

## Interview: Walter H. "Butch" Wingo, Jr.

### Time Code Content

- 00:00:01 Introduction. Walter H. "Butch" Wingo, Jr. Interviewed October 11, 2017, at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Interviewed by Jeanne Drewes, librarian.
- 00:01:15 Interest in Industry: Had a friend, Barry George, who was the Vice President of the bookbinders union in Washington D.C. and at worked at Merkle Press. Directed Butch to bookbinding position in Shady Groves, MD.
- 00:02:38 Learning the Trade: Learned from a gentleman who created the prototypes, but could not do apprenticeship with him because a union shop.
- 00:03:19 Career: Moved to California because had great union contract for bookbinders; struggled to find a bookbinding position at the union offices because scarcity of jobs. Worked for a printer in an advertising business for 1 year.
- 00:04:55 Mentors: Moved back to the East Coast. John Dobbs of Dobbs Brothers Library Binding sent him to train from bookbinders in St. Augustine, FL in 1974. Trained by Sammy Daniels on finished end. Learned about Library of Congress library binding contracts.
- 00:06:59 Mentors: Moved to Dobbs Brothers location in Colonial Heights, VA. Worked with Leonard Hess, a bookbinder and plant manager. Exposed to conservation and restoration aspect.
- 00:07:51 Career Change: Left bookbinding industry to work for his father in a jewelry store. After a few years, decided to leave retail and return to bookbinding.
- 00:08:15 Career: Bookbinding position for Simon's Trade Bindery. Managed library bindery case binding area until Simon's went out of business. Union wanted him to learn how to run folders, but declined. Found another hand bookbinding job with Distinctive Bookbinding.
- 00:09:34 Industry Changes: Became self-unemployed with Book Works. Market and projects changed so less demand for his work. Found part time-and contractual work. Developed case bindings and worked as plant manager for Virginia Binding Corporation in Richmond, VA.
- 00:11:35 Greatest Accomplishment: In 1992, offered hand bookbinding position at GPO. Calls it one of the highlight of his life. Learned good habits from his co-workers: being clean, fast, and efficient. GPO well run and very structured.
- 00:15:19 Greatest Accomplishment: Story of how head forwarder lost tip of his finger while nipping books. Butch now responsible for learning how to do lace-style binding of the U.S. Code. Eventually became head forwarder; very proud of this accomplishment.

- 00:19:08 Mentors: Anecdote from time in St. Petersburg. Sammy Daniels said all bookbinders either drunks or crazy. Sammy taught him how to bind left-handed. Sammy and Leonard Hess, his mentors, saw bookbinding as a craft and not a job.
- 00:24:16 Technology: Shady Groves was an addition bindery; machines very labor intensive and fast. Dobbs Brothers was a library bindery; each worker performed one specific task, except Butch who did all of the tasks to learn all facets of library binding.
- 00:27:19 Salaries: Paid better when working for unions. One day a week, would make book deliveries from Richmond to D.C. for extra pay.
- 00:29:45 Technology: Simon's in D.C. a trade bindery, including folding, cutting, case binding, for union shops. Very mechanized; learned how to use Muller Martini binding machine; case binding an after-thought for Simon's. Dobbs Brothers and Simon's used hot glue pots. Distinctive Binding doing case binding, library binding, leather, gift items. Applied glue with brushes. Learned whip stich from Iranian bookbinding at Distinctive Binding.
- 00:33:15 Business: Started own business in Fredericksburg. Involved with James Monroe Museum and Library.
- 00:34:20 Apprentices: His son, also a bookbinder, worked with him in the summer at Fredericksburg. Then moved into basement of a rare book store; David Lee Wilson worked as his apprentice and given the equipment when Butch went to GPO.
- 00:37:23 Technology: Have the equipment at the GPO to do all types of binding, including saddle-stitch binding, adhesive binding, case binding, library binding, fine-leather binding. GPO a self-sufficient print shop; web and sheet-fed printing. Had to replace outdated equipment, including adhesive binders; updated cutters and folders; new saddle-stitch machines. New machines more digitally-run and operated, automatic; saves significant time. Acquiring a nipper station to replace separate nipper gluer; allows serial sets to be moved to addition line instead of made and cased-in in library binding section.
- 00:41:32 Changes in Business over Time: Pressure to reduce number of employees. Led to purchasing more efficient equipment. Unskilled laborers and bookbinders forced to learn new skills. Have to establish priorities because less manpower; Congress always the priority at the GPO.
- 00:44:04 Differences within Industry: Shorter runs and production pressures main differences between GPO and commercial bookbinding.
- 00:44:43 Regret: Not attending more workshops, learning about conservation
- 00:46:13 Advice to Next Generation: Something new to learn every day.
- 00:46:33 Associations: Member of LBI. First exposed to association at Dobbs Brothers.

Attended conferences.

00:47:40 Greatest Accomplishment: GPO LBI certified .

00:51:44 Interesting Projects: First rare book bound was Andersonville Death Register, U.S. Code made bookbinding fun, public papers for President very satisfying, Mercedes-Benz US clamshell boxes for lap belt and steering wheel.

00:56:27 Changes to Industry: Had to learn the craft in a non-union shop. Given journeyperson bookbinders union card after working at Dobbs Brothers. Describes differences in union and non-union shops .

01:00:21 Goals: Revamp apprenticeship program at GPO.

01:01:57 Advice to Future Generations: If want to be a good bookbinder, need experience working in a production environment and not just learning in the classroom. Learn graphic arts because industry becoming more digital. Keep moving.

01:05:41 Changes to Industry: Roll-to-roll inkjet

01:07:37 End of Interview