



ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION newsletter

Volume V, Number 1, January, 1971

150 Oral Historians Attend 5th National Colloquium of the Oral History Association at Asilomar Conference Center in California

The weather was perfect and almost every other feature of the 1970 Oral History Colloquium from November 13 to 16 at the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, California, was ideal. The Program Committee, headed by Willa Baum of the Regional Oral History Project at the University of California at Berkeley and by James Mink of UCLA, was warmly praised, and thanks were conveyed to the four host institutions—the University of California campuses at Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Santa Cruz, and the Forest History Society in Santa Cruz. The Proceedings of the Colloquium are now being prepared for publication by past President Peter Olch. Details about the meeting are given inside this issue of the OHA Newsletter.



Top: (left) Clarence Simmons, Director of the Oral History Program at Mary Holmes College in West Point, Mississippi, addresses the Oral History Colloquium at Asilomar in the session about "Oral History And Black Studies." (right) Out-going OHA President Peter Olch chats with incoming President Forrest C. Pogue (middle) and new OHA Secretary Amelia Fry.

Bottom: (left) Saul Benison has an attentive audience at one of the Colloquium small-group discussions, while (right) coffee-drinkers take a break (left-to-right: Gould Colman of Cornell University, Samuel Proctor of the University of Florida, Bruce Stave of the University of Connecticut, and Samuel Hand of the University of Vermont).



THE SCENE AT ASILOMAR: NEWS IN BRIEF

Treasurer Knox Mellon reported that the Oral History Association had 436 members as of November 16, 1970. 224 of these are individual members, 83 are institutional members, 95 are libraries, and 34 hold student memberships.

Mellon also reported a balance in the OHA Treasury of \$2,713.02.

Carlotta Herman, reporting on the finances of the 1969 Oral History Colloquium at Airlie House in Virginia, noted a balance of \$3.86, but prospective sales of the published proceedings of the Airlie House Colloquium should push that balance up to about \$900.

Gould Colman, past OHA President, gave an engraved gavel to outgoing President Peter Olch. The ceremony was loudly applauded by OHA members because of Olch's excellent leadership of the Association.

Gary Shumway, compiler of an Oral History Compendium, noted that five years ago only 70 institutions in the United States had oral history projects, and only 21 of these had more than 100 hours on tape; now there are 250 programs, and about 100 have 100 hours on tape. In addition, 41 institutions have announced their intentions to launch oral history projects in the next few months.

Manfred Wasserman of the National Library of Medicine reported that his bibliography of oral history literature is almost completed. He was commended by the Council for his work; a pre-publication review of the entire bibliography will take place soon.

A query about increasing membership dues in the OHA was set aside on the basis that the OHA is currently growing and does not need funds for any new or specific purposes.

A question about how to respond to requests from individuals and libraries for past copies of the OHA **Newsletter** resulted in a decision to price back issues at \$1.00 each.

The Oral History Workshop, held on the day preceding the OHA Colloquium, was attended by about 80 persons interested in learning the basic methods of oral history interviewing and was warmly praised. Some expressed hope that similar workshops, to meet the needs of neophytes in oral history, could be scheduled in conjunction with future OHA colloquia.

The Sites Committee has made no commitments regarding future colloquia beyond the forthcoming meeting in Bloomington, Indiana, from October 8 to 11, 1971.

A proposed amendment to the OHA Constitution, permitting election of officers by mail ballot, was tabled. Opponents argued that OHA leadership would best be entrusted to people who demonstrate their active interest in the Association by attending and voting for officers at annual meetings of the Association.

AT OUR COLLOQUIA: 46 OF THE 50 STATES HAVE BEEN REPRESENTED

Forty-six of the fifty states have been represented at one or more of the first five national meetings of the Oral History Association. California, with a total of 161 registrants at these gatherings—the first and fifth were held in that state—leads the list as expected. New York follows with 75, and then the District of Columbia with 56.

Others in the top ten are Maryland (24), Massachusetts (19), Pennsylvania (17), Illinois, Utah, and Virginia (16), Florida and Indiana (15).

These figures suggest that interest in oral history has spread evenly across the nation. Connecticut and Ohio have 13 each; Tennessee, Minnesota, and Kansas, 12 each; Alabama, 11; South Dakota, Texas, and Vermont, 10.

The four states yet to be represented are widely scattered. Some already harbor oral history programs, but have not mustered a delegate. They are New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Wyoming. In 1971, at Indiana University, perhaps?

NEW OFFICERS OF 1971: SEVERAL CHANGES APPROVED BY OHA MEMBERS AT ASILOMAR COLLOQUIUM

New President of the Oral History Association is Dr. Forrest C. Pogue, Executive Director of the George C. Marshall Research Foundation in Lexington, Virginia, and author of a multi-volume biography of General Marshall. Dr. Pogue succeeds Dr. Peter D. Olch of the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Olch had been Program Chairman for the 1969 OHA Colloquium at Airlie House in Warrenton, Virginia, and was elected Vice President-President Elect of the Association at that meeting. He became OHA President upon the death of Professor Oscar O. Winther of Indiana University on May 22, 1970. He asked to be relieved of the duties of President due to the intense demands of the office during the past several months, and due also to other pressing duties.

