

8-26-2003

## Paul Camp oral history interview by Yael V. Greenberg, August 26, 2003

Paul Eugen Camp (Interviewee)

Yael V. Greenberg (Interviewer)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo\\_oh](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo_oh)



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [Other Education Commons](#)

---

### Scholar Commons Citation

Camp, Paul Eugen (Interviewee) and Greenberg, Yael V. (Interviewer), "Paul Camp oral history interview by Yael V. Greenberg, August 26, 2003" (2003). *Digital Collection - USF Historical Archives Oral Histories*. Paper 76.  
[http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo\\_oh/76](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo_oh/76)

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Digital Collection - Historical University Archives at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Collection - USF Historical Archives Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact [scholarcommons@usf.edu](mailto:scholarcommons@usf.edu).

# **COPYRIGHT NOTICE**

**This Oral History is copyrighted by the University of South Florida Libraries Oral History Program on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of South Florida.**

**Copyright, 2008, University of South Florida.  
All rights, reserved.**

**This oral history may be used for research, instruction, and private study under the provisions of the Fair Use. Fair Use is a provision of the United States Copyright Law (United States Code, Title 17, section 107), which allows limited use of copyrighted materials under certain conditions. Fair Use limits the amount of material that may be used.**

**For all other permissions and requests, contact the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA LIBRARIES ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM at the University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, LIB 122, Tampa, FL 33620.**

USF Florida Studies Center  
Oral History Program  
USF 50<sup>th</sup> History Anniversary Project

Narrator: Paul Camp  
Current Position: Librarian at  
USF's Special Collections  
Date of Interview: August 26, 2003  
Editor: Danielle E. Riley  
Date of Edit: January 6, 2004

Interviewer: Yael V. Greenberg  
Location of Interview: Tampa  
Campus Library.  
Abstractor: Daniel Bertwell  
Final Editor: Jared G. Toney

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

*Mr. Camp came to USF in 1966 as a student and worked as an assistant in Special Collections at the library.*

*Interview Data*

BA in English, 1970; Completed Library Sciences MS in 1971 at Florida State University.

*Reason for attending USF*

Mr. Camp arrived in Tampa in 1965. His father, who was serving in the Air Force, was stationed at MacDill Air Force Base. He completed his senior year of high school in Tampa at Chamberlain High. He first saw the campus in 1965 when dropping off a friend's girlfriend. The lasting impression from that first visit was the size of the campus. His main reason for attending was convenience and location.

*First memories as a student*

The freshman class assembled at the side of the old library, where Student Services currently resides. They all gathered beneath a big wall with the USF seal. Mr. Camp is "pretty sure" that it was President Allen who addressed and welcomed them. At the time a parking permit cost less than five dollars and "we had no problem finding parking places in those days."

*Reflections on Student Days*

In the 1960s there was a film called "The 10<sup>th</sup> Victim" with Ursula Andress. The movie was about a game in which people hunted one another voluntarily. If you could kill ten victims and survive the assassin that was assigned to you, you received the coveted prize. Students at USF formed an unofficial club to play the 10<sup>th</sup> Victim on campus. They jumped out of bushes and attacked one another using rubber knives and fake guns. He was able to get into a friend's lunch and put a mint in his tuna sandwich, which represented a cyanide capsule. Mr. Camp doubts that this would be possible in the present climate.

### *His "American Idea" course*

There was a required course for all students in order to reinforce American ideals. There was a comparable course in high school called "Americanism Vs. Communism," which was also required. His instructor was Charlie Arnade, "one of the characters of USF, one of the treasures of USF." His father was a German diplomat and he was raised all over the world. Dr. Arnade spoke five or six languages, but all with the wrong accent (For example, he spoke Chinese with a German accent and German with a Chinese accent). He did not teach the course in a "dogmatic manner" which made it interesting and useful. They were discussing the Ku Klux Klan in class one day. One of the students had gone to a Klan rally outside Lakeland and come back with literature and propaganda. The Klansman tried to recruit the students and "he didn't tell them that he was Jewish." Overall the course turned out to be interesting and informative. Having this course teaching that "American's were good and Commies were bad" was quite interesting since the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade was a student organization on campus. They were able to consider two perspectives concerning communism and capitalism.

