



ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER

An Update: Excluding Oral History from IRB Review

By Donald A. Ritchie
Oral History Association and
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Since Aug. 26, 2003, when the Office for Human Research Protection concurred in a policy statement developed jointly by the American Historical Association and the Oral History Association regarding the application of federal regulations governing research on human subjects to oral history, most campus-based oral history projects have been able to proceed with their interviews without submitting protocols for review by an Institutional Review Board.

The policy statement can be found on the OHA's Web site: <http://www.dickinson.edu/oha>. It also can be found on page 3 of the Winter 2003 issue of the OHA **Newsletter**.

Some IRBs, however, have raised questions about the policy statement and have circulated memoranda that suggest hypothetical cases in which oral history would still be subject to review. The memos purport to reflect the views of the Office for Human Research Protection, but in fact they seriously misinterpret the OHRP's position.

As representatives of the OHA and AHA, we participated in a conference call on Jan. 7, 2004, with Dr. Michael Carome, the OHRP's associate director for regulatory

affairs, who affirmed his agency's continued concurrence in the policy statement "that oral history interviewing activities, in general, are not designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge and therefore do not involve research as defined by Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations at 45 CFR 46.102 (d) and do not need to be reviewed by an institutional review board (IRB). OHRP has tried consistently to confirm this concurrence whenever it receives inquiries about this matter from representatives of IRBs or other institutional officers."

Some of the confusion seems to have arisen around the concepts of "research" and "generalizable knowledge." While oral history clearly involves historical research and interviews can lend themselves to generalizations, oral historians' standard operating procedures do not fit the type of research defined by federal regulations: "A systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge."

By this they mean the type of standard questionnaires used to interview a large sampling of the population anonymously, as commonly employed in medical, behavioral and social science research.

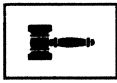
Individually-tailored interviews with a narrator's informed consent do not meet this definition of "research."

Nor do they contribute to "generalizable knowledge," even if conducted with people identified with a common group, theme or event, and whether or not the interviewer or other researchers might draw some historical generalizations from multiple interviews. The interviews must be *designed* specifically to produce generalizable knowledge in the scientific sense.

Interview projects that meet the above federal definition should be submitted for IRB review. Those that do not are not subject to review.

Copy Deadline Note

The next **OHA Newsletter** copy deadline is July 1 for the issue mailed to members Aug. 1. You can reach the editor at: ohaeditor@aol.com. Your stories about oral history projects or matters of general concern in the profession are always welcome. You may e-mail them to the editor or call 402-730-0473 to discuss a story idea. Photographs also are welcome. Please send them to 7524 S. 35th St., Lincoln, NE 68516. Pictures will be returned if you wish.



From Your President

Rose T. Díaz, OHA President

At its recent midwinter meeting, the OHA Council focused on the important outreach components of OHA committee work. Among the concerns of this Council--and previous presidents and Council members--has been the enormous task of finding committee members willing to serve when institutions, agencies and organizations are providing less support for professional activities and fewer resources are available to individuals.

However, the important work of committees, including gaining members and outreach services, suffers when our committees cannot respond. Often, this results in OHA becoming reactive rather than proactive, and we are not serving the membership to the best of our ability if we are limited in this way. Further, it limits leadership opportunities since we resort to calling on those who always make time in their busy schedules for "just one more duty." We have been extremely fortunate that few ever turn us down, but for the organization to grow, we need to extend opportunities in every direction.

Please let us know how you can help us grow. Most organizations ask you for money (we don't want to discourage this, as our membership and endowment do need to grow!!!) but right now, we need your talents and your time.

Council held an in-depth discussion on committee chairs, structures and reporting avenues. The early concerns focused on the number and type of existing committees (i.e., standing, single purpose/ad hoc, task forces and forums), with Council voting to establish a **Committee on Committees** comprised of the immediate past-president, president, and first vice-president (the second vice-president has responsibility for the annual meeting every year). This

ensures continuity among the committee responsibilities and will allow for the workflow to remain consistent over time.

Council identified the following six OHA **Standing Committees** that advance the organization's general mission and goals (appointed 2004 Council liaisons are in parentheses):

+ **Nominating**--(Rebecca Sharpless--first vice president is traditionally the liaison to Council) The Nominating Committee solicits nominations for Council and the Nominating Committee and coordinates and runs the OHA annual election independently from OHA Council. It consists of six members elected by the membership. The committee chair is chosen by the committee members.

+ **Finance/Endowments**--(Rebecca Sharpless, first vice president, will be designated liaison) Committee will consist of the Executive Committee--both vice presidents, president, immediate past president and two members at large, to be appointed in 2004, two others in 2005--appointed to three-year, staggered and (possibly) renewable terms.

+ **Publications**--(Charles Hardy, liaison). Hardy will work with me to find a committee chair and two members for appointment in 2004 and three other members in 2005 to serve staggered terms. This committee oversees all of the organization's publication efforts.

+ **Education**--(Celia Alvarez, liaison). Alvarez will work with me to find a committee chair and two members for appointment in 2004 and three other members in 2005 to serve staggered terms.