Dr. Pogue, who has been a pioneer in the oral history movement (he began interviewing for his Marshall biography in 1956), will serve as OHA President until the 6th National Colloquium is held at Indiana University in Bloomington on October 8-11, 1971. He will be succeeded by the new Vice President-President Elect, Charles T. Morrissey, who has served for the past three years as Editor of the Oral History Association **Newsletter**. Morrissey is Director of the Vermont Historical Society and Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Vermont; he is also Director of the Christian A. Herter Oral History Project at Harvard University and former Chief of the John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Project.

By becoming President, Pogue vacated a seat on the OHA Council which was filled by the election of Samuel Proctor of the University of Florida. The other two Council-members are Charles Crawford of Memphis State University, and Saul Benison of the University of Cincinnati. Morrissey resigned as **Newsletter** editor; he will be succeeded (beginning with the April, 1971, issue) by James Mink, Archivist at UCLA and Director of Oral History at UCLA. Mink's address is 138 Powell Library, UCLA, Los Angeles 90024.

New Secretary of the OHA is Mrs. Amelia Fry, Director of the Earl Warren Oral History Project at the Berkeley campus of the University of California. She succeeds Mrs. Alice Hoffman of Pennsylvania State University, Secretary for the past two years, who asked not to be renominated since she is moving with her family to a new campus of the University. Mrs. Fry's address is Room 486, University Library, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. 94720.

Knox Mellon was elected to another term as Treasurer of the OHA. All correspondence concerning membership should be addressed to him at the Department of History, Immaculate Heart College, 2021 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90027.

Program Chairman for the 1971 OHA Colloquium at Indiana University from October 8 to 11 is David R. Larson, Chief of the Archives and Manuscripts Division of the Ohio Historical Society (Interstate 71 and 17th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211).

In charge of local arrangements for the Bloomington Colloquium will be Dr. Martin Ridge of Indiana University. He is the Editor of the **Journal of American History**, the quarterly of the Organization of American Historians.

The OHA Sites Committee, to choose the locations for future Oral History Colloquia, consists of Warren Albert of the Archive-Library of the American Medical Association, Lila Johnson of the Minnesota Historical Society, and Elizabeth Calciano of U.C. at Santa Cruz.

Mrs. Elizabeth Mason of Columbia's Oral History Research Office has agreed to continue as Archivist of the OHA. Materials that belong in the permanent files of the OHA, especially records in the custody of former officers, should be conveyed to her at Box 20, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027.

THE NEW YORK TIMES AND COLUMBIA'S ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE AGREE TO MICROPUBLICATION PLAN

At the Asilomar Colloquium of the Oral History Association it was announced by Dr. Louis M. Starr, past president of the OHA and Director of Columbia University's Oral History Research Office, that the New York **Times** had agreed to reproduce and distribute Columbia's open oral history transcripts on both microfilm and microfiche. Chester M. Lewis, Director of Oral History Programs for the New York **Times**, was also present at Asilomar and explained how the program would operate. The 10-year agreement between Columbia and the **Times** was described by Starr as "a landmark for oral history everywhere." Since the Asilomar meeting the **Times** has invited other oral history projects to follow Columbia's example and make their transcripts more readily available to researchers through micropublication.

Starr recounted how he had conducted lengthy discussions with micropublishers over the past few years about making oral history memoirs more accessible to scholars. The New York **Times** sent a representative to the 1969 Oral History Colloquium at Airlie House, in Warrenton, Virginia, to explore the outlook for micropublication. Last December the **Times** conveyed its formal interest to Columbia, and a series of meetings followed. What developed is best explained in Louis Starr's words as printed in the 1969-1970 annual report of the Columbia Oral History Research Office:

We pointed out that the problems were formidable. Our memoirists, and not the University, hold title to their material. We would have to obtain their assent to assign us copyright in every instance, and in some cases, because of existing restrictions, we would not even raise the question. We are persuaded that this obstacle, and others, can be surmounted eventually, to the obvious benefit of other libraries and scholars. The usefulness of a given memoir would be multiplied many times over. Much laborious note-taking would be circumvented, since copies of desired pages could be made from the negatives.

We have concluded an agreement with the New York **Times** to provide this service for the next ten years. As the first such, we believe it will become a landmark for oral history everywhere. A **Times**' subsidiary, Microfilming Corporation of America, will reproduce on both microfilm and microfiche those of our transcripts that have been cleared for the purpose. The **Times** Library Service department will make them available to libraries and scholars, libraries subscribing for the entire output receiving a substantial discount. The Index department of the **Times** will perform the vital task of constructing a topical index of all memoirs cleared for distribution.

