

## FROM THE CHAIR

Lauren Kata, Consulting Archivist, Austin, TX



Hello, fellow oral history section members. It's August, nearing the SAA 2008 Annual Meeting in San Francisco, as well as the end of my term of service as Chair. Since last year's meeting in Chicago, I think as a section we can feel good about our

activities. I'm pleased to say that we're at the 75% mark toward our goal to produce four newsletters in 2008, and a final issue in November will complete the goal all together. Because of the time and efforts of our newsletter editor, Joel Minor, not only have we successfully produced and distributed these quarterly newsletters, we're also now focusing on particular themes to shape each issue's content. I'd like to take the time here to specifically thank Joel for his efforts.

Last issue, we highlighted technology and oral history, with solicited and member-contributed

articles related to equipment and processes with which archivists are having success. In this issue, we're spotlighting member reviews of various oral history resources, including reviews of resources on oral history methodology and cultural impact; on oral history curation; on listening and storytelling; and a special guest review of oral history and 'Web 2.0.' Our intention in featuring these reviews was not to attempt a comprehensive oral history resource list, (although, that might be a worthwhile activity for a subcommittee at some point in the future), but rather, to offer members an opportunity to survey and share their thoughts with us about current resources in which they're interested. What are archivists and non-archivists saying about oral history - in textbooks and companion websites, in podcasts, on YouTube? I'm curious about the answers to these questions, and wish I had more spare time to explore them. Perhaps as a section, we can continue to find ways to exchange thoughts about oral history resources,

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in this space and maybe even new ones. I remain interested in your thoughts and feedback. This wouldn't be a proper pre-conference newsletter without a reminder about our upcoming section meeting and elections, and oral-history related sessions throughout the conference. There are still seats available in the pre-conference and OH-Section-endorsed workshop **Driving Exhibitions With Oral History, Monday, August 25**, in which participants will explore the role of oral history in the conceptual and design processes, the selection of artifacts and documents, writing text, and creating exhibition films and ancillary materials (educational, publicity, digital components). Our **Annual Oral History Section Meeting** will be held on **Friday, August 29, noon - 2pm**, during which we will hold elections, discuss section business, and listen to the **presentations of two local special guests** (for more information, check out the meeting agenda at the end of this issue). If you did not receive an email announcing this year's candidates for Vice Chair/Chair Elect and Steering Committee, profiles are included in this issue. Finally, if you are participating in the conference through

Saturday, please stop by **Session 610, Models for Collaboration: Providing Enhanced Access to Oral History, Saturday, August 30, 9:30 - 11:00 AM**. This is an OH-Section-endorsed session, in which panelists will address how to draw upon the expertise of colleagues in-house and in other agencies to create quality products, and meet project goals through institutional collaboration.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue, reviewers as well as members sharing news items and blurbs. Gathering together at the annual meeting is always an energizing experience, and I look forward to seeing you all in San Francisco. However, keeping in mind that not everyone in our section will be attending SAA 2008, I hope that we can carry our energies through to SAA 2009 in Austin, at the very least through email discussion and in this newsletter. Certainly, I know incoming chair Al Stein will be sharing ideas and information between now and next year. So, that said, I look forward to keeping the momentum going!

## ORAL HISTORY SECTION MEETING AGENDA

### Friday, August 29, Noon - 2pm

Noon	Welcome	12:45	Main Presentations
	Steering Committee introductions		Howard Levin, Director of Technology at the Urban School of San Francisco <a href="http://www.urbanschool.org/page.cfm?p=1">http://www.urbanschool.org/page.cfm?p=1</a> who will speak about the "Telling Their Stories" Oral History Archives Project.
	Election		
12:15	Announcements		Joe Lambert, Executive Director of the Center for Digital Storytelling <a href="http://www.storycenter.org/">http://www.storycenter.org/</a> who will speak about the Center's current initiatives, including co-sponsorship of the first "International Sharing Our Stories Day."
	Section-proposed sessions		
	Activities since Chicago		
	Oral History Email discussion list	1:50	Election Results
	Announcements from members		
		2:00	Adjourn
12:30	Issues for Discussion		
	Transitioning to Online Voting		

## ORAL HISTORY SECTION CANDIDATE PROFILES

### Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

**Ben Alexander** is an Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at Queens College of The City University of New York where his research and teaching interests focus on archival theory and practice and the history of books and printing. His article, "For Posterity": The Personal Audio Recordings of Louis Armstrong," was the lead/cover article of the spring 2008 *American Archivist*. For several years Alexander served as Manuscript Specialist (archivist) for the New York Public Library where he administered an oral history project on preserving the history of Yaddo - the artists' community located in Saratoga Springs, New York. Material from this project formed the basis of his article, "Excluding Archival Silences: Oral History and Historical Absence" (*Archival Science*, spring 2005) and will be included in his forthcoming monograph, *Yaddo: A Creative History*, published by the University of Georgia Press. Alexander also serves as the vice-chair/chair-to-be of the Archives in History Roundtable of SAA.

**Mark Cave** is Curator of Manuscripts/Oral Historian at The Historic New Orleans Collection. He is currently on the Steering Committee of the Oral History Section of the Society of American Archivists, and former chair of the Acquisitions and Appraisal Section. After Hurricane Katrina, he established an extensive oral history program to document the experiences of first responders. The project was highlighted in the current issue of *Oral History Review* as well as at the recent International Congress on Archives. He is a member of the Oral History Association's Committee to Revise Guidelines and the Consortium of Oral History Educators.