+ **Diversity**--(Mary Larson, liaison). Larson will work with me to find a committee chair and two members for appointment in 2004 and three other members in 2005 to serve staggered terms.

+ **International**--(Mehmed Ali, liaison). Ali will work with me to find a committee chair and two members for appointment in 2004, three other members to be appointed in 2005 to serve staggered terms.

The Membership Committee was

abolished several years ago.

Council defined the following as single-purpose committees to exist as long as the committee is actively involved in granting funds, defining parameters and best practices for OHA members or until an issue is resolved adequately for the organization's members

+ **Awards**--The president will appoint the Awards Committees yearly.

+ **Scholarships**--The president will work with Council member Mehmed Ali.

+ **Digital Technologies/New Media**--Charles Hardy and Cliff Kuhn head this committee.

+ **IRB Issues**--Past presidents Don Ritchie and Linda Shopes head this committee.

Council defined the following as a task force, meaning a short-term group requested to serve in the interests of OHA members to make recommendations to the OHA Council:

+ **Alexander Street Press**--Kim Rogers, Council liaison.

Council defined any group of individuals with strong ties to the field of oral history or regional interests who wish to share ideas with each other in an affiliated manner at the annual meeting. These committees do not report directly to Council.

+ **All regional oral history organizations**

+ **State and regional forum affinity groups**

Finally, the Council suspended formal appointments to professional associations. All liaisons previously appointed have fulfilled their duties as of 2003 and Council thanks you for your dedication and efforts on our behalf. We consider all OHA members to be representatives to other professional groups. OHA materials can be sent to you by Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell to take to professional meetings.

Please contact me directly or any of the Council member liaisons named above if you want committee information. You are a talented group of individuals and we need you all!

Portland, Ore., Offers Many Options for 2004 OHA Meet

An array of beginner and advanced oral history workshops and off-site tours that highlight the rich cultural history of the Portland, Ore., region are among the choices available to those who attend the Oral History Association's annual meeting Sept. 29-Oct. 3 at the Portland Hilton. Call the hotel early (503-226-1611) for conference rates.

Program committee members Troy Reeves and Teresa Bergen have arranged these workshops:

- + Introduction to oral history
- + Writing the story of oral history
- + Oral history and digital technology
- + Advanced workshop on oral history and the law
- + Oral history and the World Wide Web
- + Oral history and performance
- + Oral history in the classroom

For OHA members looking for cultural diversions, the off-site tour options include:

- + McMenemy's Cosmic Bus Tour, a dinner and after-dinner tour of a local brew pub chain whose locations include a number of historic buildings
- + "Best of Portland" Walking Tour, featuring early Portland history, parks, architecture and the waterfront
- + Public Art on the Yellow Line, a walking and light-rail tour featuring various multicultural sites
- + Portland, City of Gardens, a bus tour to several dramatic local gardens
- + Columbia River Gorge and Timberline Lodge, an all-day tour past Bonneville Dam, through the orchards of the Hood River Valley and up the flank of Mt. Hood to Timberline Lodge, a WPA project completed in 1937.

Advance reservations are required for the tours and workshops. Details will be in the conference programs available in July.



The Columbia River Gorge beckons visitors to the annual Oral History Association meeting in Portland, Ore., Sept. 29-Oct. 3.

Executive Secretary's Report By Madelyn Campbell

This year, the association will again publish the OHA Membership Directory. The information we publish is provided to us by the University of California Press, which maintains our mailing list. Please update your information with UC Press by June 15. We publish not only your address, but phone numbers and e-mails as well.

To see what we have on file, you may e-mail oha@dickinson.edu with a subject line of "Membership Directory," and request your current complete listing. Or you may send any changes directly to our customer service representative at UC Press, Sheryle Hodapp, 510-643-0953, or sheryle.hodapp@ucpress.edu.

Lately the amount of spam our office receives has increased significantly. Well over 40 messages daily are unrelated to OHA business. If you are e-mailing us, please complete the subject line with helpful information that relates to your query. Due to the large amount of spam, many e-mails with subjects such as "Hi," "Help," "Please Respond" or that are blank are

deleted unopened. We do not want to miss your important message, so please add a pertinent subject line.

Washington Update By Bruce Craig

+ **The Department of Homeland Security** recently hired Priscilla Dale Jones to serve as historian for the 180,000-employee department. Her office is believed to be the only congressionally sanctioned office of history in the federal government.

Jones was selected for the historian position in part because of her strong background in oral history and also because of her experience in history-related administration at the Air Force History Office.

+ **The Library of Congress Manuscript Division** opened the papers of the late Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun on March 4, five years after his death. In addition to the voluminous files, many with Blackmun's personal notes, the collection includes 38 hours of oral history interviews with the long-serving jurist. The Washington Post Web site, www.washingtonpost.com, contains video excerpts from the interviews.