It is important at the outset that no misunderstanding mar this development. In essence, our relationship with those we have interviewed remains undisturbed. **Confidentiality will be protected as zealously as ever.** Closed memoirs remain closed. Those requiring permission to be read, as noted in our catalogue, continue to require such permission. The only change introduced by our pioneer venture with the **Times**, so far as memoirists are concerned, is that an option has been created for the author of an **open** memoir. If he wishes, copyright may be assigned to Columbia University and his contribution made available to other libraries and to interested scholars individually, in the form of microfilm, microfiche or full-size copy. Ultimately, in addition to enhancing access in three ways—by microreproduction, by copy, and by topical index—the arrangement should produce a modest income from royalties, self-generated income of significance in a field that has been chronically underfinanced. This, in turn, should further stimulate the growth of oral history.

We are proud to announce our micropublication partnership with the New York **Times** on the occasion of the fifth anniversary meeting of the Oral History Association, now a thriving national body.

Shortly after the Asilomar meeting, Dr. Starr demonstrated his confidence in the future of the Oral History Association by signing up as a Life Member of the OHA.

MEMOIRS OF HOLLYWOOD FILM-MAKERS ARE RECORDED ON TAPE

The Oral History program at the Center for Advanced Film Studies, located at the American Film Institute in Beverly Hills, California, is now entering its third year and continues to operate on funds provided in a \$150,000 grant from the Louis B. Mayer Foundation in December, 1968. This program is designed to fill gaps in American film knowledge by preserving the first-hand accounts of individuals who have played significant roles in the history of motion pictures in America.

Mayer Foundation Research Associateships for the 1970-1971 academic year have been awarded to Tom Stempel for a study of Darryl F. Zanuck's career and his 20th-Century Fox organization, and to Donald Knox for a study from inception to distribution of MGM's famous musical, **An American In Paris**. Knox will also complete an oral history project begun a year ago with film historian Keith Brownlow on Clarence Brown. Both Stempel and Knox have done graduate work in film history at UCLA; Stempel has completed a series of oral history interviews with Nunnally Johnson, and Knox has made documentaries for Westinghouse's Philadelphia station, KYW-TV.

The American Film Institute provides Research Associateships in addition to funds to support individual oral histories of prominent film makers. The first Associateship was awarded to Keith Brownlow in 1969 to interview many figures (some of them now obscure) who were prominent in the silent-film era but had not been included in his book, **The Parade's Gone By**.

CALIFORNIA BIBLIOGRAPHIC CENTER FOR ORAL HISTORY IS COLLECTING DATA

A long hoped-for and worked-for method to coordinate information on oral history interviews throughout California is about to come to fruition. The California State Library will expand its Union Catalog maintained in Sacramento to include references to all oral history tapes and transcripts available in California. Letters have been sent to the directors of libraries, historical societies, and museums encouraging statewide participation in the California Bibliographic Center for Oral History.

Each organization participating in the California Bibliographic Center will file an organizational history card indicating its oral history facilities and general policy regarding availability of material. For each tape deposited in the library, historical society, or museum, a card will be prepared listing the person or persons interviewed, the subjects covered, the length of the tape, and whether or not a transcript is also available. Thus, in time, the student of California history can discover this primary historical material available throughout the state by utilizing a central file at the State Library.

The data submitted to the Bibliographic Center will be edited to standard bibliographic form, following guidelines established by the Anglo American Cataloging Rules, and converted to machine readable form along with the other material now represented in the California Union Catalog.

HOW TO PUBLICIZE ORAL HISTORY: MAKING A TAPE THAT TELLS WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT

During a session about "Oral History and Public Relations" at the 5th OHA Colloquium in Asilomar this past November, Mrs. Jeanne Spiegel mentioned that she had prepared a tape of excerpts from oral history interviews which explains oral history to the uninitiated. We asked her to write a description of her tape, and she kindly provided this account. Mrs. Spiegel is Librarian of the Business and Professional Women's Foundation, 2012 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (telephone: 202-293-1200).

Oral history as a term, in my experience, appears to have little meaning to the general public. Because the building which houses the Business and Professional Women's Foundation library is located on "Embassy Row" in Washington, D.C. and flies a green flag, we are frequently visited by people who mistake us for the Irish Embassy. Once in the building they are given a brief tour, and I find that the phrase oral history is meaningless to them but when explained becomes their chief point of interest. We are also visited by many members of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, which is our main source of support through contributions, and the same situation holds true when the oral history collection is explained to them.

The proportion of visitors is small compared to the number of people who could be reached by other means. We have received some publicity in newspapers, including the *New York Times*, and in some columns written by women. While this has been beneficial in obtaining consent from some interviewees, who are reassured or impressed by the clippings, I felt that something more had to be done to arouse further interest and financial support for the Foundation and the oral history collection.

