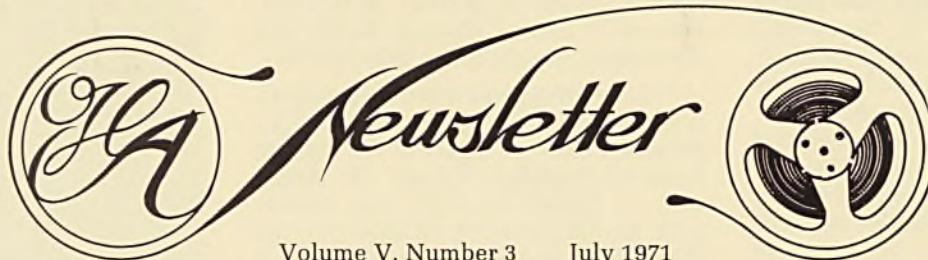


# ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION



Volume V, Number 3 July 1971

## OHA PUBLISHES DIRECTORY OF ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

In a news release from Columbia University's Oral History Research Office, Director Louis M. Starr recently announced the publication of *Oral History in the United States: A Directory*, under OHA auspices. Starr acclaimed the volume as "a new tool for research that will help scholars gain access to the unpublished reminiscences of more than 20,000 persons involved in many aspects of American life in recent decades." The 120-page volume describes more than 230 oral history projects now at colleges, universities, historical societies, and research libraries throughout the country. It includes listings for historical archives found in no other reference volume. It covers collections in 48 states, involving tape-recorded interviews with 23,115 persons. Nearly half of these collections were begun within the last three years.

The directory was compiled by Gary L. Shumway, professor of history, California State College, Fullerton, and edited by Louis Starr. The idea of a directory of oral history research originated in Columbia's Oral History Research Office and first appeared as a supplement to its annual report for 1965, under the title *Oral History in the United States*. Starr urged OHA to take over the responsibility of

publishing an updated version, and with approval of the Executive Council, OHA President Gould Colman appointed Professor Shumway to prepare the survey questionnaire and compile the new directory.

In the introduction to the directory, Starr compares it with the 12 pages he issued in 1965 and makes a strong case for the oral history explosion in America. In the mid-sixties there were 89 ongoing projects and 7 in the planning stages; today there are over 230 operative programs and 93 more are expecting to begin soon.

The 1965 directory listed 17,441 hours of recorded interviews. That figure has now more than tripled, while the pages of transcript available has only doubled from the 1965 figure of 398,556. Starr concludes that "this vast discrepancy reflects the fact that for all the interest that it has generated, oral history remains critically underfinanced." He points out that "studies of the use of oral history over the last decade have shown time and time again that transcripts edited by the oral authors, rather than tapes, are what scholars want." Nevertheless, the questionnaires generated in the process of compiling the directory, as well as the wide discrepancy in the ratio of hours recorded to pages transcribed, reveal that lack of funds for transcription is a major hindrance to the progress of oral history. "Yet many press on with their interviewing," observes Starr, "... and this in itself tells something of the dedication of those engaged in this work."

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Dr. W. Lynwood Montell inspects an advance copy of *Oral History in the United States: A Directory* (New York, Oral History Association, 1971) in the offices of the UCLA Oral History Program. Professor Montell has received high praise and national recognition for his recent book, *The Saga of Coe Ridge: A Study in Oral History* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1970) which has been hailed as a pioneering work in oral folk history. He is professor of history and folklore and coordinator of the Center for Intercultural Studies at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky. This summer he is visiting professor of history and folklore at UCLA. He will be a speaker at the Sixth National Colloquium on Oral History, Indiana University, October 8-10, as a member of the plenary session to consider the relationships of the folklorist and the oral historian.

## ORAL HISTORY SESSIONS SCHEDULED AT THIS YEAR'S SAA MEETING

The Society of American Archivists will hold its annual meeting, October 12-15, at the Sheraton-Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Oral history will be featured in two sessions during the meeting. On Wednesday, October 13 at 1:45 p.m., Willa K. Baum, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley, will chair a session entitled, "Nuts and Bolts of an Oral History Program." Speakers at this session include: David Rosenblatt, Ohio Historical Society, discussing funding; Allen Jones, Auburn University, considering institutional relationships in administering an oral history-manuscripts program; and Ann Campbell, San Francisco Federal Records Center, exploring the problems of processing oral history tape recordings.