Archival Considerations for Librarians and Oral Historians

Editor's Note: The following three articles are adapted from papers presented at the 2003 Oral History Association conference in Bethesda, Md. They deal with a topic critical to long-term access to oral histories, but one seldom addressed in detail in the Newsletter.

By Robyn Russell
University of Alaska Fairbanks

When people start looking for advice on which audiovisual format they should use for their recording project, they immediately are bombarded by a great deal of conflicting information. Whether collecting original recordings or reformatting the interviews they already have, they want to do their project right. So should they go digital or analog? Reel-to-reel or audiocassette? CD or mini-disk?

First let's get rid of the one great assumption many people, myself included, have carried around for a while: THERE IS NO ONE BEST FORMAT. No A/V format is "better" than another. They all have their pluses and minuses, and choosing one over the other means making a series of compromises.

But isn't one format better for archival purposes than another?

That entirely depends on what you mean by "archival." In oral history circles, "archival" actually has several meanings. It refers to: 1) the length of time a format will last (the natural life span of the media itself), 2) the length of time playback equipment will last or be available and 3) how widely available this technology is to your donor public.

Using these criteria, let's evaluate one particular medium—reel-to-reel tape. Reels are a very stable format in the sense that they have a long life span. Properly stored, a reel-to-reel tape will last upwards of 40 years. I have successfully played back reels that were older than that, in fact. Because the tape is wide (about ½ inch) and easy to access mechanically (just unwind it from the reel), it is also easy to repair if it has been abused. As compared to other A/V media, reels are very hardy. They can be exposed to heat, cold, moisture, etc.—the conditions found in most attics, sheds, and garages—and the information on the reel can still be salvaged. If you were to expose a mini-disk to the same conditions for the same length of time, it is highly unlikely you'd be able to retrieve any information from it. So given its longevity and repairability would I choose reel-to-reel for a current

recording or reformatting project? No, I wouldn't because the tape to record an interview on and the equipment to play it back are becoming harder and harder to find.

With that in mind, why do I maintain the two reel-to-reel recorders in my workspace? In part, it's because roughly a third of the 9,392 tapes I manage at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Oral History Program are reels and in part, it's because my donors, otherwise known as the general public, continue to bring me reel-to-reel tapes. Which brings us to the third definition of archival—the ready availability of the technology to your donor public. In their day, reel-to-reel tapes were used everywhere. People recorded audio letters to each other and sent them through the mail. So widespread was this technology that even now, 20-some years after reels ceased to be sold to the general public, people continue to bring me tapes that they have come across. I have gotten some wonderful material this way.

For example, we have radio coverage of the 1964 Good Friday earthquake—sound files that the radio stations themselves didn't save—because one man, Harry Hughes, heard the broadcast and put his reel-to-reel tape recorder up to the

| Format | Pros | Cons |
|--|---|---|
| Reel-to-reel tape | Easy to repair, life span of 40 years or more | Equipment and blank tapes harder to find, no longer supported by manufacturers |
| Analog audio cassettes | Easy to find, relatively stable (life span of about 20 years or more), repairable although the process is quite convoluted, equipment is easy to obtain and use | Hiss is transferred onto tapes when recording |
| Compact Discs (CDs) | Relatively stable and supported, CD players are readily available | Life span varies depending on brand, recordable CDs are easy to scratch and damage, recorded CDs are not always compatible with all CD players depending on the age of the player |
| Mini-disk, DAT, and other digital formats | Easy to transfer audio from recorder to computer | Many unknowns related to stability, life span, and equipment support |

| | Pros | Cons |
|----------------|--|---|
| Analog | Supported by manufacturers over the long term, audio quality can be cleaned up, cheap and easily available, relatively easy to store, suitable for long term storage | Sound quality compromised to some degree, requires proper cooling for long term storage, information must be transferred before medium decay, loss of quality from copy to copy |
| Digital | Easy to transfer audio from recorder to computer and to post or send over the Internet, easy to edit sound files on the computer | Need computer and special software, not suitable for long-term storage, becomes obsolete quickly, archiving requires a large investment in equipment and software (initial investment and frequent upgrades), must be backed up frequently as computer failures can wipe out or corrupt files |

radio and recorded what was being said.

But what about analog vs. digital formats? This is a favorite debate in oral history circles, but there is no clear winner. Again, it's a question of making compromises.

Analog's great strength is in its cheapness, both in terms of cost per item and in terms of storage. The question of money, both for equipment and for personnel, is a major issue for libraries and archives that have been continually asked to preserve more and more A/V formats with fewer and fewer resources.

When digitization first came on the scene, it was billed as the answer to the collective prayers of archivists everywhere. Digitize once and forget about it. One digital copy of any item would last forever and be easily accessible to patrons. Never again would copies need to be made.

If something sounds too good to be true it usually is.

The great strength of digitization is the ease with which information can be turned into a computer file, which can then be transferred to a workstation, transmitted long distance to a home base or uploaded to a Web site.