### Steering Committee Member

**Doug Boyd**, Ph.D. is the Director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries. Previously, he managed the Digital Program for the University of Alabama Libraries, served as the Director of the Kentucky Oral History Commission and was the Senior Archivist for the oral history collections at the Kentucky Historical Society. Boyd is currently the media review editor for the *Oral History Review* and co-general editor of the oral history

series at the University Press of Kentucky. Boyd specializes in digital technologies associated with the collection, preservation, and digital publication of oral histories. Recently, Boyd designed the Civil Rights in Kentucky Oral History Project Digital Media Database for the Kentucky Historical Society, and co-authored with Henry Glassie the audio CD accompanying Glassie's book *The Stars of Ballymenone*. Current research interests include oral history and usability regarding Web interfaces and long-term digital preservation solutions.

**Scott A. Sharon** is a graduate student pursuing two masters in history and archives at Simmons College. His concentration is Twentieth Century America, particularly World War II and the Cold War. In addition to being a student of history, he is also an avid music enthusiast and jazz vocalist with a tremendous music collection, so he definitely appreciates the value of old sound recordings. Sharon's experience lies in his final assignment for an Oral History class he took recently; he interviewed his father and two of his father's former classmates about growing up Jewish in Brooklyn from the Great Depression to postwar America. He paid careful attention to detail, evaluating his own questions, setting up the equipment properly and allowing for the perfect atmosphere for the interviewees. It was one of the most educational/entertaining exercises he ever did and he received an "A."

**Hermann Trojanowski** has an undergraduate degree in history from Greensboro College and a master's degree in library and information studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). Since 2003, he has been Assistant University Archivist at UNCG. There, he teaches a freshman "History of the University" course; gives historic walking campus tours for alumni, faculty, staff, students and visitors; conducts oral history interviews; and is involved in other archival activities. Trojanowski has conducted over 100 oral history interviews for the Betty H. Carter Women Veterans Historical Project, the UNCG Institutional Memory Collection and the Preserving Our History: Rotary Club of Greensboro Oral History Project. Recently he trained a graduate student to conduct interviews for the Rotary Club project. He particularly enjoys conducting interviews with the

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## ORAL HISTORY SECTION CANDIDATES (continued)

women veterans who served during World War II, since his parents lived through that conflict in Europe.

**Kristi A. Young** is the curator of the Wilson Folklore Archives in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at Brigham Young University. As part of her responsibilities she is responsible for the Veterans History Project and the Utah Heritage Project. Both projects rely on oral histories to build their collections. While new to SAA, Young has been in her position for several years and is aware of the concerns surrounding oral history collections. She is excited about participating in the Oral History Section.

Education:

B.A. Brigham Young University, 1985

M.A. Brigham Young, 1995

M.L.S. University of North Texas, 2006

Professional Experience:

Curator, Wilson Folklore Archives, 1995-present

Other Activities:

Vice-president Conference of Intermountain Archivists, 2006-2007

President Conference of Intermountain Archivists, 2007-2008

Past president Conference of Intermountain Archivists, 2008-2009

Member, Brenda McCallum prize committee, American Folklore Society, Archives and Libraries Section

Chair, Brenda McCallum prize committee, American Folklore Society, Archives and Libraries Section

## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Oral History and Public Memory\*

By Richard A. Cox

\*Reprinted with permission by Dr. Richard Cox - original review posted on his [Reading Archives](#) blog.

While archivists' bookshelves are loaded with practical manuals on oral history practice, the mainstream archival literature includes a modicum of analysis about the connection of oral history to archival work and the archival mission. There also have been few studies about oral history, while we possess many basic practice primers. Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, eds., *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008) is a different kind of contribution to the oral history literature. As the editors suggest, "this book . . . represents an effort to link the often highly particular, individualized work of oral history with broader public, civic, or communal memories within the context of recent work in memory studies" (p. xiii).

*Oral History and Public Memories* includes studies on the United States, Australia, Canada, Columbia, Greece, Kosovo, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, and Turkey – for a truly international spectrum of studies. The essays cluster about three themes: creating heritage (state-sanctioned projects), recreating identity and community (less formal local efforts), and making change (oral history as an "activist practice"). The editors provide a sense of how their volume differs from most volumes on oral history: "What distinguishes these chapters from much work in oral history is their focus not on the experiences of individual narrators, but on the broader cultural meanings of oral history narratives" (p. xiv).

This is a volume that helps provide a sense of the power and influence of conducting oral histories. Kevin Blackburn, looking at oral history in Singapore, notes, for example, that "even the presumably more democratic practice of interviewing ordinary people can be subverted by nationalistic agendas and produce 'history from above' – that is, oral history

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT: LITERATURE REVIEW (continued)

shaped by the desire of the state to mold public memory according to the version of history that it endorses" (p. 44). Maria Nugent, considering the use of oral history in the Aboriginal culture in Australia, notes that "it is productive to interpret these oral histories both for the information they provide that can be used to tell new histories of old places and as a mode of storytelling that enables Aboriginal people to represent themselves not only as the subjects of history, but as the makers of it too" (p. 57). Gail Lee Dubrow, considering the oral history of Japanese Americans, reveals how oral histories show the "active role that oral history can play not only in reshaping public memories but also in advancing social change" (p. 138). These are just examples, but they provide a sense of what the essayists in this volume are seeking to do.

I am not sure the volume is completely successful in relating oral history to public memory scholarship, but this may be more the result of how diverse public memory scholarship has been. I am convinced that archivists can use this volume to consider how oral historians and oral history relate to their own work and mission.