On Thursday, October 14 at 9:15 p.m., John F. Stewart, acting director of the John F. Kennedy Library, will chair a session designed to identify and contrast the variety of oral history programs. Panelists at this session will be: Amelia Fry, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley; Elwood R. Maunder, Forest History Society, Santa Cruz, California; Eleanor Alexander, Civil Rights Documentation Project, Washington, D.C.; and Joseph Cash, American Indian Research Project and South Dakota Oral History Project.



## DIRECTOR NAMED FOR NIXON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Dr. C. Richard Arena has been named director of the Richard M. Nixon Oral History Project at Whittier College, Whittier, California, President Frederick M. Binder has announced.

The Richard M. Nixon Foundation has granted Whittier College the official privilege to conduct an oral history project centering around the pre-1945 political and historical activities of President Nixon.

Dr. Arena has been granted a two-year leave of absence from the faculty to direct the oral history project.

"Whittier College conducted a nationwide search for an historian to direct this project," Dr. Binder said. "Dr. Daniel J. Reed, the director of the Presidential Libraries division of the National Archives, advised us in selecting the right person. After interviewing many interested historians from throughout the nation, we concluded that the most qualified was Dr. Arena of our own faculty."

Dr. Arena has been connected part-time with the project during the past academic year and has already con-

ducted several interviews with members of President Nixon's family and some close friends in the Whittier area.

"I have been given overwhelming encouragement and support from key individuals who are a part of the life and times of President Nixon," Dr. Arena said. "I expect to work very closely with the Oral History Association and the Presidential Libraries division of the National Archives and am grateful for the support given by Whittier College and the Richard M. Nixon Foundation for this project."

Dr. Arena said he intends to conduct his research on a purely professional basis using no students or semitrained personnel. He also intends to call upon persons living on the East Coast as well as the West Coast.

"It is also understood that my efforts will be only in the research area and not the publication of any books or articles," Dr. Arena stated. "The publication will be done by future historians who will eventually have access to all the results of my research."



*Recently named director of the Richard M. Nixon Oral History Project is C. Richard Arena, associate professor of history at Whittier College. He is a graduate of Temple University and received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Pennsylvania. He has taught at the University of Puerto Rico, Temple University, St. Joseph's College, and at Hartwick College. He joined the Whittier faculty in 1970. He is also the charter president of the Historical Society of the Whittier Area and a member of OHA's Public Information Committee.*

## NUCMC ISSUES SPECIAL CIRCULAR ON REPORTING COLLECTIONS OF ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTS

Arline Custer

The editorial staff of the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* (NUCMC) has now had sufficient experience with preparing descriptions of transcripts of oral history collections to feel confident in distributing instructions for reporting. These instructions are being published as No. 7 of our series of Information Circulars and are being distributed to OHA members; copies are also available from Mrs. Arline Custer, Editor, NUCMC, Descriptive Cataloging Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

The 1969 NUCMC volume includes only one oral history collection entry, the interviews relating to American Indians in Utah and neighboring states conducted by the Western History Center of the University of Utah, on which we experimented with style of wording and the arrangement and order of descriptive notes. Our catalogers designed this entry from the information available in the guide to the collection published by the Western History Center. We then asked Willa K. Baum and James V. Mink to report some of the University of California's collections using our "Data Sheet," since this would be the usual method of presenting information to us for the catalog. They were very patient with us, and after

much correspondence and several trial and error examples, we were all satisfied with the results, from the reporting side and the cataloging product. With these examples as background experience we were able to write the information sheet which includes instructions, examples, and samples.

In the 1970 issue of the NUCMC, now in final preparation for publication in winter 1971, we plan to have a list of the collections of transcripts of oral history interviews and of other collections containing tapes or other forms of sound recordings. There are about 75 entries in the list representing collections in 19 different repositories of which the following 8 repositories reported collections consisting entirely of oral history transcripts: American Institute of Physics, Center for History and Philosophy of Physics (New York City); California, University, Berkeley, Bancroft Library; California, University, Los Angeles, Library; Columbia University Libraries (New York City); Stanford University Archives (California); U.S. Marine Corps, Headquarters, Historical Division (Washington, D.C.); United States Naval Institute (Annapolis); and Wayne State University, Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs (Detroit).

