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Narrator

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Interviewer

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BB: My name is Betty Bright, and today, July 29, 2015 I am interviewing Greg Campbell, proprietor of Campbell-Logan Bindery, at Open Book in Minneapolis. This interview is being conducted on behalf of Minnesota Center for Book Arts' 30th Anniversary Oral History Project, which has been financed in part with funds provided by the State of Minnesota, through the Minnesota Historical Society, from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Greg, your involvement in Minnesota's book and book arts community reaches beyond the lifespan of MCBA, from your business, Campbell-Logan Bindery, to supportive relationships with many of Minnesota's book artists, and to service on MCBA's founding board of directors. Your son Duncan, who is now co-proprietor with you of Campbell-Logan Bindery, is a current board member of MCBA. In short, you and your family have been participants and patrons of the book and book artists for several decades between you. Thank you so much for sharing your broad perspective today.

GC: You are welcome.

BB: Let's start by introducing the kind of work you do at Campbell-Logan Bindery.

GC: Campbell-Logan is unique in that we will do anything in regards to books except for spiral binding. That is the only thing we don't do. We do paperback perfect binding all the way up to hardcover leather bindings with gilt edges. And there is nothing that we are really not capable of doing other than the spiral binding. My father started the business in the basement of our house when I was three years old, so I have grown up with it. I used to earn my allowance scrubbing out his slop sink for twenty-five cents a week, and watch him bind books. He wanted to be a fine leather binder and artisan, and do repair restoration and artsy-craftsy leather binding. He wanted to be a starving bohemian artist [and] he was very good at the starving part. His story was that when my sister and I found out that other children in the neighborhood ate three meals a day, he had to do something more commercial, and he entered into something called library binding, which is binding magazines and periodicals for academic libraries [and] rebinding school library textbooks

for school boards, so I grew up learning that as well. For a long time [that] has been our mainstay, [now] that part of the business is shrinking and we are going back to the artsy-craftsy thing and we have been for a long time. I think it would please my father if he was still around to see the amount of material that is going through that is not library binding these days.

My father retired in 1976, moved to Mexico, threw his keys at me and said, don't forget to send me a check every month, and he was gone for eleven years. In the meantime, I bought the Inkunabula Arts building and moved into that thing, and rehabbed that as best I could at the time. I had excess space that we were not using and I was looking for tenants to help me pay the mortgage on it, and it attracted some artsy crowds. Printers, booksellers, papermakers, and they all gravitated to our location. And that is where we are today. Many of the other artists that were in the building are not there any longer; they have moved on to other things or found fame and fortune in other places in the country, but we still have a handful of them in the building besides us.

BB: I didn't realize [that] Campbell-Logan, you bought that building. That was when you took the business over? Or was your dad in that building?

GC: No, he was never in the building. He was in Mexico when I bought that building. I signed a buy-sell agreement with my father early in the 1970s, and we agreed to a certain amount that I would pay him every month he was going to retire, and he finally did; he moved to Mexico. He took every penny out of the company checking account, paid all the bills that were due, left me enough money to make payroll at the end of the week, and said, good luck kid, and that was it. It was tough; it was very, very tough. And we struggled along, and mostly are successful.

BB: Oh, yes! I have to say that. Mostly successful and also influential. How long had you been in that building when MCBA was starting up, between 1983 to 1985?

GC: We moved in in 1979. So we had been there four years before MCBA really got going, I guess. Late 1982 was the first mention of some kind of book arts organization. I remember talking to Jim Sitter and Elmer Andersen about it, and mentioned to Elmer that this is kind of what I am trying to do here in my own building; we don't have a formal named organization like that but it is something that is very important to me [and] I would be very supportive of MCBA idea as long as I could keep doing my own thing.

BB: When did you christen it Inkunabula Arts? Such a great name for it.

GC: We were looking for a name other than the Campbell-Logan bindery building, because we had other tenants in the building who wanted some kind of presence besides being in the Campbell-Logan building, the book bindery. We held a contest among tenants, and a free month's rent was given to whoever could come up with a name that I liked the best. And we had Toad Hollow and all those crazy [names] because we were

near the river, and I think it was Gerry Lange who came up with Inkunabula Arts, and misspelled it, Ink, instead of Inc, as the common spelling was. He thinks that probably is how Gutenberg would have spelled it because he had ink on his hands.