It was decided to make a tape consisting of excerpts from oral history interviews already recorded. This could be played as an educational program item by the clubs of the National Federation and other women's organizations as an experiment. Two necessary requirements were clear: the tape had to be interesting, and it had to pay for itself.

I proceeded to listen to a number of our tapes, selecting portions of interviews with women whose names would be known—living women such as Senator Margaret Chase Smith and Marya Mannes, and others now dead, such as Mary McCloud Bethune and Rachel Carson. I decided on about 15 excerpts which stood by themselves, marked the tapes, and then wrote a script which contained an introduction explaining the oral history project and brief information about the speaker in each excerpt.

Using two recorders, I read the script and played the excerpts from the tapes. The result was somewhat rough since clicks could be heard between the excerpts and my reading, but we had a tape which could be judged and worked with.

It was listened to by members of the Foundation for criticism and suggestions. The listeners found it interesting, and the only change suggested was the dropping of one excerpt for political reasons. After listening to it myself many times I decided on several changes. I revised the positions of some of the excerpts for dramatic impact. For example, I had two women with Southern accents one after the other; their impact was greater when another excerpt intervened. I also decided that a man's voice reading the introductions would separate the excerpts more effectively for the listener than my voice would. I added as a final item the voice of Ashley Montague saying that women were superior in every way, which always brings smiles to the faces of listeners—leaves them laughing, so to speak. To make the excerpts entertaining does not detract from the serious purpose of oral history.

I consulted Mr. Leo Orso, a member of the Oral History Association, who acts as my technical adviser and is the possessor of an unusually good recording voice. He

(Continued in next column)

CBC ORAL HISTORY PROJECT SPONSORS \$1,000 CONTEST

In Canada the CBC Radio Network is offering a prize of \$1,000 for an original documentary essay on tape. According to the CBC the purpose of this competition, aside from discovering people with a talent for making radio programs, is to encourage the use of already existing oral history material and to develop new sources.

The subject for an "essay on tape" might be an individual biography; the evolution of a movement, institution, or political party; or the recounting of a specific event. It might employ taped material such as speeches, interviews, music, or crowd noise which could be extracted from existing oral archives. It might partly or entirely consist of original recordings and interpretations. Entries will be judged on content, intrinsic interest, presentation, and technical quality. Any of these "essays on tape" which might be used for programming by the CBC would receive broadcast fees in addition to the prize.

April 10, 1971, is the deadline for entry in the CBC Oral History Project. For technical instructions and detailed rules you should write to Oral History Project, att: Lewis Auerbach, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Box 500, Terminal A, Toronto 1, Ontario.

The CBC Oral History Project is an attempt to kindle a more intensive interest in oral history in Canada and to encourage those already engaged in projects involving the collection of taped material to consider radio as a possible outlet for their efforts. More generally, the project is an attempt to capture more of the past for the present, and some of the present for the future.

In addition to sponsoring this competition, the CBC has also initiated two oral history projects of its own. One is interviews with Canadian poets, and the other is interviews with "intellectual refugees" in Canadian culture. These long, open-ended interviews are being deposited with the CBC Archives in Toronto as source material for the future.

The Center for History and Philosophy of Physics of the American Institute of Physics (335 East 45th St., New York, N.Y. 10017) reports that 70 individuals have been interviewed thus far in its oral history program, and that these interviews total more than 300 hours. The two most recent interviews were conducted with John C. Slater, Chairman of the Department of Physics at MIT from 1930 to 1951, and with Robert E. Marshak, Chairman of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Rochester from 1950 to 1964.

How To Publicize Oral History, Continued

agreed to make us a batch of recordings with his voice reading the introductions. We had to cut out two excerpts, a terrible choice for me, in order to reduce the length and lower the cost. The end result is a fine technical recording, attractively boxed. We sell the tape for \$3.50, our cost, to anyone requesting it. Distribution has been good and the reaction has been favorable.

All this was done several years ago, and today we are almost out of the recordings. It is probably time to make a new tape of excerpts. I know of no change I would make in the process of producing the tape, but I would certainly change at least half of the excerpts, perhaps all. Times have changed, particularly in the area of women's concerns, and I am toying with such ideas as using a particular theme—women in the past and present, for example, or women's liberation, or women in politics. The possibilities are numerous. Perhaps more than one type should be made.

If your oral history project needs publicity, try it. Anyone can play.

BOOK REVIEW: ORAL HISTORY AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

The New Deal and the Last Hurrah: Pittsburgh Machine Politics. By Bruce M. Stave. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970. \$8.95.