### Building a Career on Listening - Some Thoughts Inspired by Dave Isay

By Lauren Kata

I finally got around to reading StoryCorps founder Dave Isay's *Listening is an Act of Love*, his compilation of forty excerpts from the StoryCorps archive, arranged thematically "into a moving portrait of American life." I had noted the book's release in December 2007, listened to the [Democracy Now! feature](#) and added my name to the (quite long) request list for the book at my local public library.

After finishing the read, which by the way was enjoyable and well worth the wait, I went back and looked up some of the reviews. [One reviewer](#) suggests that the StoryCorps project "may well be the most important cultural event in America today," and

that *Listening is an Act of Love* "is a gift." [According to Studs Terkel](#), the book "is history in the richest sense of the word, the kind that makes people feel like they count." "Above all," offers the book's publisher, "this book is a way to honor the gift of meaning that each participant in StoryCorps has made, out of the raw stuff of his or her life, to the people who come after."

In a [June 2004 article in Smithsonian Magazine](#), Isay is described as having "built a career on listening" (Isay is a former radio producer). During an [NPR interview](#), Isay suggests that "StoryCorps is really about the experience in the booth...about families taking the time to kind of turn off the computer screens, turn off their BlackBerrys and look each other in the eyes and tell them that they love them by listening."

As an oral history archivist, having participated in a variety of different projects as both interviewer and collector, reading this book reminded me how inviting someone to sit for an oral history recording communicates to them that their story is valuable - that they are valuable. Oral history projects document and are initiated to preserve eras and movements, institutional and public memory, as well as to find answers to questions that may not be found in the written record; but the personal connection is often just as important. Just as the act of sitting with a donor and assisting him or her in sorting personal papers can be a moving and deeply personal experience, so too is the listening experience that is part of the oral history interview. I believe this is true for the person conducting the interview, but also, for future listeners.

Isay's book and the StoryCorps project provide us with intimate, moving, often inspiring tales - we listen, maybe on the way to work, or we read excerpts from someone else's intimate listening experience. And while I nod in agreement with Isay that this listening can surely be experienced as an act of love, as an archivist I also look for guidance from those who promote listening as a responsibility, an ethical responsibility and response to the person giving an account of a life experience that is not my own, indeed, which may be very different from my own. Whether I am the interviewer, or the archivist sponsoring an interviewing project, I must

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT: LITERATURE REVIEW (continued)

understand listening - not speaking - as central.

There are several lessons that archivists may take from StoryCorps. I believe an emphasis on the power of listening is one of them.

### Sharing Oral Histories Using Podcasting and YouTube

By Kate Theimer

*Editorial note: For this review issue, we invited Kate Theimer, author of the [ArchivesNext](#) blog, to share her thoughts on how archivists and others are utilizing Web 2.0 technology for oral history. Is your institution utilizing or exploring the potential of blogs, wikis, podcasting, YouTube or other social networking media for oral history outreach? We'd love for you to share your experiences!*

The sharing of audio and video oral histories on the web presents an ideal opportunity for archives to put a human face (or just a voice) to our "musty, dusty" collections. One of the hallmarks of "Web 2.0" technology is that it explodes the spectrum of content contributors. With tools such as podcasting and YouTube, we are all potential sources of new content to share with the world.

Although podcasting can contain both audio and video, audio-only is the predominant format. Podcasting is still relatively unusual among archives, although it seems popular among museums and among historical societies with a strong museum component. The U.S. Capitol Historical Society, the Ohio Historical Society, the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Washington State Historical Society, Minnesota Historical Society, and the Kansas State Historical Society all have podcasts available on their websites (some of which are also available through iTunes). Of these, "[A Kansas Memory](#)" is only podcast that seems to have included any excerpts from oral histories.

The only example I have found of oral history excerpts from archival collections being regularly featured in podcasts is the Los Alamos Historical Society's podcast series (<http://www.losalamoshistory.org/>

[pods.htm](#)). Currently twenty episodes are available, each containing a segment of about three to five minutes from an oral history or other audio recording (such as a lecture, or a holiday show with an excerpt from a Christmas concert). Each episode has a very short introduction and conclusion, giving some context and contact information. Interestingly, the transcripts of the interviews are not available online, as they are at many other archives' websites. While I would appreciate links to more information on the website regarding each episode (for example, transcripts), this is an excellent model, and I would expect it is quite successful in raising interest in Los Alamos' collections.

While formal oral history excerpts are rare in podcasts, in keeping with the spirit of Web 2.0, there are many sources where people are recording and sharing their own stories. Among them are:

- [Peoples Archive](#)
- [Story Corps](#)
- [Transom](#)
- [Center for Digital Storytelling](#)

Of these, the Peoples Archive is the only project focusing on "great people." The other projects all allow people to create and share their own stories.

Series of oral histories from archives are not much more prominent on YouTube. One notable exception is the extensive series of interviews from the [Archive of American Television](#). This series includes multi-part interviews with hundreds of actors, writers, and directors spanning the history of television. It is an incredible—and incredibly entertaining—resource.

Other formal oral history series available on YouTube include the Denso Project, featuring excerpts from interviews in the [Denso Digital Archives](#), which document the experiences of Japanese Americans interred during World War II. There are eleven videos in this series, including an introduction to the project. The [National World War II Museum](#) in New Orleans has also posted a few excerpts from oral history interviews with veterans. These interviews feature

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT: LITERATURE REVIEW (continued)

period film clips interspersed with video from the interview, which adds to the interest.