BB: Yes, you had Gerry Lange; there have been all sorts of artists.

GC: And booksellers, too. [Rob] Rulon-Miller, Steve Clay of Granary Books was in there, Ross and Haines Book Company, Steve Anderson was there for a while.

BB: Wasn't Michael Tarachow there?

GC: Tarachow was there with Pentagram Press. Randy Scholes was in there.

BB: Phil Gallo has been there.

GC: Yes, he has been there for about fifteen years. On top of that we have Cave Paper in the basement. Dave Rathman was a tenant for a while. There have been a lot of them in there.

BB: Great. I wanted to start here, with your involvement in the local book and book arts community before MCBA, and how some of that was in the Ampersand Club, which I will mention here as—I got this off the website—a loose-knit—some would say anarchic—Minnesota group that fosters appreciation for the historic and artistic importance of the printed book and for the arts essential for book production.

GC: Boy, those are high ideals. I thought it was a party club. [Laughter]

BB: Maybe you could talk [about] the Ampersand Club, because it is such a key entry point for a lot of folks who move here. What kinds of things was the club doing around that time in the late-1970s and early-1980s?

GC: Well, it is a social organization more than anything. You could stretch it a bit and say it is an educational association also. But it is a network of collectors, librarians, book production people, people who work with books, collect books, sell books, catalogue books, and it is primarily made up of the working nucleus that is active in the Twin Cities today. There are a few out-of-state members from time to time. Bob Fleck at Oak Knoll Books was a member for a few years. That does happen but it is seldom beyond the Twin Cities area.

BB: Where were the meetings held?

GC: I remember the first meetings that I went to, I was not a member at the time, but my father invited me to go [and] they were in the Press Club at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Minneapolis—not the Radisson that is around now. It was on Seventh Street,

above the parking ramp at Dayton's. [Those were] the first meetings I went to. It was a great huge bar and people would come and get absolutely hammered and smoke cigars and tell dirty jokes and once and a while somebody would have something interesting to talk about, that had printed a broadside or a book or a lithograph or something. And it was completely social, people would come up from Rochester, Eau Claire, and they would ride the train up and spend the night in town, and then go back.

BB: Now it is a little more structured. Just for the record, I am sure the current President Peggy Korsmo-Kennon would want us to mention that there are presentations, some kind of content.

GC: There are presentations, generally now, not just a drunken party, there is some reason to have a meeting. And we work hard to bring in speakers to talk. Somebody has some book they have produced or garden they have planted in the shape of an Ampersand or something, [and] we will have a meeting about it. We have several officers' meetings of the Ampersand Club, and kind of go over things, and it is a long drawn-out schedule for a year's worth of meetings.

BB: Yes, some of the most memorable programs I have gone to were Ampersand programs. You get a great mix of people from all corners of the book world as well as the book arts. Another thing you and I were thinking about when we met the other day was, where else did people gather in those years? I am sure they hung out at Campbell-Logan, but you were saying something about book fairs.

GC: Yes, there was a series of book fairs early on, early 1980s. I remember them being at the University of Minnesota West Bank. Publishers and printers would come and display their works. I don't know if there was a monetary prize but they were awarded Best of Show or some blue ribbon or something, and there were people from all over the country that would submit work. I know that David Godine was there, Barry Moser, Adagio Press, Leonard Bahr came one time. It was a big deal for a while. It lasted two good years that I recall at the University of Minnesota, and ended up going over to Calhoun Square [in Minneapolis' Uptown neighborhood] and on multiple levels, and that kind of ended it because people got lost wandering the levels at Calhoun Square trying to find exhibitors. It was fun at the University of Minnesota to share a table and exhibit wares with the Bieler Press once and awhile. We had a great time.

BB: You mention the Bieler Press with Gerry Lange who later moved out to the LA [Los Angeles] area. Who were some of the other folks who would comprise an informal book arts community?