### *How he came to work in the Library*

Mr. Camp simply wandered into Special Collections one day. It was located on first floor of the library, and had a window that opened on the garden behind wire and glass doors with "Special Collections" written in gold lettering. He was intrigued. That day Mr. Camp met Margaret Chapman and became a student assistant. At the time there were three divisions in Special Collections. First, the Florida Collection, which consisted of all Florida materials (demographic and statistical data, history etc.) Second, the Rare Books Collection, which was housed in a very small room. Third, the Florida Historical Society Library.

There was a dress code for students and staff. Women had to wear dresses and were only allowed to wear pantsuits if they were engaged in heavy work like moving books. No slacks or jeans were allowed. There was an interesting character that came to the library. The staff called him "Jack the Ripper." In the evenings female staff would be in the library working in the stacks and they might be climbing a ladder when they would notice a man looking up their skirts. This happened often and they never actually caught "Jack the Ripper," although security came close once or twice.

### *History of Special Collections*

Special Collections opened in 1962. This was a new library and the Florida Historical Society Library (FHSL), which had been located at the University of Florida (UF), ran into space problems. Many people at UF didn't use the FHSL because UF had a deep collection of Floridiana. The FHSL was looking for a new home and came to USF. They subsequently stayed for a couple decades.

Special Collections were open stacks at the time. This used to bother the first head of the department, Margaret Chapman ("a magnificent lady"). She would be upset that "this is the only open stacks Special Collections department in the country." Because of the ease of entry there were incidents of theft. Mr. Camp remembers a specific incident in particular. Every time someone came into Special Collections a faculty member would

click a clicker to keep track of entry. Upon exit, the patron's bags would be inspected, to see if books were checked out. Because Special Collections books were rare, they were not stamped with a library stamp, and could not be identified easily. A thief took one book off the shelf, put it in his bag and left the room. He would have escaped easily, but he took a stolen book to the second floor and inquired with the head of reference as to the book's worth. The thief left and the librarian realized it had a USF bookplate. The criminal returned at a later date and was caught.

#### *Technological difference between libraries then and now*

When he first started here as a student the books were checked out manually. When checking out a book, a card had to be made for each containing name, address, and telephone of the borrower. The faculty color-coded slips with a marker and at the end of the month, located card by color and matched it up with a book to record that it had been returned, or sent out reminder notices. The "ultimate traumatic experience" for librarians and assistants was to knock over either a drawer full of cards in the card catalog, or a tray full of books, losing their color-coded slips. Key punch machines were quite a revolution in library work. Originally circulation was in the front lobby of the old Student Services building; later on it was moved to the third floor.

#### *Impressions of Campus and surrounding areas in 1965-66*

Center of campus looked liked it did until President Betty Castor renovated MLK Plaza. The campus included a giant parade ground with buildings around it. It was quite a trek if you had to walk from a class on one side of campus to the other. In the summer it was very hot and the trees were very small, providing little shade. Around campus there was little development to speak of. There was a motel at the intersection of Bruce B. Downs and Fowler Avenue and there was a university restaurant near the present day University Mall. This was the only place off campus to have lunch or dinner (Good veal, eggplant parmesan, and Chinese mustard). The University (now Marshall) Center housed the cafeteria. Morrison's had the contract at the cafeteria; students always complained about the food, regardless of who provided it. There wasn't much around the campus in 1966. Busch Gardens was popular, but at the time it was just gardens, a bird show and brewery tour. In 1966 USF was still mostly comprised of its original buildings.

#### *Professors that stand out in recollections*

Mr. Camp was an English major, but considered a degree in history. He took enough classes for a major in either or both, but decided to take the easiest route and not do a double major. He always liked Jim Swanson in the history department (Russian History). He didn't have an "axe to grind;" everyone else seemed to have a determinist theory that affected his or her historical outlook (economic, religious or erotic theory of history, etc.).

Mr. Camp almost drowned his German history professor in a scuba diving class. He was a very demanding professor (Name not-recalled), but his methods led to success in memorizing work. Mr. Camp took a scuba class with this professor and in class students were expected to tow someone the length of the pool. The professor towed Mr. Camp,

and then Mr. Camp towed the professor fairly unsuccessfully. This particular professor later died hiking in Colorado.