For the casual reader *The Last Hurrah*, a novel published in 1956 by the late Edwin O'Connor, provides an entertaining and sometimes poignant account of the successes and ultimate defeat of an urban political boss. The main character was obviously patterned after Boston's James Michael Curley and the work fits nicely into the contemporary historical novel genre. For historians and political scientists the work transcends entertainment. It provides the classic fictional account of the alleged decline of bossism in recent American life. Simply stated the "last hurrah" thesis contends that the New Deal's emphasis upon federally administered relief and social welfare programs precipitated the destruction of the traditional urban machine. It did this by establishing patronage machinery outside the control of local bosses and making the various constituencies less dependent than they had been upon partisan political favor for aid.

The thesis has provided the context for numerous studies; some assuming the validity of the "last hurrah" and others testing it. These latter efforts have tended to be case studies of a particular city that conclude, at least for their particular city, that the "last hurrah" thesis is inappropriate. One of the most impressive of these case studies is Bruce M. Stave's *The New Deal and the Last Hurrah: Pittsburgh Machine Politics*. Professor Stave contends that "rather than enfeebling machine politics in Pittsburgh the New Deal invigorated a previously impotent Democratic organization." In 1929 only 5,200 of the city's 175,000 registered voters were registered Democrats. Yet within a few years Pittsburgh was to become a Democratic stronghold. This spectacular conversion in partisan political allegiance was in part the product of the "interplay of politics and federal work relief." Stave's amply documented conclusion is that "Roosevelt's welfare state did not undermine the bosses; instead it facilitated the transfer of urban political power from the Republicans to the Democrats."

To illustrate the nature of this political metamorphosis, the author has relied heavily upon voting return analysis and collective biography. There are forty pages of tables in the appendix and others included in the text, all I should add eminently readable. Stave's reliance upon quantitative methodology is thus most apparent. His reliance upon oral history is less obvious but also significant.

Before assuming his present position at the University of Connecticut, Professor Stave served as director of the Oral History Research Project at the University of Bridgeport. While there he acquired some important views as to the utility of oral history. "Although the historian must often be wary of an individual's recall of a past event, interviews can be most helpful in explaining what other evidence leaves unsaid." In the course of his own research, Stave conducted oral history interviews with 103 Pittsburgh New Deal committeemen, or their families when committeemen were not available. (The interviews with the families were less satisfactory than those with the committeemen.) In addition to confirming many of the written sources "the interviews aided in pinpointing the exact role politics played in the work relief operation." It was from these interviews that Stave was able to compile job histories for the committeemen. And from there it was simple arithmetic to ascertain the increased importance of politically related employment for democratic workers. The latter is crucial to Stave's presentation. It is also the sort of thing other manageable evidence might not have revealed.

This book, consequently, is an excellent example of how quantitative methodology and oral history interviewing can be combined successfully in studying political history.

—Samuel B. Hand

NEWS IN BRIEF . . .

Prospectors and others involved in mining for uranium were interviewed this past summer by members of an oral history research team led by Gary L. Shumway of California State College at Fullerton and by Floyd A. O'Neil of the University of Utah. Setting up headquarters at Blanding, Utah, this group of professors, graduate students, and college seniors interviewed miners, townspeople, government and corporation officials, and others, at a critical turning point in the history of uranium mining. After July 1, 1970, the Atomic Energy Commission would not guarantee purchases of the ore, and it was predicted that either new markets would have to be developed or the industry would face a major decline. Individual topics chosen by the interviewers ranged from a study of Moab, Utah, and the rampant industrialization brought upon it by the uranium industry, to the role of Union Carbide, the Vanadium Corporation, and the AEC in the development of the industry. Some researchers investigated monopolies, lawsuits, the effects of sudden affluence on independent prospectors who uncovered uranium deposits, and the birth and death of mining towns that now are ghost towns. The results will be deposited in the Center for Studies of the American West at the University of Utah and in the Oral History Collection at California State College, Fullerton.

The Magnetic Products Division of the 3M Company has prepared a 24-page informational guidebook for more effective use and better understanding of magnetic recording tape. Called *Recording Basics*, this booklet contains diagrams to explain such format terms as full-track, dual-track, and four-track recording. It also offers advice about splicing tapes, editing, the use of leaders, recorder maintenance, how to figure recording times, and how to select and care for recording tape. Copies of *Recording Basics* may be obtained by sending 25¢ each for handling to the 3M Company, Box 3146, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

The Maryland Historical Society has received a grant of \$2,000 from the Jacob and Annita France Foundation for support of an oral history program that will culminate in a collection of taped reminiscences of prominent Maryland citizens. Mrs. Francis Scott Key of Chevy Chase, former Director of the Eugene McCarthy History Project, has been assisting the Maryland Historical Society in launching its program.

The University of Miami School of Medicine Library is sponsoring an Oral History Program to obtain records of the School's founders and officers. This initial program will later be expanded to include interviews with physicians and others who have played important roles in the history of medicine in Florida, with special emphasis on Miami and Dade County and the School's Teaching Hospitals. The program will be under the direction of Mrs. Mildred C. Langer, Director of the Medical School Library, P.O. Box 875, Biscayne Annex, University of Miami, Miami, Fla. 33152. Mrs. Langer reports that physicians who are also historians will serve as interviewers.