GC: Another [tenant] was Jim Thusen who had Biblioteca Islamica. He was the former librarian at the Minnesota Historical Society. Steve Anderson had a used bookstore in Saint Paul; at one time it was in Minneapolis where Leland Lien on Fourth Street took over; it was Ross and Haines old book company. He is now in Hudson, Wisconsin, but he

sometimes comes into town. There is Michael Tarachow, Phil Gallo, Randy Scholes, myself, Norm Fritzberg, who I had forgotten all about. Norm worked for North Central Press and North Central Publishing, and when that place closed up he went off on his own, tried to do it here, and ended up going out to Texas where he worked with W. Thomas Taylor for a while.

BB: Oh, interesting.

GC: Until he lost that position, too. Norm was a different guy, a very eccentric person. A good friend, but a handful to deal with sometimes.

BB: When did Gaylord Schanilec show up? He was around when MCBA was just starting, but I am not sure when he actually came.

GC: Yes, and the book I brought is a Gaylord Schanilec printed commission. I first met Gaylord in early 1980, something like that. Oh, Alison Circle is another one, and there were several people who moved here from the Madison area that had gone through Walter Hamady's printing class. I can't remember the two women who were here, besides Alison Circle.

BB: Mary Jo Pauly was here—wasn't she in Madison?

GC: Could be. There were some real babes that came out of Madison that ended up here for a while. It was a fun crowd. I met Jim Sitter too, and his Bookslinger thing. Steve Clay had a little bitty new and used bookstore in South Minneapolis, and we would all hang out together. Somebody would have a potluck dinner at somebody's house [and] we would go over there and hang out. Jim Laurie the bookseller was part of that crowd.

BB: So, this crowd hung out, people came from a variety of backgrounds. Was there any understanding of something called the book arts then? The term 'book art' had actually been circulating since the 1960s but people weren't talking about it, as far as I remember.

GC: I doubt that. There was fine press and private press, but I don't think it was referred to as book arts, as it is today. Perhaps, somebody from some university...

BB: Like Madison, maybe? [Laughter]

GC: Madison, might have come up with that, becoming a book artist. Allan Kornblum [of Coffee House Press] talking about book arts, said, I have too much respect for the craft to call it art. It is a craft, and it can border on art, and sometimes it is art that borders on books.

BB: So, in that kind of mixed group, when did you first hear about MCBA? You mentioned Elmer [Andersen] and Jim Sitter.

GC: Jim Sitter. The first inkling I had that something was being thought of was at a meeting with Jim Sitter and Gerry Lange. We were sitting at the bar at the Monte Carlo Restaurant and Jim threw out this question, and we started sketching names of who might be involved on a cocktail napkin, if I recall correctly, and other than the Ampersand membership, which was probably the first thing tapped, other than major donors and foundations and things, that was the first group that kind of got involved with something that was then being called Minnesota Center for Book Arts. And early on I know that there was talk of Ampersand be housed at MCBA for least a home for meetings, and it has been [a site] for many of them. It is not a permanent location but it is certainly a fine place to come and have an Ampersand meeting. That would have been late 1981, early 1982, something like that. I don't believe it was winter yet in 1982. It might have been spring; it was still chilly. I remember having a coat at the Monte Carlo but there was no snow on the ground. But that was the first time that I recall a discussion about some kind of book arts organization.

BB: You mentioned former Governor Elmer Andersen as well as Jim Sitter. Who asked you to join this board and how were you formally approached?

GC: I believe that Jim asked me if I would serve on the board. I said sure, I would be very happy to. He was forming committees at the time, looking for equipment and supplies and a location. The temporary address was Jim Sitter's apartment on Selby Avenue, or someplace in Saint Paul. If I remember the first letterhead, temporary address was in parenthesis underneath MCBA. But he was looking for a location at that time because I was rehabbing a building and familiar with the real estate down here, I was the site search committee, and Gerry and I were the equipment committee also. We drew up lists of what I thought a bookbindery needed to have for small classes, and Gerry was doing the same thing for a printing facility. And in the meantime I was running all over town looking at buildings. I think I toured a dozen or more that were legitimate possibilities. A bunch of defunct funeral parlors.