He also remembers Harold Goldstein fondly, a history professor and very dynamic teacher. Mr. Camp never had a class with him. While in class with Dr. Swanson, everyone could hear Dr. Goldstein in the next room, so Dr. Swanson brought his entire class to hear Goldstein's lecture. Dr. Goldstein was later suspended when he asked a class, "does your shit stink?" One girl was offended and Dr. Goldstein was suspended. The students protested publicly with signs and rallies and Dr. Goldstein was reinstated. This was the only demonstration the Mr. Camp partook in.

#### *Reflections on President John Allen*

"A gentleman and a scholar, he was just a wonderful guy, and of course Mrs. Allen was also a very strong presence in the old days, and just a wonderful lady." As a student working in Special Collections Mr. Camp had the chance to meet Dr. Allen at events. The President and his wife were interested in the library. He was very cordial and was very well intentioned. During Vietnam, Mr. Camp got the impression that Dr. Allen understood what people were upset about, but he needed to keep a balance with everyone, including those in state government. He did "a good job of minimizing the disruption to the University." If President Allen had been confrontational things may have gotten worse. Dr. Allen's presidential portrait is the only one that is life size and he was a rather large man. The portrait was temporarily housed in Special Collections and Mr. Camp confused this life sized portrait for a patron out of the corner of his eye many times. Dr. Covington did the portrait, "he was kind of the court painter for USF for many years." Mr. Camp always wondered why Dr. Allen's portrait has no feet.

#### *Reflections on Library Sciences MS*

Library Science program was new at the time. It initially started to train school librarians and was taught in the College of Education, then branched out to full-fledged library sciences. After he graduated he stayed at the library as a clerk for a year in Special Collections. He took library science courses, using the free credit hours he was allowed as an employee. USF was not accredited at the time, so he decided to complete his Library Sciences Degree at Florida State University. After he finished at FSU there was an opening in Special Collections. Mr. Camp applied and got the job, and has been at USF ever since. By that time Margaret Chapman went to work as the director of the library at Queens College in North Carolina. Mary Jane Kuhl, the former assistant, moved up to be head of Special Collections and Mr. Camp applied for her position as assistant.

#### *60's Radicalism and Protest on Campus*

There was a "small but active protest community" at USF in the 1960s. Of those that made the biggest impression were a student takeover of the president's office and the movement to eat President Allen (Mr. Camp never understood what that was about). Another event that made an impression on him was the student reaction to an all night rock concert. Students wanted to have a concert but the administration disapproved of an

all night event, the students continued with their plan and University Police had to come in and break it up.

The campus radical movement was small because most of USF's students were non-traditional in that they were either older than the average college student, or they were working. Many were intent on completing their degrees and providing for their families. This was and still is a commuter campus, this status added to stability. There were occasional demonstrations and after the student deaths at Kent State many USF students wanted to close campus. The administration refused and there were minor protests.

#### *Library move-1972*

In the time he had been at Florida State the Special Collections had not changed, except in book volume. When he arrived as a student at USF the library's entire circulation collection fit on the third floor. The following is a layout of the old library. The front lobby was circulation and a lounge area, with a nice garden next to it. Straight ahead was an art gallery, then reserved reading to the left and Special Collections to the right. Reference, technical processing (cataloging), and current periodicals were housed on the second floor. The library basement housed the media center, technical processing (binding, etc.), storage and a radio station. The storage area was full of drums of water and civil defense supplies. There were many civil defense supplies around campus. The library was also a fallout shelter. The third floor housed books and the fourth floor was full of bound periodicals. On the roof was a faculty lounge and snack bar.

#### *Move from the Old to New library*

Mr. Camp remembers enough of the move that he "would probably retire if we had to do it again, it was a nameless horror, but it was very well organized." By that time the reserve room was full of stacks of books. Moving the collection in the library was a challenge because it all had to be moved in order. For months they put stickers on furniture and shelves letting people know where they would go in the new building. Jay Dobkin, the third head of Special Collections, moved the rare book collection with Mr. Camp. The two of them accomplished this alone. The initial talk was of the students doing the work but the library declined. The Graber Moving Company did the actual move and they did hire some students. The library staff was active in the move and helped as much as possible. Graber built a fleet of plywood book trucks for the move. They took out a window on each floor then put in an elevator in the bushes outside. Inside they built ramps leading to the open windows and ran book trucks to the elevator down to a van. The vans carried the books to the new library where they were unloaded. For decades after the move you would find Graber labels in the oddest places. The move was smooth from his perspective, but he would not want to do it again.