The [University of South Florida's Library channel](#) includes several series from the university's oral history program, including a series of interviews on the university's first fifty years, an interview with the co-owner of the oldest bakery in Tampa, and a series called "The Freedom Riders," which is "an oral history travelogue through the Civil Rights movement." [UC Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office](#) has posted videos with excerpts from the "Rosie the Riveter/ World War II American Homefront Series" and interviews with African American faculty and senior staff."

As with podcasting, YouTube features many oral history videos made by students for class projects and people documenting their own lives and the memories of their family members or local figures. These interviews have intrinsic interest, and some repository might consider collecting some of them into an artificial collection of oral histories to document this aspect of Web 2.0 culture. They might also be used by instructors to show students real world examples of proper and improper interviewing techniques. It is worth noting that there are several videos available on YouTube that provide instruction on conducting oral histories.

My survey was far from comprehensive, and I may very well have missed some examples in both podcasting and YouTube. Although for some interviews copyright and permissions may be prohibitive, I would think these resources are ideal for excerpting and using to draw in the public on the web, as the Los Alamos Historical Society and the University of South Florida have done. Given the familiarity most of the younger members of our profession probably have with these techniques and resources, I would expect their use for outreach to continually increase and I hope to see and hear more examples from our archives' oral histories making their way on to the web.

Note: In association with the blog, ArchivesNext, I maintain a list of examples of archives and special collections projects that feature Web 2.0 technologies, such as audio and video podcasts. If you know about

a project I should add to this online resource, please send me the link at [info@archivesnext.com](mailto:info@archivesnext.com).

Kate Theimer writes regularly about "what's next" for archives on [ArchivesNext](#), a blog that frequently focuses on use of Web 2.0 technologies by archives.

### ***Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive.* By Nancy MacKay. Left Coast Press, 2006.**

By Jennifer Eidson

In response to the lack of methodology for curating oral histories, versus existing methodology for collecting oral histories, MacKay conducted a survey in 2004 which yielded feedback from sixty-three institutions with oral history collections in their holdings. She conducted extensive follow-up case studies with seven institutions and used their expertise as guidance.

MacKay makes a commendable effort to establish basic standards and best practices for processing and preserving oral history collections, and sets up the ground work for subsequent studies. About half of the book is an analysis of archives administration, legal and ethical issues, recording technology, transcribing, cataloging, preservation, and using the internet as an access point to oral history collections. In the second half, MacKay presents profiles of seven oral history programs, and twenty-three sample forms, including checklists, worksheets, and evaluation templates. These forms are an invaluable resource for any oral history project, new or established, to consider and tailor to institutional needs. Additionally, she provides a glossary, a list of resources, and a list of organizations and professional associations, related to the curation of oral history collections.

A companion website to the book offers links to resources mentioned in the book as well as an online version of the bibliography and the glossary. The website also provides access to oral history project websites and institutions with oral history collections. The survey she used to compile information for the

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT: LITERATURE REVIEW (continued)

book is also available along with a comprehensive analysis of the results.

***Living with Stories: Telling, Re-Telling, and Remembering.* Edited by William Schneider. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2008. Pp. 175, introduction, photographs, references, afterword, index. \$27.95, cloth).**

By Kristi Young

William Schneider's *Living with Stories: Telling, Re-Telling, and Remembering* contains six essays describing and evaluating oral history projects conducted by individuals from a variety of disciplines. What makes his book unique are the interviews that follow each article. Schneider talks with experts in the fields that each article focuses on. Often the author of the article joins in as well. These short conversations are fascinating and add immeasurably to the content of the book.

Schneider asserts that the "common ground" between the authors "is an interest in how people use stories over time and what prompts them to remember and retell" (2). The chapters cover a wide variety of topics from an Eskimo legend to the Palestinian intifada to a developing oral presentation of histories. While each chapter reports on part of an oral history project, the conversations allow the reader to see how scholars might evaluate the project and the material collected. It is vital to understand that the materials collected and housed in archives are not only important to the people who gave the interviews, but are a rich resource for scholars.

An oral historian as well as an archivist, Schneider writes "of course, for those of us who are also curators of collections, we must not only understand how stories are used over time (live with the stories), we must also preserve and make accessible the record that that is produced. We have a responsibility to understand what we are preserving, the way it

has been created, and how it is interpreted within historic and cultural contexts" (10). One author who demonstrates this type of knowledge as well as a desire for public outreach is Lorraine McConaghy.

As staff historian of Seattle's Museum of History and Industry, McConaghy was excited about the interviews the museum's staff did with everyday workers ranging from housewives to aviation industry employees to plumbers to Rosie the riveters from World War II. She wanted to get the story of these average people out to the public rather than just the items the museum had collected from high class families. The first step was a group of actors who collected histories and then combined them into a script. The play was a success, but attended primarily by a more educated, moneyed audience.

The second step was to revise the script and have employees of the museum read it in one of the rooms at the museum. It has evolved now so that one employee acts as narrator with patrons reading the various histories. The response has been enthusiastic.

*Living with Stories* is fascinating and well-written. The conversations with scholars and authors are insightful. It takes oral history past the collecting stage and focuses on how these collections may be used. It effectively addresses a challenge in oral history "to preserve as much of the social and cultural setting along with the words recorded on the machine" (163).



# ORAL HISTORY LISTSERV TOPIC SURVEY

Some of you may already subscribe to the H-oralhist email discussion list; for this issue, we thought it might be interesting to survey the range of topics discussed this summer.

In other words, what are oral historians talking about lately?

