

Robert Sibert Interview Log

Time Code Content

- 00:00:03 **Introduction.** Robert Sibert, Bound to Stay Bound Books, Jacksonville, IL. Interviewed June 3, 2017, at the Roslyn Hotel, Roslyn, New York. Interviewed by Jeanne Drewes, librarian.
- 00:00:45 **Career:** Third generation bookbinder. Company founded in 1920 by Robert's grandfather, Lawrence D. Sibert. Robert first worked in the bindery as a teen during summers; he learned the trade from his father who also worked in the bindery all his life. Jack Fairfield, Mark Lovekamp, and Ralph Evans also important mentors.
- 00:03:45 **Changes in Business over Time:** Traditional library binding, plus prebinding for publishers as New Method Book Bindery. Specialized in prebinding in the early 1950s, formed Hertzberg-New Method with Fritz James's father and the Hertzbergs to take over the traditional library binding services, then focused on prebinding, formalized name as Bound to Stay Bound in 1970.
- 00:06:01 **Information Technology:** Honeywell computer early adopter. Custom programming to customize Library of Congress catalog cards for customers working with MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging) records, with help from Frank Pezzanite of LSSI.
- 00:12:00 **Career:** Graduated from college in 1978; spent that summer learning bookbinding at Dunn & Wilson in Scotland. Started that fall at Bound to Stay Bound doing accounting, new book and backlist buying. Attended business school at Columbia University 1980-82. In 1992, became President of company
- 00:14:09 **Opportunities:** Diversified in the 1980s and 90s into a heating and air conditioning company, a medical technology start-up company and an educational video company, but none of these proved successful. Have diversified binding into customized classroom collections and contract binding for printing companies and various book vendors, and private binding for self-published and print-on-demand markets.
- 00:15:50 **Greatest Accomplishment:** Surviving! Decline in school library market since 2004 has been a major challenge, partially because of e-books.
- 00:18:18 **Building and Plant:** Always in Jacksonville, IL, started in shop above a candy store with three employees. Within a few years, moved to building that had been a business college, additions made. Built a new building on Morton Avenue in 1958. 46,000 square feet with an addition three years later. Now 110,000 square feet. Strange orange brick building. Included a computer room when built even though they didn't have a computer. Concrete floors for staff on roller skates. *Books that Stand the Test of Time* publication full of pictures of bindery (through 1998).

- 00:22:25 **Employees:** Maximum staff 350 in the late 1990s, currently 140. Description of roller skate use in picking work.
- 00:25:55 **Greatest Accomplishment:** 1985 established Bound to Stay Bound Books Foundation for charitable giving, including Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal, for children's books, scholarships for students going to library school to study children's librarianship, and travel grants to attend the AASL (American Association of School Librarians) biannual conference.
- 00:29:56 **Employees:** Jacksonville, IL is traditionally agricultural economy; skills are adaptable to book production. Non-union, approximately 70% female workforce, long-tenured.
- 00:32:57 **Mentors:** His father, Fritz James, Jack Bendror, members of the Library Binding Institute; Frank Scioscia at Harper, John Briggs at Holiday House, librarians Gloria Miller and Susan Roman.
- 00:34:24 **Interesting Projects:** The MARC record project mentioned earlier, the ANSI/NISO/LBI Library Binding Standard (Z39.78-2000) Committee representing prebinding. Discussion of lack of ANSI/NISO standard for prebinding, testing of PUR (Polyurethane Reactive) adhesive for bookbinding, use of cover materials other than buckram book cloth.
- 00:43:12 **Changes in Business over Time:** Influence of computer, Internet, technology explosion.
- 00:45:37 **Advice to Next Generation:** Be ready for a wild ride!
- 00:46:19 **End of interview.**