The first annual Archives-Library Institute on Historical Research Materials, sponsored by the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus from February 1 to 12, 1971, gave ample attention to oral history. Guest lecturers included Alice Hoffman of the Oral History Program at Pennsylvania State University, James Mink of UCLA's Oral History Program, and John Stewart of the Kennedy Library. This Institute was directed by David R. Larson, Chief of the Archives and Manuscripts Division of the Ohio Historical Society.

Oral History News in Brief . . .

The Historical Research Center of the National Air and Space Museum (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560) is developing a library of tape recordings of persons who have contributed to aeronautics and space flight development. The HRC is interested in borrowing oral tapes that can be copied into their master bank which now contains over 200 reels. The original tape will be returned and no tapes will be released without the approval of the donor and the person interviewed. If you can assist this program you should write to E. W. Robischon, Assistant Director for Information and Education of the National Air and Space Museum.

Oral history will be the theme of the 1971 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. This conference is scheduled to begin on September 1 at University College, Swansea, and to conclude on September 8. The Oral History Association has been invited to send a representative.

Interview guidelines used at Cornell University to study student activism were applied this past spring at Jackson State College when protests arose about the killing of two Jackson students by Mississippi State Highway Patrolmen. A Cornell student, Cleveland Donald, who was black and had grown up in Jackson, was sent to his former home town about eight weeks after the initial incident. He recorded 12 interviews in a single week—eight with Jackson students, one with a librarian at the College, one with a Jackson attorney associated with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and the Law, one with a Jackson physician, and one with a local high school student. Mr. Donald had hoped to interview twice as many people, but he was scheduled to leave for Brazil the day after he returned with his tapes to Ithaca from Jackson. Total costs for this brief project were \$950.

The March, 1970, issue of **Judicature** (Volume 53, No. 8) contains an article on "The Development of Tape-Recorded Court Proceedings in Israel" by Haim Gershoni. Conceived as a way of assuring an accurate record of what is actually said in a courtroom, the project was inaugurated in 1968 and tested through various stages, from mock trials to a series of actual trials in several courts. The results so far have been satisfactory, and the project will be expanded. The multiplicity of accents remains a major problem for transcribers; although Hebrew is Israel's national language it is spoken as a second tongue by many residents. Another troublesome point has been those situations when several people speak at once.

Willa K. Baum is the author of "Oral History, The Library, and the Genealogical Researcher" in the October, 1970 (Volume V, No. 4) issue of the **Journal of Library History**. Charles T. Morrissey has an article, "Oral History On Campus: Recording Changes In Higher Education," coming this spring in the **Dartmouth College Library Bulletin**.

"Accuracy In Oral History Interviewing" by William W. Cutler III of the History Department at Temple University was published in the June, 1970 (Volume III, No. 3) issue of the **Historical Methods Newsletter**.

The University of Florida has begun a Seminole Indian Oral History Project. The Utah Historical Society has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to produce educational materials for Utah schools and also assist local historical groups to initiate new activities, including oral history. Dr. Glen M. Leonard will direct the NEH-funded project, which is expected to continue for fifteen months. The National Trust for Historic Preservation hopes to start an oral history program at Chesterwood, the studio and home of Daniel Chester French in Stockbridge, Mass. The National Trust owns and administers this site. Studs Terkel, editor of **Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression** (Pantheon, 1970), addressed the Illinois Chapter of the Special Libraries Association on October 21 about "My Version Of Oral History."

The transcript of an oral history interview with W. Wallace White, now retired but once in charge of inspecting Nevada's legal houses of prostitution for the state health department, contains 17 pages devoted to an analysis of this business in Nevada. White's memoir is entitled "Caring For The Environment: My Work in Public Health and Reclamation in Nevada." It is open to research, together with several other oral history transcripts with briefer sections of information about prostitution in Nevada, at the library of the University of Nevada in Reno. This information comes from a 3-page piece by Mary Ellen Glass, "Restricted District: A Note For Social Historians," in the Winter, 1970 (Volume XIII, No. 4) issue of the Nevada Historical Society **Quarterly**.

Mystery fans and others who like to read thriller-diller books will be pleased to learn that **The Anderson Tapes**, an imaginative novel consisting of transcribed tapes, is now available as a \$1.25 paperback from Dell.

A one-man oral history project in Rockland County, New York, is being conducted by Scott E. Webber of Stony Point, N.Y. 10980. Among his interviewees is James A. Farley, former Postmaster General and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who was born and grew up in Rockland County. "Mr. Farley is now 82 but has a sharp mind and excellent recollection of his native town around 1900," writes Webber. "Shortly we will do a tape on his rise in politics from town clerk to state Democratic chairman, 1908-1929, about 21 years. We have also had conversations on his relationships with Hoover, MacArthur, Eisenhower, and Lyndon Johnson."

