

Transcription of Interview about damage sustained from Hurricane Harvey (August 25,2017) to University of Texas Marine Science Institute Library building and book collection with Miyuki Elizabeth DeHart, Head Librarian, University of Texas Marine Science Institute, Port Aransas, Texas. Interviewed by Charles L. DeHart, October 7, 2017 at their home in Aransas Pass, Texas.

CD: What is your name?

LD: Liz DeHart

CD: Do you agree to be recorded?

LD: Yes

CD: What did you do to prepare the library for the storm?

LD: Very minimal to be honest with you. The library is well protected in the E.R.C. building, which is the Estuarine Research building. We moved books from the bottom shelf to prepare for the storm and unlike other instances we did not have to cover the shelves with plastic.

CD: How long did it take to prepare?

LD: About three hours.

CD: And during this preparation did it take a lot of physical effort to do it?

LD: Not Really.

CD: After the storm when did you learn of the damage to U.T.M.S.I.? After the storm when did you learn of the damage to U.T.M.S.I.?

LD: After the storm Hurricane Harvey there were first thoughts that we had lost the entire collection because of the compromise at the Estuarine Research Building at M.S.I. We found out later that the books did not get wet, the library was well protected and did not have any damages other than the carpet being wet.

CD: What collection are you talking about?

LD: The rare book room, book collection, the journal section, maps.

CD: What did they comprise of? I mean of historical data? Was it how many years old? Is it...

LD: The rare book room we had pieces date back to the eighteen hundreds; we also had a collection of rare materials where we are one of twelve to have this particular collection of seagrasses, leaves.

CD: What is the oldest collection you have?

LD: About eighteen hundred.

CD: What year of eighteen hundred?

LD: I cannot give a specific year; we have Smithsonian Museum collections; we have Darwin collections.

CD: Okay, moving along. About any damage done from the storm, what did you do to make sure that nothing happened to the books and any type of collections? What type of materials did you use? What did you drape over the collections?

LD: We didn't drape anything over the materials; we moved part of the bottom shelves and that was all. We did not cover the collection with plastic.

CD: So how was it? There wasn't any plastic covering anything, correct?

LD: No, there was not. There wasn't any need to.

CD: If it went all to pieces, it went all to pieces, correct?

LD: Correct.

CD: Excuse me, interviewee. Don't be mean to me. When were you able to go to the library and survey the damage to your office and library?

LD: Please repeat your question.

CD: When were you able to go to the library and survey the damage to your office and library?

LD: September eighteenth. It was my first trip to the Marine Science Institute. Right after the storm there were only certain people that were allowed to take care of everything there.

CD: Where did you survive the storm?

LD: At home in Aransas Pass.

CD: And what happened there.

LD: I was terrified!

CD: What was you terrified of?

LD: The whole storm; I was afraid the roof was going to blow; it started leaking in the kitchen ceiling.

CD: I understand from your past you're scared to hell, to death of tornadoes. Is that true?

LD: Yes, I am, and I have recurring dreams of tornadoes, which is ridiculous, so yes, I am terrified by the tornadoes, and I've never been in one.

CD: Is the library fully functional now?

LD: No, it is not. We are still waiting to make decisions about moving the rest of the collection so that the Estuarine Research Building can be renovated well as the library. They want to be able to protect the collection, so they feel like it is best to move them out of the building.

CD: What are they going to do if they do that?

LD: U.T. libraries are assisting me to make the decisions on what to do with the collection. They are trying to figure out to send it to the storage facility in Austin

or to some storage facility which is nearer because of cost issues. In order to do that they would need to use book trucks.

CD: Don't you think in the electronic age, they need to be moved somewhere else that is not prone to flooding or hurricane? That way they could be preserved perfectly in U.T. libraries in Austin.

LD: That's a good question, but I don't believe that. In order for a research institute to have materials, there are old materials that do not exist on electronic resources, so to have the print at the library is very important to faculty and students that are there at the facility. A good library will have a combination of both print and electronic.

CD: Well that's nice. I appreciate your help. When will the institute be back open, back to business as usual. Any time soon?

LD: Currently they are thinking maybe two to three months.

CD: Now okay, you're going to cuss me for this one. Compare the storm at Duke to this one? What do you think? What was the worst one? From our, we've been through both of them. What the hell was the difference? I mean what was the big difference?

LD: In my profession these two incidences of disaster in the library were completely different. At the Duke Marine Laboratory the library was compromised

because a tornado had hit a dormitory and the debris and everything from that dormitory blew into the plywood and glass that protected, that was supposedly protecting the library. During the entire storm sand, rain, you name it was blowing through those windows. Ninety per cent of the collection was wet. I had evacuated from North Carolina to Virginia because of the storm. I found out immediately that the faculty and the students knew what to do immediately which meant putting the wet collection in a fish freezer storage facility. Anytime you have wet materials within twenty- four to forty-eight hours the best thing to do for a wet collection is to freeze it. That way you have the time to preserve and process the books from there. So the main difference between the Duke Marine Library and Marine Science Library here in Port Aransas, the Duke Library- the collections were wet whereas at the Marine Science Library the collections were not wet. It made a huge difference to be able preserve and move forward with the collection here.

CD: Do you think because of the Republicans and all from years ago cutting back on the money and everything spent and all if it had hit hard as it did in North Carolina, do you think that Abbott, they always cut back on money and everything they call state's rights, do you think that the state was prepared to help like in North Carolina? Do think the state of Texas was as prepared to help as it was in Duke because Duke on Pivers Island was right next to N.O.A.A. You think they're prepared? Yes or No?

LD: The preparation for Duke was a whole lot faster, here they claimed to have been prepared but this area has not been hit in a very long time, and I think there was lessons learned from this incident. Just because a building is supposed to be a category four building that did not come about.

CD: It does appear that ah the state government here in Texas was prepared for it. Do you agree or not?

LD: No, I don't agree.

CD: The state of Texas was not prepared correct?

LD: Correct

CD: They don't do anything and talk a lot and they want to sue the government (federal). It's ok.

LD: [inaudible]

CD: Yeah you can; you can cut it off.

Note: Interviewee did not feel comfortable talking about this subject and stopped the interview.