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Robert H. Geiman

1980s

Karen Cedzo, interviewer

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University of Alaska campus in Fairbanks, Alaska

Bob Geiman said they have an appropriation each year from the legislature that is specifically earmarked for the acquisition of Polar Regions and rare Alaska type materials. This year they received 25,000 dollars. Depending on the value of the materials determines how many volumes are picked up. Some of the volumes are six or eight thousand dollars and some of them are six or eight hundred dollars. Over the course of a year they purchase ten or fifteen significant volumes a year based on an average of several years. Karen Cedzo said in recent weeks the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library has acquired two significant collections. Elmer Rasmuson donated one of three known German copies of a first-account of the death of Captain James Cook published in 1780. The book is one of the library's most valuable volumes. Geiman said that book ranks high among the total collection as far as value. He said they are extremely fortunate to have a benefactor such as Elmer Rasmuson and the National Bank of Alaska. They work closely with Elmer Rasmuson. He sends notices of available material from time to time and asks them if they have it. If they don't own it then they send him ranking of the importance of the work to the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library. Cedzo said not only is the book on Captain Cook one of three known it is the only copy held in the Americas. Geiman said the significance of that is it further enhances the University of Alaska Fairbanks as a place where scholars will come and do research. They have a steady stream of scholars in and out of the library because of the materials they have on the Polar Regions and Alaska areas and this greatly enhances that.

Cedzo said the Rasmuson Library recently received confirmation that it would be the recipient of Senator Mike Gravel's papers. About fifty cartons of papers that document some twelve years in the Senate in Washington, D.C. are expected. Geiman said they acquired this collection through the good work of Paul McCarthy, university archivist, and his staff. Other papers have been deposited at the library in the past. They have the Bartlett papers, the Gruening paper, the Rivers papers, the Begich papers, and all of the papers of territorial delegates to Washington, D.C. from territorial days through all of the representatives and senators since statehood. They have the records since 1922 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Mike Gravel's papers carry on that tradition and assists them to maintain that.

Cedzo said she asked Geiman what kind of material they would prefer not to acquire. Geiman said in their effort to be a comprehensive resource center their materials pertain to Alaska and the Polar Regions. There is very little they would not have an interest in. With the skills they have on their staff they can determine what would be of value to the present and future generations in Alaska. He invites anyone with materials, whether they think they are valuable or not, to get in touch with them. He asked people to call him or stop in. He said it is often assumed by donors that their materials are not that

significant. Only in the process of visiting with people do they find they are of extreme value to them. They have a lot of business records, mining records and personal records.

Karen Cedzo reports on campus activities.