The great weaknesses of digital formats are two-fold: 1) the media and the equipment to play them back become obsolete much more quickly than analog and 2) a growing collection of digital files requires an ever larger investment in equipment, software and personnel. The software to read digital audio files

needs to be upgraded every three years; the hardware, every five years. I have yet to see any hard data on the actual life span of the digital files themselves (that is, the length of time before the information in the file becomes unsalvageable). Research is going on in the audio engineering and computer science fields but is not finding its way into the hands of oral historians and oral history archivists.

Meanwhile, what are we who collect oral histories to do about this ticking time bomb in our vaults? Here are some suggestions:

Oral historians should:

1) Work closely with the librarian or archivist of your depository from the very beginning of your project. The easier you make their job, the happier they are going to be to see your interviews.

2) Choose your recording format with the needs of your depository in mind. In other words, don't give your library a format they don't have the staff, equipment or facilities to support.

3) Routinely make analog copies of digital recordings. That way, you have an audio backup of the original.

4) Don't cut corners on transcription. When all else fails a transcript printed on archival paper can preserve the information imparted by your narrator for several hundred years if stored under the proper conditions. Get money for transcription at the beginning of the project and hand the job off to a professional. The time and sanity you save will be your own.

Oral history archivists should:

1) Always save your originals.

Never swap bad originals for worse copies, no matter how spiffy the technology is.

2) Educate yourself about the new technology. You're the person who will be left to cope with the new media.

3) Only accept A/V formats you and your organization are willing to support. To accept a format is to commit yourself to maintaining not only the medium itself, but its playback equipment and software.

4) Don't be afraid to refuse or get rid of a collection that doesn't meet your acquisition criteria. Collections that present insurmountable problems for you and your organization, no matter how wonderful their subject matter, wind up being more trouble than they're worth.

5) Prioritize your collection, especially if you have many different kinds of formats. Once you have facts and statistics at your command, you can formulate a strategy to deal with your preservation or reformatting problems.

6) Do unto your interviewees before they do unto you. Make the first move where your donors are concerned. Let them know what you need and what you won't accept.

7) You are the best advocate for your collection. Be honest about the real needs of your archive, be they better staffing, better funding, better facilities or all three, and be prepared to lobby for them with the powers in question.

What Oral Historians Should Know About Cataloging

By Nancy MacKay
Mills College

I've been a cataloger for about 20 years in college and university libraries, longer than I've been an oral historian.

I am the program coordinator and archivist for the Oakland Living History Program at Mills College. This is a new program and I was very much involved in setting it up and developing the procedures, especially the back end of it—processing and cataloging. But unlike our program, many valuable oral history materials arrive at libraries with little or no information about them. This adds another layer of difficulty for the cataloger who must recreate and make educated guesses about the gaps in the information. It not only compromises the usefulness of the catalog record, but also is expensive to do this extra research.

When oral historians and catalogers can work together **from the beginning**, interviews can be cataloged more efficiently and accurately, which translates into better access for your oral history collection.

Large institutions that support oral history programs generally have skilled catalogers who can create detailed catalog records. But you may be a one-person operation doing the project administration, interviewing,

processing and cataloging yourself. In either case, these principles apply:

- + plan ahead,
- + budget for cataloging and
- + keep accurate records.

Cataloging organizes your materials according to physical formats, subjects, projects, programs, geographical areas, physical locations or any categories you choose. It also describes the physical and intellectual content of your materials, provides multiple points of access, stores administrative data and allows you to share information with other institutions.

With your cataloger, you should discuss:

+ **A home for catalog records.** In a card catalog in your library? On a Web-based online catalog? You may not have much say in where your catalog records live, but be sure to discuss this with the cataloger.

+ **Hierarchies.** Oral histories are collected in many ways—as life histories, as a series of separate interviews surrounding an event, as stand-alone interviews and so on. The cataloger needs to know the **intellectual organization** of the oral histories, that is, are your users more likely to access them by the name of the interviewer, the name of the project or both?

Catalogers can create catalog records for a single interview or for a collection of interviews or both.

Generally the more specific the catalog record is, the better the access, but there are also good reasons for cataloging collections rather than individual interviews.

It costs between \$25 and \$50 to create an original cataloging record, so make sure you budget for it. In the past, this was an argument for creating collection-level records, that is, a single catalog record for a whole oral history collection. With tools now available to catalogers, that figure can be cut at least in half, so your decision at which level to create catalog records should be based on the needs of the project, not on cost.

+ **Format—**Oral histories often come in multiple formats—tapes, disks, transcripts or a combination. The cataloger needs to know what you consider the primary format, the original recording or the transcript.

+ **Standardizing name headings.** Catalogers have a system for standardizing names and making cross-references from variant forms. It is very important that you provide the complete name, properly spelled, for all personal names, institutional names and geographic place names relevant to each oral history.

+ **Index terms or access points.** These are all the terms that users might want to access the oral history. You know better than the cataloger, so make your voice heard.

Dropping Breadcrumbs: Helping your Oral History Project Find Its Way Home

By Susan Kraft, Coordinator, Dance Oral History Project
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

At the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, we both create oral histories as well as house and process them, so I have a window with a pretty good view on the issues faced by both sides.