Interestingly enough Mr. Camp was also the first person caught by the detection system in the new library. He was going to take a book outside to read for lunch and circulation was busy so he just went out the front door, forgetting about the system and was caught red-handed.

### *Opening of the New Library*

The new library opened a month or two before the formal dedication. Margaret Mead was the guest speaker. She spoke in the front lobby and signed one of her books for the library. This book is still in Special Collections.

### *Reflections on Jay Dobkin and his innovations*

Jay was very important for Special Collections. He had been at the University of Toronto and Arizona State. The library was hiring a new head of Special Collections but none of the applicants had much Special Collections experience. Towards the end of the process they got his application. He was very capable and experienced so their main worry was that USF's small rare books collection would not be large enough for him. Mary Lou Harkness, the director at that time, said "maybe he'll bring us up to his standards." This was a prophetic statement because that is just what Jay Dobkin did. Special Collections had a very good Floridiana collection and a good but small rare books collection. At the time Jay Dobkin came to the school Special Collections had the Rare Books Collection, the Collection of Floridiana, the Florida Historical Society Library and the University Archives, which was a collection of USF publications and the papers of the President. Jay Dobkin looked it over and decided to expand into new areas. Before Mr. Dobkin arrived, they acquired the stock in (what Camp believes was) the John Jay Bookstore in Boston, which went out of business. Most books went into circulating collections. There were many nineteenth-century literary works and a few hundred early American textbooks that couldn't go into circulation so the books were unused. Dobkin believed that they could start a nineteenth-century literary collection and Mr. Camp had put the textbooks in his office, which Mr. Dobkin thought could be the beginning of a collection of nineteenth-century schoolbooks. These were not areas that were being collected at the time. In this manner, Jay Dobkin set them on a course they would follow for a decade by diversifying the focus of the collections.

Mr. Dobkin's tenure was a "major watershed in the history of Special Collections at USF." There was a collector of series (young adult) books in Pasco County named Harry K. Hudson, the author of the first systematic bibliography of series books. This bibliography was a major event in the history of that literature and stirred interest in collecting series books by making information about boy's series books available to anyone interested. Somehow Harry met Jay and arranged for Special Collections to acquire the Hudson Collection. USF has continued to add to the Series Book Collection and has one of the best collections in the country. Mr. Dobkin decided that it would be of value to build a collection of girl's series books and Anthropomorphic Animals Series Books. The Series book collection is very well regarded. The boy's series books were selected for the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) preservation-microfilming project (The official title of the project was the SOLINET/ASERL Preservation Microfilm Project, SOLINET is an acronym for "Southeastern Library Network"). They microfilmed about 6,000 books, preserving this work for future generations.

During Mr. Dobkin's tenure they also acquired the personal research collection of Hampton Dunn, a noted Florida historian and Tony Pizzo, a Tampa historian. Both were



“delightful gentlemen.” Mr. Pizzo was a very friendly man with a pleasant disposition. His specific interest was the history of Ybor City. When he noticed in the fifties that Ybor City as he knew it was vanishing, he began to collect documents that helped preserve the history of the city. Hampton Dunn was a newspaperman, a former president of the Florida Historical Society, and also the president and founder of the Tampa Historical Society. He wrote many books on Florida history. The research collections of both these gentlemen are kept at the USF Special Collections.

#### *Special Collections After Jay Dobkin*

After Mr. Dobkin retired, Mr. Camp was acting head of Special Collections for a couple of years. Mary Lou Harkness renamed the Nineteenth-Century Literature Collection (which Dobkin put together) the J.B. Dobkin Collection. Mr. Camp considers himself very lucky to have worked for so many directors over the years.

#### *Where will Special Collections go in the next ten years?*

“We’ll probably focus mainly on deepening and perfecting the collections that we have. I think we’ll maintain our focus on Florida history and expand that as much as possible, the Florida history aspect of our collection is an excellent connection with the community.” Interest in local history is very high, many of the Special Collections users come from off campus. They probably will not add major areas of specialization because there is only so much they can do. They will continue to take advantage of opportunities despite a limited budget, this has been the way they have always done it. They began collecting popular culture books that other institutions were not particularly interested in such as textbooks and series books. Mr. Camp and Mr. Dobkin would joke with one another that Special Collections at USF would begin to collect in an area and the prices would go through the roof three or four years later.