BB: I remember that.

GC: Because they would have a wet room for the papermaking! [Laughter] And probably a large seating area for audiences. But there were other things as well. Jim was looking at mansions on Summit Avenue that would be donated, and old schools that had gone defunct, and he was very enamored with the Union Depot in Saint Paul for a long time, and finally I talked with Harry Lerner. I knew that he had property around and told him what I was looking for, and he got us into the McKesson Building.

BB: Really. Was he using the whole building for storage, or what was on that first floor?

GC: No, just vacant space, pretty much. I talked with Harry and told him about the organization. I told him that you have trampled across the toes of every book production

person in the Twin Cities for years and years and years. It is time to give something back. How about letting us move into your vacant building space?

BB: Wow. That is great. So, you were literally on the ground floor with the founding board of directors. Do you have any memories about those early board meetings? It was a really small group, if I remember.

GC: It was. There were a dozen, I think. There might have been nine at the first board meeting. They were held at the Cowles Media boardroom, Jim Alcott presiding over the huge round table of inlaid wood. It was very intimidating up there. I wore a coat and tie to those meetings. But they were short and sweet and informal. And there was, how can we get money here, who was going to contact this person, and we were kind of dividing up responsibilities as far as fundraising went. It was Paul Parker, John Parker, Mildred Friedman, Gail See, Joanne Von Blon, Gov. Andersen, Jim Alcott, myself, David Speer. Shortly after that, Peggy Dixon came on.

BB: When did Irv Kreidberg come on?

GC: He was one of the original ones. Irv was kind of a sourpuss about a lot of things. At the time, North Central Press was still viable. The owner was Albert Mullerleile. Irv was his President or running the company. Mr. Mullerleile was very, very generous with assets, and North Central had a lot. It was a target not only for fundraising, but for equipment. Vic Stein at Typehouse Duraraph also, I contacted him and I think, most of the print shop is because of Vic Stein—there were three or four presses that came and a bunch of type from when they were liquidating the letterpress shop.

BB: And a lot of the bookbinding equipment I think came through you.

GC: Some of it did, I don't know that it was major pieces of equipment. The book press I think was from Harry Lerner, but some of the small hand tools and the little finishing presses and sewing frames and things. At one time there was a woodworker in my building, and Curt Johnson made a few things for us that were more display items than real working things, but we talked with him about building a finishing press that had legs on it so you didn't have to bend over or prop it up on bricks, and he designed a bunch of those things and made them, and they're here, and we donated those things, and hand tools as well, needles and scissors and thread.

BB: All essential. Every single item was needed and used.

GC: I tell people that honestly about binding books there is nothing that we do at Campbell-Logan Bindery every day that I couldn't do out of the trunk of my car with seventy-five dollars worth of stuff. It just would take forever. You don't need a lot to bind a book. It is all handwork unless you are going into big production.

BB: How would you describe the neighborhood, the space and the structure of the McKesson Building since it was near your neighborhood if not directly a part of it?

GC: That was the Warehouse District, a neighborhood in transition in that there were a number of huge old warehouses there or buildings that housed all kinds of artists. When I first moved into our building it was full of artists. And it became a trendy place to hang out. McKesson and MCBA were part of that early on, but as it happens, with gentrification those artists pretty much got pushed out. The rents increased, and now it is full of fern bars and restaurants and things that were not there initially; there were a few but not as it is today. Every building doesn't have a bar in it, like the Loon, or whatever else is there, the New French Café was down there in that neighborhood, there was a wonderful Thai Restaurant in the Butler building. That restaurant was owned by [An Nguyen], the wife of Steve Andersen of Vermillion Editions, the lithographer. And she later, I think it was called Matin. They had a couple of other locations later on, and finally graduated to a restaurant called Rice Paper that was in Linden Hills and then Edina, and now that is closed up also. But she is a fantastic cook and a great lady, and Steve Andersen is a great lithographer who I haven't seen in many years. He is in California himself now.