In my experience, the single most popular reason that historians seek to deposit their oral history projects at a library or archive is this: You want those tapes and transcripts out of

your home or office after your project is done!

But there are other reasons to seek a new home for the materials you've created. It would be nice, after all, to ensure that your hard work will live a useful second life as a primary source document and be preserved in a new home for the benefit of future generations.

Whatever your reasons for

donating your project, you can ease not only the donation process, but also the likelihood that your materials will be processed and cataloged in a timely manner.

First, consider some general strategies when you begin your work. Libraries with well established oral history projects can be an excellent source of advice at this stage. Ideally, you should speak directly

with the person who will be in charge of your materials at the intended repository. This personal connection may be even more useful at the time of donation. To understand why, it may be helpful to look at the reality way, way behind the reference desk at an audio archive.

The current backlog of dance audio materials at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts numbers more than 2,000 reels. These include the voices of dance legends such as Agnes De Mille, Martha Graham and George Balanchine, radio programs dating back half a century, conference proceedings and a wide range of individual collections from journalists, choreographers and scholars.

Many of these recordings are on decaying and obsolete formats and cannot be listened to or cataloged.

Most of these tapes I inherited some 10 years ago when I became coordinator of the library's audio archive and oral history project. I know very little about how they came to us or when. Nor, in many cases, do I know under what circumstances they were recorded or why. The majority of these recordings were collected in the earliest days of this library when there was no regular staffing for audio materials and record keeping was, to say the least, minimal. Many of these recordings are on decaying and obsolete formats and cannot be listened to or cataloged.

I walk by these tapes daily and am simultaneously impressed by their urgent need for attention and wracked with guilt at my inability to provide it. In truth, however, much progress has been made. Although we, like public institutions everywhere, are hampered by limited budgets and staffing, since joining the archive I have overseen the preservation and cataloging of hundreds of hours of material.

The choice of title to pull from the backlog for processing is affected by a range of criteria: the age of the recording, the length of time it has been waiting on our shelves, the perceived quality of the material and finally, the projected number of roadblocks and complications on issues ranging from rights to recording circumstances.

When new audio donations come in, the criteria are the same, but with such donations comes opportunity. A lot of the unknowns are knowable. Such projects can come into the archive almost alive. Free to ask questions, the librarian may be impressed by what has been achieved and may gain interest as well as ideas on how best to utilize or display the qualities of a particular item. In this way, personal contact between the librarian and historian may result in the materials being processed sooner.

When choosing a repository for your project, consider a number of issues. If you have begun your project you may already be considering a specific library, archive or historical society, but keep an open mind. Learn more about the collection's scope and perceived mission. Find out about the researchers who would use the materials and the kind of access they will be have. Are the answers you find consistent with the nature of your project?

You also will need to know how that institution presents its material to the public and whether your project's formats and presentation methods are consistent with its requirements. Does it matter, for example, whether the transcripts are bound or unbound or what formats are used to record the interviews?

At LPA, for example, we have received a number of donations on analog micro cassettes, and besides the fact that their sound quality is poor and their archival longevity non-existent, I have absolutely nothing on which to play them. They will immediately go to those dreaded backlog shelves of perpetuity.

If you can include funding for preservation in your project budget, you may, in addition to much

gratitude from the librarian, receive star treatment as your project goes to the front of the line for processing.

The integrity of your methodology is a key factor in your work successfully finding a new home.

Beyond the physical issues facing your project, the integrity of your methodology is a key factor in your work successfully finding a new home. And this is where the breadcrumbs come in.

The "Principles and Standards of the Oral History Association" advise, "Interviewers should provide complete documentation of their preparation and methods, including the circumstances of their interviews." This is a critical point.

Oral history projects are conceived and conducted under a variety of circumstances, but the more you can document about these circumstances, the easier the project will be to process and the more useful the information will be to future researchers. **Always leave a written record—drop breadcrumbs—about all the decisions you've made in carrying out the project.**

Finally, a word about libraries and copyright. I truly believe there are no right or wrong answers here, but in collaboration with the project's participants, you must make certain choices and include as an integral aspect of your project a signed, dated record of these choices.

According to the OHA publication "Oral History and the Law," by John A. Neuenschwander, copyright protection begins at the moment an interview is created. The U.S. Copyright Act recognizes that there may be more than one author of a work, and most people agree that an oral history interview would probably qualify in this sense as a joint work.

According to Neuenschwander, however, the vast majority of oral history projects and programs at
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Army's Oral History Archives Prepares for New Home

By Major Michael E. Lynch
Army Heritage and Education
Center

"Telling the Army story--one soldier at a time."

That's the motto and mission of the Army Heritage and Education Center at Carlisle Barracks, Pa., and a large part of that mission is the collection and transcription of oral history.

The center is making final preparations to move to a new, state-of-the-art archive facility built to house the Military History Institute collections. The institute is the Army's central repository for unofficial Army records, and its mission is to acquire, organize, catalog, preserve and ensure access to historical research materials.