H-Oralhist is a network for scholars and professionals active in studies related to oral history. It is affiliated with the [Oral History Association](#). The H-oralhist archives are searchable on the [H-Oralhist](#) website.

Special thanks to Steering Committee member **Bonnie Gurewitsch** for pulling this information together.

## Review of topics discussed on H-oralhist, May – July 2008

### TECHNOLOGY

Video Transcription software

Express Scribe – free download

Transcription software that will facilitate keyword search

Archival quality CDs

Microphones

Digital recordings, Digital Recorders

### METHODOLOGY & CONTENT ISSUES

Multiple interviews with same interviewee - beware of repetition of same stories

Interviewer research can identify new areas to explore.

Using interpreters during an interview

Ethics and standards for translators

Conducting telephone/email interviews

Literary issues regarding publication

Comparing Oral and Written Narratives

Restricting Access to OH after the releases have been signed – can retroactive restrictions be imposed?

Informant Reunions and Lack of Consent:

Gathering interviewees together and presenting your results to them as a group, or getting them together with a tape recorder in the middle and not really saying anything at all, just getting them all to swap stories. What to do about using the real names of a) those people who haven't agreed to be interviewed and b) minors who are not being interviewed? What to do about information disclosed re. third parties that needs to be restricted? Various options for restricting portions of the tape are discussed.

Knowledge Management Storytelling:

Definition of terms – disseminating corporate knowledge, utilizing stories in many different ways to pass on knowledge. The question was posed about whether this is a form of oral history, a different discipline, and whether they are compatible. Description of one project - a transdisciplinary investigation into water quality and aspects of disaster risk management along the Vaal River in the vicinity of the proposed Vredefort Dome World Heritage site, with local residents and experts in a variety of fields, yields greater collaboration between disciplines when investigators conduct oral interviews.

Story Corps/Story Circle Interviewing:

Description of projects, interviewing at college reunions in groups and individually, recording short episodes or in depth memoirs. Discussion of similarities/differences between OH and this type of interviewing.

Conducting Earthquake/Disaster OH Projects:

When does OH become a useful tool after a disaster? Responses refer to projects conducted in Turkey, California, China, Armenia

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## ORAL HISTORY LISTSERV TOPIC SURVEY (continued)

### TRAINING AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Assembling a bibliography of OH Best Practices

Training Program For Indigenous Communities

Seeking advice on OH in France: Organising interviews at (an international) distance

Conducting interviews not in one's native language

Announcement of New OH Graduate Program in Australia, leading to Master of Oral History and Historical Memory

Baylor University Oral History Fellowship

### ORAL HISTORIANS/PROJECTS WANTED; PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Family history

OH in Turkey

OH Consulting Rates for interviewing and transcribing

Transcription Services - how and where to advertise for such a person, expected hourly pay range etc.

### PROGRAM/CONFERENCE/PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS

African American story telling program

Italian American Historical Assn.

MELUS Conference

SAA Web-seminars

OH Trails in London – walking tours guided by OH  
Women's History in the Mountain South

DVD in honor of Studs Terkel's birthday

First International Day for Sharing Life Stories

Stories of Miracles

Telling Stories & Music

Stories of Change, transformation and New Beginnings

South Africa OH collections on-line

OHA Australia National Conference 2009

Kentucky Folk Artists OH

Survey of New England History Museums and their OH projects

Progress report on Oral History Project: Aluka, Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa

2008 OHA annual meeting:

Announcement of Working Groups and sessions, October 15-19, Pittsburgh, PA,. Conference theme is "A Convergence of Interests: Oral History in the Digital Age" and the program showcases digital scholarship and digital public oral history projects. Sessions include Oral History in the College Classroom, Oral History and the Public in the Digital Age, discussion of recent oral history books as well as three book discussion sessions with authors.

Coming Home? Conflict and return migration in twentieth-century Europe:

Announcement of a conference on how return migration is actually experienced and subsequently remembered by exiles and by migrants.

## ORAL HISTORY NEWS

### Online Portal to Oral Memoirs at The Baylor University Institute for Oral History

Submitted by Elinor Mazé



The Baylor University Institute for Oral History is pleased to announce the opening of a new online portal to its collection of over 800 oral memoirs at [http://contentdm.baylor.edu/cdm4/index\\_08oralhist.php?CISOROOT=/08oralhist](http://contentdm.baylor.edu/cdm4/index_08oralhist.php?CISOROOT=/08oralhist).

The collection comprises the transcripts and recordings of over 1,800 oral history interviews collected and deposited since the Institute's founding in 1970.

With the search tools on the new site, researchers can identify oral memoirs of interest by keyword, local or Library of Congress subject terms, and interview participant names, as well as other search fields.

The new portal has been built with the ContentDM digital collection management software from OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., in Dublin, Ohio. Staff at the Institute for Oral History worked closely with Baylor's electronic library staff to create an online collection home that serves as both finding aid and digital repository for the Institute's oral histories. Although many of the Institute's oral history transcripts are in digital form and readily accessible, most of its recordings and many of its transcripts are still in analog form. The Institute is soon to embark on a major digitization project, with the aim of making all of its collection accessible to researchers worldwide.

Detailed information about access to transcripts is included in the memoir descriptions in the new online guide. Transcripts in digital format are available online by request as PDF documents. For many of the nondigital transcripts, indexes are available online in PDF format. The full text of nondigital transcripts may be viewed by appointment in The Texas Collection on the Baylor campus in Waco, and photocopies of selected pages may be available by e-mail, telephone, or postal request to The Texas Collection's archivist. For more information about policies and procedures

for access to these nondigital materials, see The Texas Collection Web site at <http://www3.baylor.edu/Library/Texas/>.

