

CHEMICAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

MAURICE B. LINE

Transcript of an Interview
Conducted by

W. Boyd Rayward

at

Harrogate, England

on

27 June 2000

(With Subsequent Additions and Corrections)

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MAURICE B. LINE

1928 Born in Bedford, England, on 23 June

Education

1950 B.A., Oxford University
1954 M.A., Oxford University

Professional Experience

1950-1951 Trainee, Bodleian Library, Oxford University
1951-1953 Library Assistant, University of Glasgow
1954-1965 Sub-Librarian, University of Southampton, Southampton, England
1965-1968 Deputy Librarian, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne, England
1968-1971 Librarian, University of Bath, Bath, England
1971-1973 Librarian, National Central Library, London

British Library
1974-1985 Director General, Lending Division, Wetherby, England
1985-1988 Director General, Science Technology and Industry, Wetherby and London, England

1977-present Professor Associate, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, England
1985-1991 External Professor, Loughborough University, Loughborough, England
1988-2001 Independent consultant

Honors

1980 D.Litt. from Heriot-Watt University
1985 Honorary Fellow, Library Association
1988 D.Sc., Southampton University
1988 Fellow of Birmingham Polytechnic
1989 IFLA medal
1988 Companion, Chartered Management Institute
1990 President, Library Association

ABSTRACT

Maurice B. Line's interview begins with a discussion of his education and early career. After high school, Line received a scholarship to attend Oxford University and major in Classics. He began his long career in library institutions at the Bodleian Library as a library trainee. He then moved on to the University of Glasgow as an assistant librarian. While there, he was one of the first to conduct library system studies regarding student's attitudes towards the library. Line brought his interest in library systems to Southampton University where Beres Bland, the head librarian at Southampton, gave Line the freedom to develop his abilities and focus his ideas about information science. As deputy librarian at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Line helped create the first automated acquisition system in Britain. When he became a librarian at Bath University, he directed the study of social scientists' information requirements, named INFROSS, and a further study on the designs of information systems, named DISISS. In 1985, Line became the director general of Science Technology and Industry at the British Library. Line discusses the constraints of working in the public sector, and his desire to create easy access to library collections internationally. In conclusion, he describes the potential obstacles to the international library system in the future, and the importance of technology in making libraries more accessible to users.

INTERVIEWER

W. Boyd Rayward is a research professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He turned to librarianship after graduating in English literature from the University of Sydney. He received his Ph.D. from the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago in 1973. He has held positions in the University of Chicago (where he became Dean of the Graduate Library School). He served as Professor and Head of the School of Information Library and Archive Studies and Dean of the University's Faculty of Professional Studies at the University of New South Wales in Sydney where he is now professor emeritus. He has published two books related to Paul Otlet, Belgian documentalist and internationalist, and a great many articles on history of national and international schemes for the organization and dissemination of information.

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