The institute conducts the Army's Senior Officer Oral History Program, which consists of interviews with serving and retired senior officers and numerous interviews with other individuals on specific issues or events. This collection includes thousands of oral histories conducted with veterans and senior Army officers over a 32-year period.

The institute was founded in 1967 as the Military History Research Collection and has been maintained

since then in a 1920s building at the U.S. Army War College. While aesthetically pleasing, the old building is wholly inadequate for proper archival storage. Originally used for offices and classrooms, the building has been adapted over the years to store archival materials. Relative humidity is difficult to maintain, and correct preservation is nearly impossible. After 37 years, the building has also reached the limit of what it can store.

Construction began in 2002 on the new \$18 million, 66,000 square foot building adjacent to Carlisle Barracks. It will feature the latest technology to store, maintain and retrieve historical documents and artifacts for scholars, students and the general public.

In addition to the oral history tapes and manuscripts, the collection contains some 11 million items, including nearly 300,000 books on military history, 245,000 military publications, 1.2 million classified documents, 60,000 periodicals, 1.2 million photographs, 38,000 artifacts, plus many more manuscripts, diaries, letters, memoirs and maps.

The institute's collection of Civil War manuscripts, diaries and photographs is the best in the country and oft-cited source for books,

articles and movies.

"This will be a unique Army facility," said Col. Alan Cate, the center's director. "I don't know that the Army has ever purpose-built an archive like this from the ground up."

The new building will open this summer. It will seat some 80 researchers and will allow patrons to use any of the collections from one location. It will feature a new integrated library database system, which will allow researchers to access all collections from one terminal. The unique feature of the center's collections is that all items--diaries, artifacts, manuscripts, photographs and audio or digital media--will be linked electronically. The building has been designed to use the latest technology in environmental controls and monitors to protect the collections, state-of-the-industry, space-saving shelving and the latest in security equipment.

The move will begin May 1 and is expected to continue for some 90 days. The institute will close briefly during that time on dates not yet determined, so researchers are encouraged to call ahead.

For more information, contact the Army Heritage and Education Center at: Michael.lynch@carlisle.army.mil or: 717-245-4114.

Dropping Breadcrumbs

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some point secure the transfer of all the interviewees' copyright interest by means of a legal release.

Although our oral history project participants sign agreements affirming the interview as the joint property of themselves and the New York Public Library, we would not ask them to relinquish their rights to us, nor would we demand it in the case of donated projects. What we would like in the case of donations is a donor statement that specifies the rights of all involved and confirms the oral author's approval of the interview being archived and

available for non-commercial public access.

A historian who wishes to donate his or her project to a library must see to it that a clear and useful release is drafted and signed. Not only is it correct oral history practice, but the receiving institution will certainly prioritize for processing recordings that do not bring legal risks or complicated man hunts to secure the necessary rights.

I encourage all historians to consider a library for the final destination of their projects. Anyone with a serious interest in depositing a project and seeing it made available to the public in a timely manner should choose an intended repository

carefully and develop a relationship with it before the day of donation.

The chosen library can help the historian make decisions about the physical material, the methodology through which it is created and the legal rights that will govern its use.

Most important, however, are the records you keep tracing your decisions and documenting them as an integral part of your project. Such records will greatly enhance the usefulness of your project to future historians and help ensure that your project becomes a priority for cataloging and preservation. Drop breadcrumbs and your oral history project will, most certainly, find its way home.

Oral History Offers Glimpse into Past for New Jersey Youth

By Susan Douglass and Shelia Baldwin, Monmouth University

Too often, children living in a socioeconomic area besieged by problems tend to see a bleak future for themselves and their families. One way to change this view is by setting up lines of communication with community leaders who are dedicated to creating a better future for their hometown. Oral history interviews of elected leaders as well as community groups can be the first experience these students have in exercising their rights as citizens to work for a better future for their community. These interviews also can become a window into the past of their communities.

Susan Douglass, who teaches history and anthropology at Monmouth University, and Shelia Baldwin, who teaches curriculum and instruction, collaborated to create an oral history project for elementary and secondary education majors who participate in Partners in Learning (PAL), a program that pairs college students with public school children in the nearby New Jersey towns of Asbury Park and Long Branch for enrichment activities, homework help and new friendships.

Douglass conducted an oral history workshop for the college students, and the PALs conducted background research to prepare their interview questions. They were organized into teams of six: three college students and their public school partners. Each team interviewed one person. The children conducted the interviews while their college PALs took notes. The interviews were audiotaped and videotaped.

Interviewees represented all walks of life: an 89-year-old school board member, a mayor, a high school principal, a local business owner who had immigrated here in the mid-'50s and served as an information center for new arrivals, a minister who had served on the police force and in

community government, a chef at a local restaurant, numerous lifetime residents in their 70s and 80s, all whose lives reflect the interwoven fabric of their communities.

The children asked questions about what life used to be like in their communities. One interviewee talked about the cultural diversity and small-town appeal of the community: "Immigrant groups lived together in their own neighborhoods, but everyone was friendly. We walked everywhere. Everyone knew everybody. It was like a small town."