For more information, contact the Institute for Oral History at [BUIOH@baylor.edu](mailto:BUIOH@baylor.edu) or visit our Web site at [http://www.baylor.edu/oral\\_history/](http://www.baylor.edu/oral_history/).

### Preserving Our History: The Rotary Club of Greensboro, North Carolina, Oral History Project

Kathelene McCarty Smith and Hermann J. Trojanowski

In the fall of 2006, Bob Cone, President of the Rotary Club of Greensboro, spoke to fellow Rotarian Patricia Sullivan, Chancellor of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, about his growing interest in preserving the city's history by interviewing club members. Cone asked Sullivan about the possibility of the University conducting an oral history project in collaboration with the Rotary Club. The University Archives and Manuscripts department, under the guidance of University Archivist Betty Carter, had been successful in developing similar projects, including the Women Veterans Historical Collection, which includes numerous oral histories. Soon the partnership was underway.

As Greensboro approached its bi-centennial, it seemed particularly fitting to focus on an organization made up of individuals who have been so important to the city's leadership. The first Rotary Club was established in 1905 by Paul P. Harris and three friends who rotated their meetings between their Chicago offices, thus the name Rotary Club. The Rotary Club of Greensboro began just a few years later in 1917. This oral history project joins other Rotary Clubs such as the Las Vegas Rotary in seeking to gather the recollections of the members, thereby preserving the history of their organization.

In the fall of 2007, Carter concluded that the best way to approach the Rotary Club members was

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

through Rotarian and Director of the Greensboro Public Library, Sandy Neerman. Carter recruited Assistant University Archivist Hermann Trojanowski to conduct a couple of sample interviews and then train graduate student Kathelene Smith to take over the interviewing. This process has developed into an effective system. Neerman makes the initial contact with the Rotary Club member to determine their interest in the project. Once this connection is established and the member agrees to participate, Smith calls to set up a date for the interview. To increase the comfort level of the person who is to be interviewed, a set of general questions and a project brochure is sent with a letter of introduction. This brochure was created to explain more about the specific goals of the Rotary Club of Greensboro's project as well as to familiarize members with the general theories and procedures of oral histories. After the interviews have been conducted, audio copies are sent to the Rotarians and the interviews are transcribed and returned to the members for verification. Finally, when corrections are made, the transcripts are bound and a copy is sent to the member.

So far the interviews have been a resounding success, documenting Greensboro's unique history of the textile industry, civil rights movement, cultural development, and higher education. The city has grown rapidly and seen many changes, including the almost complete disappearance of the textile industry upon which it was built, as well as the transformation of the cultural and political landscape of the community. These changes are reflected, each from a unique point of view, in the oral history accounts of the Rotarians. Members share memories of last streetcar rides, the Great Depression, and incredible stories of the nation's wars. The project includes recollections from journalists, members of law enforcement, and attorneys concerning the civil rights events, which took place in Greensboro during the '60s and '70s. Stories from textile and tobacco industrialists recall times that are gone forever.

Interesting accounts of the growth and accomplishments of the Rotary Club also emerge

from these interviews. For example, one member recalled the beginnings of the Rotary Club of Greensboro in 1917 in the office of his father. His family has been represented in the Rotary ever since. Others remembered how the Rotary Club of Greensboro led the movement to fight tuberculosis in the 1920s, later expanding its philanthropic endeavors to fighting polio and AIDS. The first woman Rotarian in Greensboro, and one of the first in the nation, recounts the transition of the Club as it incorporated women.

Without exception, members speak of their love and hope for the city. They have no intent of letting Greensboro rest on its laurels. Thoughtful recollections of successes and mistakes of the past are always taken into account when discussing current and future projects. The energy and enthusiasm of those interviewed is contagious.

Currently, we have completed over fifteen interviews with Greensboro leaders. Recently the Rotary Club of Greensboro allocated additional money to continue the project through June 2009. In the future we hope to develop a Web site, which will incorporate not only transcripts but also audio clips, photographs, and perhaps selected manuscripts donated by Rotary members. Jackson Library at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro will permanently house the Web site with links to the Rotary Club of Greensboro and Greensboro Public Library home pages.

### **The John Joseph Moakley Oral History Project at Suffolk University**

Submitted by Laura Muller

Formally established in 2003, the Moakley Oral History Project (OHP) at the John Joseph Moakley Archive and Institute at Suffolk University is a rich collection of interviews that seeks to supplement Congressman Moakley's papers, which he gifted to his alma mater in 2001. To date, the OHP has collected seventy-five oral history interviews with Congressman Moakley's

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

family, friends, staff, colleagues, and constituents, as well as participants in two key historical events: the civil war in El Salvador and the 1974 Garrity decision.



*Congressman Joe Moakley's brothers, Tom (on left) and Bob (on right), with Moakley Archive interns Zenelky Ortiz and Steve Kalarites*

The oral histories in the collection document and preserve valuable information and observations that may not be a part of the paper, photographic, and audio/video portions of the Moakley Papers. Interviews with Moakley's family and friends, such as his brothers and his law school class mates, offer insight into Moakley's formative years and his early political career. Interviews with members of Moakley's staff give context and historical information that fill in years or topics where written records did not survive. Moakley's local, state and congressional colleagues have so far contributed ten oral histories about his legislative career and his legacy. Excerpts from these interviews form the basis of two DVDs, *Joe Moakley: A Legacy of Public Service* and *El Congresista: Joe Moakley in El Salvador*, which we use for classroom presentations and outreach.

