz: Yeah, no, I went through the description of the library, and I was- I looked well-pleased.

Miner: Well, it was interesting, your observation about librarians needing to attend professional conferences, because our- our current library director has been adamant about protecting that part of our budget, you know, to make sure that we can travel, and of course it's something that we all really value.

Metz: Well, I figured I'd spent about a year and a half of my life at library conferences. [Miner laughs] Well, I don't go anymore.

Miner: Well, it's bad for a thirty- thirty year career. That's not bad.

Metz: Well, I went to all of the ALA meetings for fifty years. You figure that's a year right there.

Miner: Yeah.

Metz: You know, two weeks- no, they're not quite two weeks a year. Maybe ten days in the year-

Miner: Huh.

Metz: -for fifty years.

Miner: Yeah. Yeah. Well, that'll do it.

Metz: And then, probably various other professional things I went to. And then when I was...network director, I was a member of a number of national groups. We kept going around to these different meetings but it was always the same people under a different name.

Miner: Hmm. Yeah, they start a cir- looking like a circus.

Metz: All of the computerized library networks, the Library of Congress network advisory committee, and all of those things, and it was always just turned out to be pretty much the same people. [Miner laughs] That's why I was getting bored with the town. I decided I was getting so specialized that I could only talk to about three people.

Miner: Could be time for a change. [laughs]

Metz: Yeah. Like I said, I had a great time getting- doing the building here. That couldn't have gone any better.

Miner: That's great. Well, I think-

Metz: Well, I'm here- I'm here any time you can think of anything else you need.

Miner: Yeah, I think that's about it for me, but same to you. If you think of other things and-

Metz: I'll try to get your form filled in and get it to you.

Miner: Thank you.

Metz: But I hope your project's finished.

Miner: Yeah. Well, and I really appreciate you taking time to do this. That's- it's been great to talk with you and I wish you the best of luck in all your many interests. [laughs]

Metz: Well, you too, Meg.

Miner: Thank you so much, John.

Metz: Okay.

Miner: You have a great day.

Metz: You too.

Miner: Thanks. Buh-bye.