Because of the redevelopment of the boardwalks in both communities, the children were most curious about what they had been like in the past. One 90-year-old recalled:

"After supper in the summer, we used to walk to the boardwalk to cool off. We didn't have air conditioning back then. We would meet all our friends....I miss that."

Others talked about the different amusements, shops and numerous grand hotels that are all gone now. Children learned that trolley cars, which were unknown to them, and walking were the predominant modes of transportation.

As a culminating project, each of the groups created its depiction of this oral history experience for display at the university's Global

Understanding Convention in April. Our hope is to exhibit the Long Branch displays during the city's centennial celebration in 2004.

This year's oral history project focuses on living on the Atlantic Ocean. We plan to interview people with accounts of catastrophic storms, the role of the nearby lighthouses, the popularity of the beaches and a shipwreck off Asbury Park.

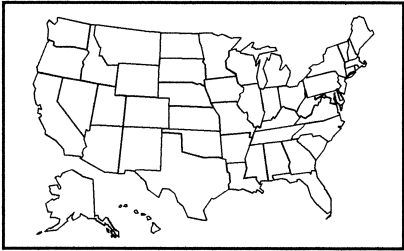
As future teachers, the college students experienced first hand a valuable lesson about the importance of connecting curriculum to their students' real world. Many anticipated the children's lack of interest in the oral history project but found quite the contrary. The children enjoyed researching their community history, and their interviewing skills surprised many of the college PALs. The realization that the community and its residents are rich resources was a critical outcome for the prospective teachers.

Importantly, the project also showed children that establishing lines of communication to local leaders is one of the most significant functions of a citizen in a democratic society. This project helped students feel that they have a stake in the future of their neighborhood and that they need not be a bystander in the political process.



Monmouth University students and their elementary school PALs celebrate completion of an oral history interview with a community leader.

STATE AND REGIONAL REPORT



Kentucky Oral History Celebrates 30 Years

By Terry L. Birdwhistell
University of Kentucky

The University of Kentucky Oral History Program recently celebrated 30 years of oral history research at a dinner attended by more than 120 friends of the program from throughout Kentucky. The program included remarks by former Gov. Louie B. Nunn, State Historian James C. Klotter and Kentucky Oral History Commission Director and former OHA president Kim Lady Smith.

Featured speaker George C. Wright is a noted historian and president of Prairie View A&M University. Wright discussed his long association with the UK Oral History Program and the important role oral history has played in his research on African-American history.

A major initiative of the 30-year anniversary celebration is the establishment of an endowment to honor the thousands of individuals who have shared their memories with future generations. The campaign goal of \$1 million will be matched by Kentucky's Research Challenge Trust Fund. The endowment effort is off to an excellent beginning thanks to the many gifts and pledges of support from around the country, including many OHA members.

The UK Oral History Program, established in 1973, has a collection of more than 6,000 interviews. Hundreds of researchers around the world use this collection each year. More than 500 interviews are

borrowed annually, and interviews available on the World Wide Web are accessed more than 10,000 times a year.

For more information, contact Terry L. Birdwhistell, director, at: tlbird@uky.edu or visit our Web site at: www.uky.edu/Libraries/Special/oral_history/.

State, Regional Groups List Upcoming Meetings

Several state and regional oral history groups have notified the OHA **Newsletter** about upcoming conferences and workshops.

+ **Southwest Oral History Association** annual conference is scheduled for April 29-May 2 in San Diego. The conference includes a walking tour of Balboa Park, a day of workshops and a day of presentations on the theme "Crossing Borders: Negotiating Oral History Theory and Practice in a Digital World."

+ **Northwest Oral History Association** will meet May 6-8 in Olympia, Wash., in conjunction with the annual Pacific Northwest History Conference and the Northwest Archivists Inc. The conference theme is "Collaborations: Recording, Researching and Writing Pacific Northwest History."

+ **Michigan Oral History Association** has a busy spring and summer schedule of participating at numerous Michigan history events and has scheduled its annual meeting, "Oral History For Michiganians" for Oct. 23 at the Michigan Historical Center in Lansing. The conference is held in partnership with the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Library.

+ **Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region** has scheduled its fall workshops day for Oct. 22 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The workshops are co-sponsored by the library's Veterans History Project.

Dear Oral Historians:

Hello. My name is David Dunaway, and many of you know me. Many of you also know that I'm working on a project funded by the National Park Service's Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, and that I've spent the last year teaching citizen-historians in communities up and down Route 66 to collect their community's unique histories about the road.

For me, Route 66 is a corridor in time as well as place--a grand avenue into exploring American history. Route 66's image as a place for cruising and nostalgia is giving way to a broader understanding of the communities and peoples left standing in the dust as the travelers passed. Though there are places without historic markers, there's always someone who remembers, and many of these memories have been recorded, in song, on paper and on tape.