The Moakley Papers' largest series is the legislative files about Moakley's work related to the civil war in El Salvador from 1980 to 1992. As the Archive prepared for a 2003 symposium and exhibition, *El Congresista: Joe Moakley en El Salvador*, we decided to interview the constituents who brought the plight of the Salvadoran refugees to Moakley's attention. It was our first collaboration with oral historian Susan Goganian and her college oral history class, which recorded six interviews on El Salvador. Since 2003 we have added several interviews with Salvadorans.

The 1974 Garrity decision, a controversial ruling that required students in the Boston Public Schools to be bused to schools in other neighborhoods with the goal of creating racial balance, was a volatile

issue in Moakley's district. Although this was an important issue in Moakley's career, the collection contains surprisingly little information on the topic. As a result, collecting interviews related to the the Garrity Decision has become an important part of the OHP. Again collaborating with Susan Goganian's oral history class, we collected twenty-four oral histories with Boston teachers, administrators, community activists, parents and students, representing a broad spectrum of stances and experiences regarding the Garrity decision.

Online access is an important goal of our project. To date we have added thirty-nine interview transcripts and three audio and video files of selected interviews, with more to come in the near future.

The oral history project has added a rich and fascinating dimension to the Moakley Archive. For more information about our oral history projects, please visit our website (<http://www.suffolk.edu/archive/18020.html>) or contact Laura Muller, Oral History Coordinator, at 617-305-6295 or email to [lmuller@suffolk.edu](mailto:lmuller@suffolk.edu).

### **A Quarter-Century of Oral History: Baker-Cederberg Museum and Archives Oral History Project Celebrates 25 Years**

By Bob Dickson

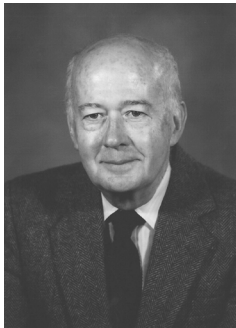
*Editorial note: an earlier version of this article appeared in the newsletter, The Baker-Cederberg Notebook.*

The practice of recording important events for future knowledge can be traced back to the primitive cave art produced by the earliest humans. With advent of language, the oral tradition of passing down knowledge from one generation to the next has become the oldest form of recording history. Within the last century, the expansion of the oral tradition from primarily a cultural institution of folklore and family genealogy into the professional arena of historical analysis has steadily evolved into what we now describe as Oral History. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Baker-Cederberg Museum and Archives Oral History Project. As we look to the future, I thought it is appropriate to take a look back at the past quarter-century of the project,

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

the individuals who made it a success, and consider our present opportunities to record the memories, challenges, and successes in the future at Viahealth.



**Paul Weld, M.D.**

At Rochester General Hospital, the idea of recording the thoughts and beliefs of the Medical Staff originated with Dr. Paul Weld, M.D., at the suggestion of Dr. Edward Atwater M.D. who had started a similar project at the University of Rochester. Since its creation, the project has recorded over 140 oral histories and the process has evolved in sophistication from the initial cassette audio tapes and written transcripts to video recordings recorded at the RGH visual communications studio on large format VHS tapes to the present use of high definition DVD video recordings recorded and produced at the ViaHealth Archives Consortium.

In December 1983 the Baker-Cederberg Archives committee, Chaired by Miss Jane Noonan, approved Dr. Weld's suggestion to form an oral history collection and the Oral History sub-committee was formed ten months later in October 1984. The Oral History committee's vision came from its first Chairman, Dr. Paul Weld. Dr. Weld remained the Chairman until 2001 and stayed active on the committee until his death in January 2007. His successor as Chairmanship was the former RGH Director of Volunteers services, Miss Anne Fenstermacher.

The typical interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and usually consisted of biographical and educational information followed by a series of questions and answers detailing the individual's experiences at RGH. The tone of these rich dialogues offered insight into the challenges and successes that chronicle not only the individual's career but the hospital's as well. Additionally, they contain many personal reminiscences of former colleagues, shared accomplishments, and the ever present cycle of adaptation to the rapidly evolving medical technology.

The early years of the project reflected a "learn as you go" approach. That first year ended with the three interviews of Drs. Walter Fenstermacher, John Barnell, and Milton Bohrod. By the end of the

decade, the oral history collection had grown to 34 interviews featuring many renowned physicians and personalities from Rochester General's history.

In 1997, the Oral History Committee published a booklet titled ECHOES comprising summaries of the first seventy-six oral histories recorded between 1984 and 1996. Volume two, titled ECHOES: Personal Memories of Rochester General Hospital, was published in May 2006 and contains forty-three summaries recorded from 1997 through 2006. Both volumes were compiled under the co-sponsorship of the Medical Staff and the Baker-Cederberg Museum and Archives. These summaries provide an easily searchable record of the interviews by including a concise summation of the major topics covered and names of featured persons.

These interviews comprise a treasure of information from many notable persons. For instance, the remarkable interview with Dr. Walter A. Fenstermacher, M.D., who relates his experience as a young resident in the 1920s and his efforts in creating Rochester's first Intravenous (IV) service and Blood Bank through his career as Chief of Surgery with the 19<sup>th</sup> General Hospital during the Second World War and after as the first Medical Director of RGH's Emergency Department in the 1960s.