BB: Did you ever go to Black's Café? That is another one that didn't last all that long but it was critical—for coffee, it was close by. Could you share with us any memories you have when you actually walked into the space? What did you encounter?

GC: Into the old building?

BB: Yes, into the McKesson.

GC: You would be looking at some display cases directly in front of you. To the right was the printing area, to the left was bookbinding, and further back was Amanda [Degener] and her papermaking thing. It was a big kind of square space as I recall, but Allan Kornblum was over on the right hand side with papers all over the place, and Michael Norman and his bookbinding thing was off to the left with stuff all over the place, and Amanda was back there trying to make paper. And in the middle of all of that were some display cases, and someplace there had to be an office but I don't remember where it was!

BB: It was on the left. [Laughter] Not the most important thing to see.

GC: Bathrooms were in the back by the loading dock.

BB: That is right. You had to go through the back door. So, that really describes the start up period [of] an organization on the ground floor, just trying to claw its way forward and get as much support as possible. Are there other stories or memories you have of that period? I know there were ups and downs.

GC: Oh, there were a lot of ups and downs. I will start with a story that I told you early on. There were a lot of people that were hoping to gain something through MCBA, whether it was a residency or recognition or something. Sometimes they weren't very successful at being recognized or patted on the back, and they harbored some grudges. There were a lot of fragile egos in the arts community, and there always will be. But there was an alternate organization called MCBAD that had t-shirts printed up, yellow t-shirts that said on the back, No matter how thin you slice it, it is still baloney. MCBADs were, there were several of them. We had a plan to barricade ourselves inside MCBA, and hold Betty hostage.

BB: Why me, Greg?

GC: Because you were there. Jim was out fundraising. We were going to demand a sack of White Castle hamburgers and free passage to Edina to let Betty Bright go! [Laughter]

BB: Terrifying! Especially the White Castles!

GC: There are people that probably still harbor some grudges. It was a long time ago and it is part of the early, early history that you have to really admire what has gone on here, and be fully supportive of this thing now. It is incredible where you have come.

BB: Well, I think, with perspective, and having gone through a start-up, I think at the time we recognized that we would have a lot of challenges, and that we literally can't please everyone. The running joke at the staff meetings, a very small staff, was, incremental progress in all areas! But that is really what MCBA has always been.

GC: It is like a couple of teenagers getting married they don't know each other very well yet! You have to roll with each other's punches and overlook things, and carry on.

BB: Yes, I think there has always been a lot of respect there, and fortunately we did carry on, and people continued to contribute whatever they could—time or whatever, including you, so we have gotten through that. But I think it is important to mention that, because that is a part of the start-up period, and there have been ups and downs through time, any organization.

GC: Always will be.

BB: Always will be, absolutely. So, I think you have commented on this a bit, but does anything else come to mind when you think about, how it got going? You have mentioned the board of directors; these were well-established people. Was there anything else that comes to mind in the larger book and arts scene of that time the early to mid 1980s that might have helped?

GC: Yes, there was, and primarily it is to the credit of the state of Minnesota, that the arts organizations in this state are greatly supported, both by individuals and by granting institutions. People move here from all over the country trying to participate in the arts scene here because of that. Graywolf Press moved from Washington state here, Coffee House Press / Toothpaste Press moved from Iowa here because of that. And it is a marvelous place for an art community to thrive. That was true certainly before MCBA, before the 1980s, but it was fully embraced by the group that formed MCBA and there was a lot of support by granting institutions of the time. I am sure there still is, but that was a big part of the whole book movement in the Twin Cities. I think people came here because they knew they could make it, whether they were an arts organization or on their own as an artist. Michael Tarachow came here on his own from Markesan Wisconsin, because the Twin Cities were conducive to what he wanted to do than Markesan, Wisconsin.

BB: I am sure you went to the grand opening in 1985.

GC: Oh yes.

BB: I am trying to remember. It was a very long opening; it went until midnight or something.

GC: I wasn't there at midnight.

BB: It was late. Do you have any memories right around the opening, or the atmosphere around MCBA?