And that's where this request comes in: I'm tracking down the archived oral histories collected in past years. A call for assistance has already gone out to the OHA e-mail list, and the response has been tremendous. But we know there's more out there, and any assistance you can provide will be greatly welcomed. If you know of any oral histories, transcribed or not, please let us know. You can contact me at 505-345-0185, at wrtgsw@unm.edu, or at the Route 66 Oral History Office, Department of English, MSC 03 2170, 1 The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001.

OHA member **Alan H. Stein** has joined the Goldring Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life in Jackson, Miss., to document remnants of the historic Jewish communities in rural Mississippi and the Deep South. Stein is a journalist, photographer and oral historian who has also worked in Chicago and San Francisco.

Summer Programs Offer Opportunities to Learn Oral History

**Oral History Institute
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio
June 8-10**

Co-sponsored by the Ohio Humanities Council and the Rural Life Center at Kenyon College in cooperation with the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums and the Ohio Historical Society, this program emphasizes hands-on training in planning and conducting successful oral history projects. Application deadline is April 30.

For information, see:
www.ohiohumanities.org

**Summer Institute in Oral History
Columbia University
New York City
July 12-23**

This year's conference theme is "Constructions of Race and Ethnicity

from Past to Present: Negotiating Collective Memories through Oral History." Faculty include prominent oral historians from Europe and throughout the United States.

Application deadline is May 1.

For information, see:
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/oral/>

**Charles Morrissey's
Oral History Workshop
Vermont College
Montpelier, Vt.
Aug 9-13**

Students attending Charles Morrissey's workshop at Vermont College can now earn three college credits by completing an independent project designed to fit individual needs and interests in collaboration with Morrissey. Projects will be due in May 2005.

For information, call Rick Zind at 802-828-8764 or Morrissey at 713-798-5130.

**Advanced Summer Institute
University of California, Berkeley
Aug. 15-20**

The institute addresses theory, methodology and practice of oral/video history and features distinguished oral historians from the United States, Italy and Brazil. Graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, college faculty, independent scholars and community historians are welcome. Application deadline is April 30.

For information, see: <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/>

OHA Pamphlet Order Form

Add to your professional reference library the Oral History Association's pamphlets. OHA members get a 10 percent discount for orders of 10 or more copies. Clip and mail this coupon, with your check made out to OHA, to:
Oral History Assn., Dickinson College, Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Country _____

All prices include shipping via domestic mail. Inquire for costs of Federal Express delivery. International shipping by surface mail at no extra charge; add 30 percent to your order if you prefer international airmail delivery.

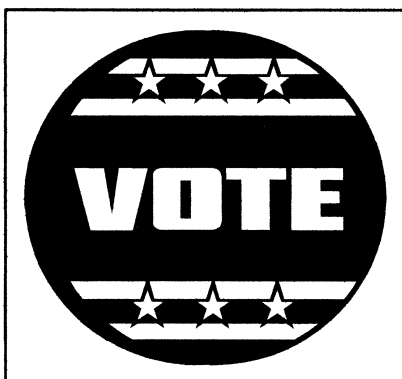
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- _____ Oral History and the Law
3rd ed., John Neuenschwander, 2002,
\$15.00
- _____ Oral History Projects in Your Classroom,
Linda Wood, 2001, \$15.00 pages only
\$20.00 including three-ring binder
- _____ Using Oral History in Community History
Projects, Laurie Mercier and Madeline
Buckendorf, 1992, \$8.00
- _____ Oral History Evaluation Guidelines, \$5.00

_____ Order total

_____ Optional mailing charge

_____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED**



2005 Slate Presented

By Jessica Wiederhorn and
Rebecca Sharpless
OHA Nominating Committee

The Oral History Association Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the following candidates for first vice president and one Council seat:

For first vice president: **Alphine Wade Jefferson**, The College of Wooster.

For Council:
Kathryn L. Nasstrom, University of San Francisco, or

Curtis J. Austin, University of Southern Mississippi.

OHA members also will elect members to the Nominating Committee. Three two-year positions are to be filled. Members will vote for one person for each of three places.

Place 1: **Andrew Dunar**, University of Alabama, Huntsville, or **Michael Frisch**, State University of New York, Buffalo.

Place 2: **Tracy K'Meyer**, University of Louisville, or **Constance Curry**, Emory University.

Place 3: **Calinda Lee**, Stanley Weinstein & Co., Albuquerque, N.M., or **Douglas Boyd**, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

The OHA election will be by mail ballot sent this summer to each OHA member in good standing. Biographical information and statements from each of the nominees will be included with the ballots.

The Nominating Committee and Council will accept additional nominations for officers, Council members and Nominating Committee members in the manner described in the OHA bylaws.

A petition signed by 20 or more OHA members in good standing may be submitted for each nomination, stating the particular office for which the nomination is made.

A petition nominating a first vice president or Council member must be in the hands of the Nominating Committee by June 15. Send to: Jessica Wiederhorn, Columbia University Oral History Research Office, 801 Butler Library, Box 20, New York, NY 10025.

A petition nominating a candidate for the Nominating Committee must be sent to the OHA Council by June 15. Send to: Rebecca Sharpless, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, P.O. Box 97271, Waco, TX 76798.

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