**J. Raymond Hinshaw, M.D.**

Another central figure in the hospital's recent history is Dr. J. Raymond Hinshaw, M.D. This Oxford educated Rhodes Scholar shared his experiences working with burn therapy on the University of Rochester's participation project of the famous "Manhattan Project" during the Second World War. Additionally, as Chief of Surgery from 1966 until 1986 at General, Dr. Hinshaw was instrumental in establishing the Residency Teaching Program working in collaboration with the University of Rochester.

One of the most interesting interviews was with Mrs. Agnes Curtis. This long-time volunteer related her experiences in World War I in Europe with her step-father Dr. Ralph Fitch, M.D. and the military hospital he commanded. She also talks about following the examples of her grandmother Isabella Graham Hart, her mother and her sister in serving on the Women's

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

Board that today is known as the RGH Association. This extraordinary woman was responsible for the organization of the American Red Cross Nurses Aide Service during the Second World War. Under her leadership the eastern area chapter of the aide service grew from 400 volunteer nurses' aides to over 44,000 with representation in 27 separate military hospitals.



Agnes Curtis

Her post-war work at General consisted of weekly volunteering in the Emergency Department, serving with the Twigs (Women's Board and RGHA) and as the first women appointed to the Hospital's Board of Directors. Her commitment and loyalty to the hospital over her seventy-years of volunteer service is truly an inspiration to all.

The collaborative efforts of both the Baker-Cederberg Museum and Archives Council and the Genesee Hospital Archives Committee this year have resulted in the purchase of high quality professional video and audio equipment that greatly simplifies the process of interviewing guests, recording these valuable interviews, editing, and production of high quality DVDs quickly and easily here at our new archives space at Carlson Park. This new capability also allows for the scheduling of interviews at any time including after normal hours and weekends so as to accommodate the busy schedules of the participants. With the support of these new improvements to the project, it is the hope of the Oral History committees that we may inspire the members of our extended ViaHealth family to contribute their experiences and voices to this important work.

One school of thought supports the belief that oral history interviews should focus on the major personalities in the history of an institution, but the majority of oral historians believe the value of oral history is in its potential for recording a wide range of diverse perspectives. We agree, and believe that Safety and Security Officer, Lab Technician, or Pediatric Nurse's perspectives are just as important as the perspectives of the administrative staff, board members, or members of the medical staff in capturing the facts about the hospital's history. It is in this spirit that we invited participation from all departments and perspectives to join us in preserving this history.

Over the past twenty-five years the Baker-Cederberg

Museum and Archives Oral History Project has evolved into a historically significant record of the history of healthcare here in Rochester. As we look to the future, we thank all the participants and individuals from the past who have volunteered their time and energy in making this endeavor so successful. Additionally, we wish to especially thank the other notable members of the archives committee that have over the years contributed so much to this success of this project: they are the former Chairperson, the late Miss Jane Noonan, Drs. J. LaRue Wiley and David Thurber, Miss Anne Fenstermacher, Mrs. William B. Morse, Mrs. Carol Samuel, Mrs. John Lehr, and Mr. Philip G. Maples, Director Emeritus of the ViaHealth Archives Consortium.

For more information contact Robert J. Dickson, Archivist & Oral History Curator: [Robert.Dickson@viahealth.org](mailto:Robert.Dickson@viahealth.org)

### **The Consortium of Oral History Educators Announces the Spring, 2008 On-line Journal**

Submitted by Al Stein  
COHE Associate Director

We are pleased and excited to introduce our spring, 2008 on-line journal conveniently located on the COHE website. While reading the journal, you can visit the main COHE website as well as the website for the Martha Ross Center for Oral History. Both of the sites will provide you with interesting information and resources for your current oral history projects!

To access the journal, please visit the main COHE website (See the address listed below). When this is accessed, you simply click on the link at the top of the page that says "Journals". You will be automatically directed to the journal website. If you are experiencing difficulties with the site, please email me for assistance.

Please submit articles, news and photographs for future issues of the journal. Pass this site along to another oral history educator.

<http://www.umbc.edu/mrc/cohe/journals.html>

If you have any additional questions, feel free to send me an email at [asteinca@earthlink.net](mailto:asteinca@earthlink.net).



# Oral History Section

[www.archivists.org/saagroups/oralhist/index.asp](http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/oralhist/index.asp)



**SOCIETY OF  
American  
Archivists**

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### Newsletter Editor/Ex-officio Member

Joel Minor

Texas State University-San Marcos

[minor@txstate.edu](mailto:minor@txstate.edu)

New leadership assumes office at the close of the annual meeting of the section.

## Purpose of the SAA Oral History Section

The Oral History Section of the Society of American Archivists is composed of members of the Society and others who are interested in or are actively engaged in conducting oral history interviews and/or teach oral history methodology. The Oral History Section provides a forum for news, for discussion of issues and developments, and for establishing and maintaining communication and cooperation with other professional organizations.

Read the rest of the Section's [By-laws](#)

## Oral-History Related Happenings at the SAA 2008 Annual Meeting

### Pre-conference workshop:

Driving Exhibitions with Oral History

Monday, Aug 25, 2008

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Event Location: HILTON SAN FRANCISCO

Instructor: Bonnie Gurewitsch, CA

Archivist/Curator, Museum of Jewish Heritage

Seats Available - To register go to the [Conference/Workshop page of the SAA website](#).

### Annual Oral History Section Meeting:

Friday, Aug 29, 2008

NOON - 2:00 PM

### Session 610: Models for Collaboration: Providing Enhanced Access to Oral History

Saturday, Aug 30, 2008

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM



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