GC: Oh, I can't tell from one party to the next. I remember the first Family Day or Dirty Works held at McKesson, and people were kind of timid about participating in things. Amanda was trying to get people to make paper and nobody wanted to get in there. I was wearing my nice red sweater and walked in and pushed up my sleeves, couched a big piece of paper and shook it out: this is how you do it! And then there was an engraving class going on, with linoleum block engravings. People were sitting there with their thing in their hand looking at their blank linoleum block: I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. [I said] give me that, and I sketched out a book and gave it to Allan Kornblum and he printed it, and it has been used as a poster for MCBA several times now. It was a Campbell-Logan Christmas card at one point.

BB: That is great.

GC: I remember those things more than grand opening parties.

BB: Yes. Just getting people used to going into a studio and learning.

GC: Yes. And people were very hesitant to come down and make a mistake, get their hands dirty and get wet or whatever. That is what I do every day. I make a lot of mistakes. [Laughter]

BB: We'll call that an artistic thing, or a craft thing. So if we move from that early period, I am trying to remember, were you around or involved in the late 1990s as MCBA starts to get ready to make a push to move to Open Book?

GC: From a great distance perhaps, yes.

BB: Were you involved in discussions as they were deciding whether or not to move to Open Book?

GC: I remember this location, and I think an early-on tour of what the architects wanted to do or thought they could do. Beyond my scope, I guess. Pretty good with sheetrock and a hammer, but this full-on demolition and rebuilding thing was absolutely fantastic. No, I first started to appreciate this kind of rehab when Peter Hall owned Pracna on Main. It was before I had our building, and I have had [a few years of] architectural training in school, and Peter was an architect. Then two brothers bought Butler Square and started to rehab that building based on what Peter had done on Pracna on Main. I worked for them for a few weeks one summer pushing wheelbarrows and busted brick out to a dumper. I can't remember their names now. I didn't get paid, if I remember right. Anyway, I worked demolition on that crew for a while, and that was very intriguing, and because I had some training, I was confident I could do our building over a period of time, and looked at this as a wonderful thing, also. But this is way beyond my scope of expertise, and I was happy to have architects to take it over.

BB: So what was it like when you walked into the rough space?

GC: Oh, it was a mess. It was a mess! It was just complete demolition, there was dust and crap and stuff all over the place. It was terrible, but you could see the bones and it had a lot of possibilities.

BB: What was the neighborhood like?

GC: Oh, the neighborhood was different. When I was at the University of Minnesota, my wife was a nursing student at Swedish Hospital. And I lived at the University, in one of the dormitories. I would walk across the bridge and come down Washington Avenue, and kind of snake my way across Augsburg College, sneak over to Swedish Hospital and go on a date. And I remember coming through this neighborhood and you'd go past....

BB: Liquor Depot.

GC: Well, the Liquor Depot was tame. It was the stuff up on Seven Corners that was a little dicey. It was the, whatever the charitable organization that is there now. And there would be panhandlers out there. I remember walking along one day and it was dark, it was the middle of winter, and there was a noise shuffling behind me and I thought, oh my God, what is this? I turned around and there is a poor guy that didn't have a foot on one leg. He had a coffee can stuck on one leg, shuffling along the sidewalk. And that was down there all the time. You would see these people all over the place, poor unfortunate souls that had to be someplace. There was a bunch of rowdy bars up on Seven Corners. They are probably still semi-rowdy but not like then. And Triangle Bar, and some of those places that have cleaned up their act in the years. It was a tough neighborhood down here. Early on there was the Liquor Depot across the street and Frank's Plumbing on the corner [for] used plumbing fixtures, old stuff. If you had an old claw foot bathtub or wanted one—that was the place to go. Frank's was made an offer he couldn't refuse [and] moved across the river to someplace else. I think he's still in business. There was a really tough neighborhood and, well, today, it still is a major transit thoroughfare for trucks and buses and things, and not a fern-lined boulevard out on the street by any means, but it is a lot better now than it was then.

BB: Did you go to the grand opening in 2000? Do you remember?

GC: Sure I do.

BB: Tell me something about that.