## NEW EDITION OF THE ORAL HISTORY BIBLIOGRAPHY TO BE AVAILABLE SOON

The second edition of the bibliography of the literature of oral history, compiled by Manfred J. Wasserman, curator of modern manuscripts, National Library of Medicine, is being set in type at Burlington, Vermont, according to OHA Vice President Charles T. Morrissey. It will cover all publications pertaining to oral history through December 31, 1970 and will thus have the added value of being published within less than a year after the terminal date for publications it contains. As in the first edition, the entries will be annotated. Those entries appearing in the earlier edition that were considered peripheral to oral history have been eliminated.

The bibliography had its origins in a vertical filing cabinet at the UCLA Oral History Program. The staff began collecting and filing articles about oral history in order to learn what others were thinking or doing in this area, as well as to train new personnel. Belle Feinberg of the UCLA staff (who subsequently organized her own oral history program at the University of Tel Aviv in Israel) then prepared an annotated bibliography of the articles on file. When the UCLA program decided to sponsor the First National Colloquium on Oral History, staff members Donald J. Schippers

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## ORAL HISTORY: IMPRESSIONS AND PROBLEMS BY A CONTEMPORARY PRACTITIONER

Paige E. Mulhollan

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I will assume that oral history as a technique and a resource is not unknown to you and that you are aware of the University of Texas Oral History Project concentrating on the life and times of Lyndon Johnson. Obviously a collection of this type, centered around the career of a man who served as a representative in the United States Congress from Texas for over 20 years, will be of preeminent interest and value to scholars of the future who attempt to interpret Texas's past.

It is easy to overwhelm you with statistics regarding the Johnson project. By this time, well into the third year of activity, nearly 600 individuals have recorded their memoirs on tape. Interviews total more than 1,200 hours of conversation, which will produce approximately 36,000 pages of typed transcripts. The participants already include dozens of cabinet officers or ex-cabinet officers, literally hundreds of assistant secretaries, countless congressmen, White House staffers, personal friends, ministers, local politicians from the Texas provinces, individuals in all walks of life whose careers touched in one way or another that of Lyndon Johnson. A more important consideration for future Texas historians, however, will be, "Of what use is all of this accumulation?"

I hope that those of us connected with the collection of oral history have not exaggerated its utility, but I am afraid that sometimes we have. For example, much of the information which you will find when the National Archives opens the Johnson collection is available elsewhere in traditional documentary form. While we made a conscientious effort to prevent interviewees from simply reading written material, we were not always aware when they did — and it was not always possible to prevent their contributing this type of material even when we did know. While it is impossible to put an accurate estimate on the amount of duplication we collected, I am afraid it will be a rather high proportion of the total. Fortunately for Texas historians there will be a smaller proportion of duplication on local material than on national material because it is less fully recorded in documentary form.

There will also be fewer secrets in the Johnson collection, and indeed in all of the national oral history collections, than some historians may fondly hope. There are just fewer secrets in American government and politics than those outside it usually imagine that there are. Someone in some media records publicly almost everything of importance which happens in Washington. Unfortunately the national media fail to penetrate equally into all areas of the country. It may be that information of this kind does not get wide circulation in Manhattan, Kansas or Fayetteville, Arkansas, or even Austin, Texas. But the eastern press — the so often maligned national media — will discover and print most information of substance about national affairs. The memoirs will definitely reveal anecdotes, recollections, and personal viewpoints not widely known, but I think you will find fewer secrets which genuinely affected specific action by the federal government than you might hope.

Information found in the oral history collections will also be suspect on at least two accounts. While we tried to insure candor by submitting to detailed FBI investigations and by allowing interviewees to place unlimited restrictions on the use of their material, there were still those who did not trust the project or who for other reasons did not respond candidly or fully to the interviewer's questions. Many simply re-

fused to believe that Lyndon Johnson did not intend to amuse himself in his retirement by reading their "confidential" memoirs. We also encountered a few who felt that material submitted to earlier oral history projects had promptly appeared in print. Other participants simply dissembled, and while we could discreetly indicate our disbelief, it was usually not practical to call the interviewee a liar. Consequently I sat and listened silently while individuals told what I knew, from other conversations and from outside research, were untruths or less than the full truth.