Books and libraries are a source of information and researchers don’t care about the format of the information. They just want the knowledge and books are a great way to store and get information. Now new technology allows us to access this electronically, making some argue that libraries will be outdated in the future. Special Collections, unlike the rest of the library, have “an additional dimension to them.” These are the originals and this allows Special Collections to act also as a kind of museum. “Many of our items, particularly the rare books, have an artifactual dimension to them, as well as an informational dimension.” Therefore the library might become more reliant on technology to provide information.

Sam Fustukjian, a director who died in office was “a man of great vision” and “a wheeler-dealer, first-rate.” He moved the library into the computer age without a major increase in funding. He got into some trouble with the staff because they needed to pick up the slack from time to time but Sam played a big role in getting the library where it is today. Mr. Camp thinks that although some are predicting the demise of libraries, they will be around in some form or another. In the past (and present) libraries kept books and let people know where to find sources and information. With new technology, they might be able to just give information. The librarian may become a “surgical nurse with the scholar as the surgeon.” In other words, the librarian will get the information for the

scholar directly. Special Collections might someday be the only part of the library that is left, while the rest of it is “virtual.” Luckily there will still be a need for the original manuscripts and work. It might become digitized, but they will not get rid of the original. There is a certain aspect to holding a 5,000-year-old tablet in your hands that does not apply to digitized representation. This will allow for there to be a role for Special Collections no matter what happens technologically to the rest of the library.

*In more than thirty years of involvement with USF, I am most proud of...*

It is a difficult question for Mr. Camp to answer. He is very proud of the Hudson Collection. He is very proud that we have some “really top-notch rare books.” They have a very good local and Florida history collection. He is most personally proud of preserving the Hudson Collection forever. The microfilm for that will be around forever. “This is a pretty impressive place,” to Mr. Camp. He is impressed when he sees the Marshall Center and the Solar Rotary (Behind Cooper Hall), the bust of MLK and the “I have a dream” speech. When he looks back at thirty years in the library he wonders how they were able to survive before they had all the resources that they now enjoy, especially without having been generously funded.

In the 1970s there was a study done which found that all the books in all nine state universities in Florida did not add up to the collection at the University of Indiana’s library. The Florida legislature established a five-year program to beef up the collection. The first year they had more money than they knew what to do with. In fact they offered the library director more money late in the year and she turned them down because they could not spend the money they had already. Jay Dobkins was appalled that someone would refuse money. He said “I can take any amount of money they give me and spend it well with a few phone calls.” The following year they received more money than they could spend again. Unfortunately by the third year the five-year plan was over.

*Final thoughts*

“It’ll be here long after we’re not and what you can do to perfect it, to make it better, to expand it, to move it on is a permanent contribution. It hasn’t got your name on it, unless you’re a Provost Marshall” but “it’s something you’ve given and it’ll have impact for as long as the University lasts, more so than writing your name in one of the concrete sidewalks out here, which I also did as a student.” Mr. Camp continues, “This place has had a lot of outstanding people contribute to it over the years,” people “that it was really an honor to know, and every one of them put something into it and what they put into it is still here because it is part of what’s made the university what it is at the present, and that’s something.” The people that you teach or are taught by or the people can meet and talk to impact your life and maybe you impact theirs. “What you do here goes on...you don’t, but it does.” In looking over USF in 2003, Mr. Camp finishes his thought by saying, “I think John Allen would be pleased.”

John "Knocky" Parker in the English department was quite a character, a nationally known jazz pianist. He wasn’t that great an English teacher, Mr. Camp asserts, but he was great with music and movies. Classes would watch films in class and discuss them.

Mr. Camp would sit in the back of his movie class with a drink, a snack and a blueberry Muriel cigar.

In Mr. Parkers American literature course, Mr. Camp was required to write a final paper. Mr. Camp wrote a paper about Jonathan Edwards on a roll of toilet paper because he didn't like Jonathan Edwards. Dr. Parker gave him an "A" because he thought it was innovative. All in all it has been an interesting experience, and Mr. Camp has many wonderful memories. They had a Christmas party in Special Collections in the old library years ago and co-workers from around the world brought in food, and a Hungarian Violinist playing while they ate. This is just another one of his many happy memories.

*End of Interview*