GC: Well, I hadn't seen Jim Sitter for years, and he was there, and we had a long talk. It was primarily where the old board members I had served with had come. I was happy to see them, I hadn't seen them for years, and some of the young artists were there that were working. It was a fun time. I don't remember specifics about anything, but it was good to see some old faces. Familiar faces, not that they were old!

BB: So, the [Open Book] spaces as you walked in. How did feel compared to the old space as far as it was laid out? You were [now] walking into the shared building and then finding your way.

GC: It was a little more confusing because it was a shared building. At the old location it was pretty hard to get lost. Here there were the gallery space and the offices upstairs, and the performance hall that we are in now, and the library and things. The library I don't think was open at that time, a lot of boxes on the floor.

BB: Yes, and then going downstairs to the printing studio.

GC: You know, I seldom go down there. I should, but I forget that it is down there. Probably it is good for them, because I am not interrupting.

BB: So, I know you have been involved in different ways at MCBA since it reopened here. Do you have any sense of what was the artist community at the old Center and the community of artists that is now at this MCBA, if there has been a change in it or developments?

GC: There certainly are some new people that I don't know really well, but many of the original group are still active, which is very nice to see. But the new people are coming along; it is really fun to see the school groups working away like crazy. It is just great. The McKnight people come out of here and take classes, learn how to design a book. It is just wonderful.

BB: We are about three quarters of the way through here. I want to look at something you have brought.

GC: I did bring one book.

BB: I would love to hear about it.

GC: This is one of the MCBA Winter Books, I believe number 5 in the series: Will Weaver, *Snares*. It is my favorite Winter Book, mostly because of the story. It was printed by Gaylord Schanilec with help by Robert Johnson; I haven't seen [Johnson] in a long time. I don't think he is active in the book arts any more, but this book, *Snares*, is a story about a young man that worked his way through the University of Minnesota paying for his tuition by trapping muskrats and minks along the Mississippi River right below the University of Minnesota. And he would sell these pelts and pay his tuition with the money he gained. It is a great story. Short little thing but it is a wonderful story. We were happy to bind the book for MCBA. I think Denny Ruud did the limited edition [and] we got the production thing. Quarter German linen with paste papers over boards is the description.

BB: Do you have any memories of binding some of these Winter Books? Because so often what I have been aware of is the timing, the binder is always...

GC: The timing, we are the last cog, Betty.

BB: ...in the wheel! [Laughter]

GC: We always are! It is that way with every publishing venture. The binder is the last guy that is making up time for the printer and designer and everybody else. The timing is very, very critical on these things; there is a publication date that they have to be done for, sometimes they hit your bench two or three days ahead of time. We are aware it is coming, hopefully we have materials ready to go, but there is nothing we can do until we get the pages. So it is all hands on deck when these things come in sometimes. I don't

recall we have had a great problem meeting a deadline but there were hiccups from time to time. I think the last one was...the last one!

BB: Yes. And it got done. It always gets done. It is almost always something, it is true. Campbell-Logan has been the foundation for Winter Books, although the whole artist community participates in different ways, a lot of people and volunteers, but it has been fantastic having Campbell-Logan in the mix.

GC: We are always a cog, Betty!

BB: It is ok, nothing wrong with being a cog. Ok, so let's just have a few more general questions to finish up. You were involved with the start-up of MCBA, and you have been involved off and on in this space. How would you describe this MCBA as it compares to the MCBA that you were so involved with early on?

GC: Oh, there is no comparison any more. I mean, this is incredible. Early on, it was fun, but there were a dozen people you were dealing with. Here it is a whole community; it is entirely different. It is much grander and fantastic, what it has grown up to be. Some of the same, much of the same activity goes on, but in a much broader scale than it ever did previously.

BB: So if the mission or the vision has changed, it would be the scale, as far as who is affected?

GC: Absolutely.

BB: Do you have a sense of what MCBA may have contributed to either the book arts community or the book community in Minnesota? How has the existence of MCBA altered that book community?