In the late fall of 1970 the John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Project reported that it had interviewed a total of 834 persons. These interviews require 1,020 reels of tape. To date 15,000 pages have been transcribed, and 265 transcripts are presently available for research use. The Kennedy Library is temporarily housed in the Federal Records Center at 380 Trapelo Road, Waltham, Mass. 02154; John Stewart is Acting Director (telephone: 617-223-7250). When the Kennedy memorial complex is completed in Cambridge, Mass., probably in 1976, the library section of the memorial will be given to and administered by the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration.

At present in Cambridge the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, located at Radcliffe College, is formulating plans to begin an oral history project.

It is true that an active member of the Oral History Association has MYTHS on his automobile license plates.

ETHNIC HISTORY

ROSA, The Life of an Italian Immigrant, by Marie Hall Ets. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1970. 254 pp. \$7.50. Forward by Rudolph J. Vecoli.

Rosa Cavalleri was an Italian immigrant who came to the United States in 1884 when she was 18. First she lived in an iron mining town in Missouri; then she moved to Chicago, where she worked at a Settlement House.

It was at the "Chicago Commons" in 1918 that she met a young social worker, Marie Hall Ets, to whom she told her reminiscences of life in a silk making town in Lombardy, how she happened to immigrate to America, and of the life she and her family were able to fashion in the United States. Mrs. Ets, an award winning author and illustrator of children's books, "took down her words in heavy dialect as she spoke them."

"Since Mrs. C. could read and write no English and very little Italian," Mrs. Ets wrote, "she could make no notes. She just had to tell me things as she remembered them and let me put them in order. . . . I have corrected and simplified her text, trying at the same time not to lose the character and style of her spoken words."

The book provides a welcome addition to the literature of immigration, partly because there are few readily available first person accounts of the experiences of the immigrant woman in America. While this is not oral history as the term is generally understood, it shows what can be obtained in the field of ethnic history in the United States when a responsive interviewer is paired with a perceptive subject.

LUMBERING AND OTHER TOPICS IN UPSTATE NEW YORK RECEIVE ATTENTION FROM ORAL HISTORIANS

In 1968, William J. Langlois of the State University of New York at Binghamton and Robert McGowan of Hamilton College began an oral history study of the Northern New York State logging community of Reynoldston. Due to the lack of written documentation of Reynoldston's existence from 1870 to 1940 they pursued their study by oral history techniques. Their interviews centered on the common man and the everyday details of life in a lumbering community—an aspect of history that had been too long neglected. Dealing with the age group 70-100, a coordinated biographical approach to interviews was used to insure the validity of the information gathered. Langlois and McGowan are now working on a book based on their Reynoldston material.

Work on Reynoldston has led to a taped cultural survey of Franklin County, New York. Using techniques developed from their previous work they have so far conducted over 200 hours of interviews on the folklife of the county from 1870 to 1940. At present they are devising a system for rapid retrieval of information stored in their tape and tape transcript collection.

With their work on Reynoldston as a basis, Langlois was able to obtain the generous support of SUNY Binghamton. They have also been aided in their work by SUC at Plattsburgh, the New York State Historical Association and the Cornell Program in Oral History.

In addition to carrying on their regular classwork and their independent oral research on upstate New York, both Langlois and McGowan are now engaged in supervising the oral history of their respective schools, SUNY at Binghamton and Hamilton College. While Langlois is faced with the history of a young state university McGowan is dealing with the story of the third oldest college in New York State. The "Oral History of SUNY Binghamton" traces a community's desire for a four year college after World War II and a branch of Syracuse University with 876 students to a university center today with over 7,000 students, in about 25 years.

BOOKS: 100 interviews recorded in the 1930's with ex-slaves have been edited by Norman Yetman and published in **Voices From Slavery: Personal Accounts From The Slave Narratives** (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$7.95). **The Director's Event**, by Eric Sherman and Martin Rubin (Atheneum, \$6.95), consists of transcribed interviews with five American film makers: Abraham Polonsky, Arthur Penn, Samuel Fuller, Peter Bogdanovich, and Budd Boetticher. **The Librarian Speaking: Interviews With University Librarians** (University of Georgia Press, 1970), contains 16 interviews recorded by Guy R. Lyle, editor of this book and Librarian at Emory University. "What I have to offer in this book," Lyle writes, "is an informal exploration of some of the persistent and critical problems of university librarianship in the 1960's by some of the leading librarians of today." He adds: "Minimal editing was done by the editor since this is a form of oral history and there can be significance in the way a librarian expresses his views." An excellent book that relies heavily on interviews, **The Conspiracy Against Hitler In The Twilight War**, by Harold C. Deutsch, is available in paperback from the University of Minnesota Press at \$3.45 per copy. **The Fantastic Lodge**, edited by Helen MacGill Hughes (Fawcett Premier, 95¢), is transcribed from tapes taken in a sociological project conducted by the Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago. These tapes contain the autobiography of a drug addict, identified as "Janet Clark," who was born in 1919. "Janet gives an excruciatingly detailed fix-by-fix account of her losing battle with heroin," says **Publishers' Weekly**. "She is especially bitter about righteous establishment people who exacerbate the drug problem." The third edition of **Spoken Records** by Helen Roach (Scarecrow Press, Box 656, Metuchen, N.J. 08840; \$7.50), contains a short piece on oral history by Louis M. Starr.