Some memoirs will rightly be suspect on the grounds of faulty memory. Interviewees called upon to answer detailed questions without reference to their written files simply recalled details erroneously. A high official in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, for example, told me an interesting anecdote which involved two individuals as well as President Johnson. When I edited the transcript I found that both the names he gave me were slightly wrong. And yet that donor showed considerably greater faith in the project and displayed a considerably keener memory than many of the subjects with whom I talked. Informally recalled chronology may even prove inaccurate more often than not. These circumstances suggest an important warning. Under the best of circumstances oral history testimony must not be used alone; it is intended to supplement, not to replace, traditional documentary research. It may provide a shortcut by directing researchers to the relevant documentation, but it will be a misuse of this testimony if it is used in place of the documentation.

In addition, interviewers simply have bad days. On some occasions I felt badly; on others the press of six or seven interviews with second-level officials within a two- or three-day period made it difficult to prepare adequately — either intellectually or psychologically — for the interview. At the end of a conversation with an important assistant secretary, for example, having exhausted my knowledge of his activities, I asked him as a pro forma courtesy if he had anything further to add, only to find that he had participated in some extremely important episode which had entirely escaped my notice. On too many occasions he might have chosen not to mention it at all.

Interviewees can also have bad days. Particularly during the early months of the Johnson project, our subjects still held jobs which were terribly demanding of their time. Constant interruptions during a conversation sometimes required frequent backing up and starting anew, or in some cases diverting the direction of the conversation into different channels. A more serious problem arose when an interviewee simply declined to allow us adequate time to explore his knowledge of the Johnson administration as thoroughly as historians will wish. This limitation may lead to a justifiable charge of superficiality, and this will apply particularly to individuals whose contact with the President was close and long-lasting. Moreover, I am afraid this problem will get worse as oral history projects proliferate — as both Mr. Parkinson and current practice lead us to believe they will. High-ranking individuals who served successive administrations will be called upon again and again by project after project and will become less and less willing to subject themselves to the kind of lengthy probing interviews which produce valuable historical data.

Finally, but certainly not least, the problem of information retrieval will be staggering. I cannot speak knowledgeably



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*This paper was presented at the 75th annual meeting of the Texas State Historical Association, Austin, Texas, March 11-13, 1971. Dr. Mulhollan is dean of the College of Arts and*

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*Sciences, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, and also served as an interviewer for the Lyndon B. Johnson Oral History Program.*

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regarding the manner in which archivists will likely solve this problem, though one can of course retreat facily into obscurity by referring vaguely to computers and advancing technology. Perhaps that is indeed the answer, but it is an answer which has not yet become practical. The fact that large national projects, such as the Johnson one, include great quantities of material not directly related to their central subject further complicates the problem. It will be necessary for scholars of the Eisenhower period, for example, to consult the Johnson, Kennedy, Truman, and Roosevelt collections as well as the Eisenhower memoirs and non-presidential collections such as the John Foster Dulles project at Princeton. Adequate cross-referencing is just one of the outstanding retrieval problems which experts are now beginning to consider.

Lest one believe from the foregoing that I emerged from my experiences in oral history as a cynical critic of the process, let me hasten now to add that the virtues of the technique largely outweigh its weaknesses, and in some perhaps unexpected areas.

These large national oral history collections will give historians a perspective on second-level bureaucrats and private citizens whose views and contributions historians have necessarily ignored before the rise of oral history. These people reveal a lot about themselves when discussing Lyndon Johnson, and historians can utilize this material to increase the depth of their own understanding of the period. Oral history projects will also make available anecdotal depth not in the documentation. We who collected it had to guard constantly against seeking titillation for its own sake on the grounds that titillation was not necessarily revelation. But historians in the 1990s who write about the Johnson years in Texas, if they possess any literary merit, will be able to write more entertaining history than those who preceded them. And that will make it better history as well. Oral history also emphasizes topics rarely emphasized. There will be a wealth of material not usually in the documents which will improve administrative history, to name but one example.

But most of all I would like to mention what seems to me the chief virtue of oral history, and that is its utility in building impressions as opposed to documenting specific facts. Now it may be this is stronger for me as a collector than it will be for the historian who uses the memoirs. When Arthur Schlesinger left government service he wrote a rather famous article on the writing of contemporary history in which he pointed out that the availability of manuscript collections for contemporary individuals demonstrated to scholars who had used them the inadequacy of documents by themselves as sources for the history of the 20th century. While the rise of the typewriter had vastly increased the flow of paper, he pointed out, the rise of the telephone had vastly reduced its importance. In short, bureaucrats produced far more documents but said less in them. One naturally wonders whether 19th century documents were really any better.