GC: It has increased the community in size, because of the people who come through MCBA, had something to do with it, learned something, or been involved with it. There are many, many more people involved in the book community now I believe than there were previously, at least on the artsy-craftsy side of things. Probably less linotype operators today than there were in the old days, but those were the blue-collar production people that, their jobs aren't there any more, and if they are still around, they are either retired or doing something else. I mean, when I was little, the printing and binding community in Minneapolis was huge. It was as big as it was in Chicago. There were hundreds of print shops around and many binderies. They are all gone, with a few exceptions, and it has something to do with the times, electronic media, and other methods of putting ink on paper if it is actually going to be a printed book.

When I was a little boy and earning my allowance from my father, he was in the basement of the Metropolitan building, which was demolished during urban renewal. But

he was in the basement, and there was a lunch counter on the other side of the basement, and to get there we had to walk past a print shop, a letterpress print shop, and it was the scariest place in the world. Because all those guys were walking around missing fingers they had lost them in the presses. There were like a dozen of them down there, all missing digits on their fingers. I don't want to go to have lunch, [I'd say], I have to go by those trolls in the print shop. Up and down Fourth Street it was printer's row or newspaper's row, three or four newspapers in Minneapolis at the time. Those were the English newspapers, there are others too. It was a huge printing community with many, many people working in it. There were several binderies around that aren't there any longer. But as far as the art part of it, there are many more people involved in it than there were then. Those were people earning a living; these are people doing what they want to do.

BB: I didn't grow up here I moved here before MCBA started. I was attracted to this community, culturally and all the rest of it. Looking at where MCBA has come, do you think that there is something characteristically Minnesotan in the fact that MCBA started and, through bumps yes, but continues to serve the state? Is there a Minnesotan aspect to why this thing continues to work?

GC: Well, yes, I don't know if it is just Minnesota but there is a huge interest in art in Minnesota. Whether it is books or whether it is sculpture or painting or dance or whatever, it is a very vibrant art community here and it is very supportive of arts organizations. I made mention earlier of the generosity of funding that is available for the art community, and fortunately MCBA is able to tap into some of that. It probably would not be as grand, but I bet it still would be around if the major donations from funding organizations hadn't materialized. It might be much smaller than in the old days, but it would still be around.

BB: The other question at an anniversary is about legacy. From this perspective how would you describe MCBA's legacy to the arts and to Minnesota? What has it given back so far?

GC: Boy, that is a question. It has, I am sure, opened many eyes to books and book art that didn't understand or appreciate it before. [Rob] Rulon Miller is probably one of those. A fine, successful bookseller from Rhode Island, moved to Minneapolis, and had no idea about fine printing and private presses until he bumped into Gerry Lange, and he still didn't understand it until he bumped into Steve Clay. And then Steve was showing many artists' books, or books printed by book artists: Claire Van Vliet, Harry Duncan, and things of that nature. All of a sudden, it clicked with Rulon. Oh! Oh! It doesn't have to be a circa 1700 book to be valuable. Yes, I can understand this. It is a limited edition, short runs, therefore they are more scarce than what you would typically find at Barnes and Noble, and they are printed with so much dedication, so much love. I remember how upset Gerry Lange was one time. He had been struggling over some book he had been printing, and starving to death in my building, and I said, Gerry I just don't understand

this. Why would anyone take a year printing a book when he could easily go out and buy one for forty-nine cents at Savrans [Paperback Shop]? And he just about killed me. He got beet red. You could see the veins in his temples start to pulsate. He liked a good joke but he didn't like to be made fun of, I guess.

BB: I just have to say you have done a lot for the artists in your building, giving them a highly affordable space, very near to downtown; it has just been critical. I wish Gerry had stayed around but I know he has done very well in Los Angeles.

GC: He is the best friend I had in the world and I miss him a lot. We don't have anything in common anymore. He is an LA guy now.

BB: Well Greg, I guess we will end it here. I want to sincerely thank you on behalf of the board, the staff, the faculty, the artists, all those kids you mentioned who come through the space. You really have put your mark here and your family continues to contribute to this broad community, so, our sincere thanks for your help here.

GC: Thank you for the opportunity.