Richard O'Connor's **The First Hurrah**, a biography of Alfred E. Smith published by Putnam's, is the 115th book to draw upon Columbia's Oral History Collection.

The North Texas State University Oral History Collection has recently undertaken a project to gather the oral memoirs of veterans who were participants in or witnesses of the major events of World War II. More specifically, at present interviews are being taped with former members of Texas' famous "Lost Battalion" (2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery, 36th Infantry Division). This group was captured by the Japanese very early in the war and spent 42 months in various prisoner-of-war camps scattered throughout Asia and Japan. One very interesting person who has been interviewed is Frank Fujita, Jr., a Japanese-American who was captured by the Japanese on Java.

Ann Campbell of the John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Project spoke at the January meeting of the Washington Area Chapter of the Manuscripts Society. Mrs. Campbell discussed oral history in the presidential libraries.

Recent additions to the Herbert Hoover Oral History Collection are interviews with former Senator William S. Knowland of California, Arthur Krock, Mr. and Mrs. David Lawrence, Neil MacNeil, Mark Sullivan, Jr., and General Harry H. Vaughan.

Algie Newlin of Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina, is directing an Oral History Series sponsored by the Guilford College Library. This is a series of interviews with local people who possess a rich stock of folklore, traditions, and local history relating generally to Quakers and Quaker communities. One of his interviewees is 105 years old, another is 103.

ORAL HISTORY IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Stephen R. Ward is the author of a 6-page article entitled "An Early Assessment of the South Dakota Oral History Project" in Volume 1, Number 1 (Winter, 1970) of **South Dakota History**, the new quarterly of the South Dakota State Historical Society. Ward is Associate Professor of History at the University of South Dakota. He tells how this oral history project has produced more than 140 tapes with nearly 180 interviewees, all recorded between June and September, 1970, and funded by a \$5,000 appropriation from the state legislature. Ultimately Ward hopes to describe these interviews in a catalogue that will be published and distributed nationally. None of the interviews recorded to date have been transcribed. About interviewing he writes: "A few surprises, however, awaited this interviewer traveling through the state in search of good informants. Amateur historians or people who have gathered information on their town or county, for example, tended to offer more secondary information than first-hand accounts of their own experiences. People billed as 'good story tellers' often proved disappointing. They had related their stories for so many years that fact and fiction could not be separated."

Beginning with the April, 1971, issue, this **Newsletter** will have a new Editor. He is James Mink, and his address is 138 Powell Library, UCLA, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024. Your retiring Editor, somewhat jaded after three years with the job, hopes earnestly that you will shower Mr. Mink with news items. To produce a 4-to-8 page **Newsletter** every three months can be a little disconcerting when the flow of news is only a trickle. At times during the past three years your present Editor has felt that all Americans were as tight-lipped as his Vermont neighbors. But now in retrospect he concludes that you have been inordinately patient with his delays, and amazingly tolerant of his oddities. He is sincerely grateful to you for your interest and helpfulness, and when he says that it has been a pleasure editing this **Newsletter** he actually means it. The Assistant Editor, Samuel Hand, joins in saying "thank you."

C.T.M.

1971 ORAL HISTORY COLLOQUIUM: The 6th National Colloquium of the Oral History Association will be held at Indiana University in Bloomington from October 8 to 11, 1971.

Membership in the Oral History Association is open to all who are interested in oral history. Dues for individuals are \$7.50 per year, and for institutions and associations they are \$25.00 per year. Non-voting student and library memberships are \$5.00 annually (these members receive all publications but do not participate in the selection of OHA officers). Life memberships are available at \$150. Institutions which generously decide to become Sustaining Members pay between \$100 and \$150 each year. All checks for membership dues should be sent to OHA Treasurer Knox Mellon, Dept. of History, Immaculate Heart College, 2021 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90027.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll as a member of the Oral History Association. Enclosed find a check in payment of the OHA membership dues for the current year.

Check one: Individual membership (\$ 7.50 Minimum)
Institutional/Associational membership...(\$25.00 Minimum)

Send all OHA publications and communications to the address below:

Signed: Date:

Checks should be made payable to The Oral History Association, Inc., and forwarded with the above information to: Knox Mellon, Treasurer, Oral History Association, Immaculate Heart College, 2021 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90027

The Oral History Association, Inc.
Editorial Office
The Vermont Historical Society
Montpelier, Vermont 05602