I think the user of oral history can begin to overcome this difficulty by saturating himself with the materials in a broad collection. In doing so he will build overwhelming impressions which will give him important insights into the subject or period. Without belaboring this in great detail, I can perhaps mention as examples some impressions of my own. Each of these I know would shape any hypothesis against which

I tested the documentation of the times.

First and foremost is a matter as simple as the power of the presidency. I do not know how one could document or demonstrate the reality of that power by appeal to a single piece of evidence, but in my opinion it is the greatest reality of the federal government, and you cannot extensively use the Johnson oral history collection nor, I am certain, any other presidential collection without strongly sharing this impression.

All sorts of concomitants flow from this reality. It means that personal access to the President gives tremendous power to individuals largely unknown and almost always without electoral responsibility. The power of the office overwhelms the best laid plans of administrators for clear chains of command and neat decision-making. If the boss has an opinion, that will likely be the decision, regardless of proliferating committees, subcommittees, boards, and agencies. A great many people in the federal government work full time at telling the President how he can do what he has already decided to do. Historians may want to use the oral evidence to test George Reedy's hypothesis that power isolates the presidency from dissent. I am certainly convinced that close friends of Lyndon Johnson who deplored his Vietnam policies feared throughout his presidency to tell him so. On the other hand many interviewees remember individuals close to the President, such as Joe Califano, standing before the presence and simply saying "No."

Another impression — which I prefaced earlier — is that few important secrets exist in American government. A scholar who conscientiously immerses himself in oral history memoirs will develop a healthy skepticism about the reliability of published memoirs and so called kiss-and-tell exposes. Books of this type provide the basis for much of contemporary analysis. Yet those who genuinely know where the bodies are buried seldom write about them. Those who do write usually know only one part of the full story. This does not mean that memoirists are necessarily charlatans. But a mass of oral testimony will disclose how unlikely it is that any single source could master all channels to the presidency and will have much to say about the genuine access of specific memoirists.

My list of impressions could continue on at greater length than we have here: the impression of extremely high ability in and around the upper regions of the American government, particularly in the White House; the impression of youth; the certainty that power is a stronger motivation than economics for most high-ranking bureaucrats; the certainty that there is a capital-E "Establishment," based on Ivy League background, New York and Washington law firms, and fortunate marriages. This may be an open Establishment, but men with homogeneous backgrounds perceive the world similarly — and differently from those outside the circle.

These are all general impressions, but specific ones will occur to the users of particular collections. Without any finality, and only as examples of what I mean, let me mention just a couple in connection with the Johnson collection. I think it may be possible, for example, for historians to conclude that Lyndon Johnson — far from being an accomplished wheeler-dealer politician — was in fact a non-politician once he assumed the presidency; and that the difficulties of his later administration stemmed as much from political errors

*Continued on page 5*



or omissions as from the Vietnam quagmire. It may be possible to conclude that his mastery of the Senate did not prepare him to master the House of Representatives and that his presumed congressional expertise was in fact only senatorial expertise — a quite different thing. I think it may also be a sustainable hypothesis that Lyndon Johnson was not Texas- or southwestern-oriented, or even rural-oriented, but was perhaps as truly a national politician as has occupied the presidency in this century. If Johnson must be labeled some kind of provincial, one might consider him a "Washington provincial" since he lived there pretty much full time from 1937 until 1969. Such an hypothesis would give the lie to any claim that he did not have the background to understand urban problems. It may still be true, however, that life in Washington produces its own special brand of provincial behavior.

Finally, if as Schlesinger has also suggested, the besetting sin of the historian has been to tidy up the past, to impute pattern to accident and purpose to fortuity, then I think that the conscientious user of the great oral history collections can avoid that sin and give instead adequate scope to the play of contingency, change, ignorance, and sheer stupidity. If this is true for those who interpret the Johnson years for Texas and the nation, then the labor and expense of collecting this testimony will have served man well.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

The Executive Council has decided that this year the Oral History Association will not issue the proceedings of its annual colloquium, held last year at Asilomar, California. In lieu of this publication OHA members will receive the volume, *A Bibliography on Oral History*. The bibliography is expected to be ready by mid-September.

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 \$10 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.

### NEW EDITION OF THE ORAL HISTORY BIBLIOGRAPHY

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and Adelaide G. Tusler searched the literature for additional articles and prepared an annotated list which was distributed to participants at the colloquium, asking them to supply additional leads. These were then combined, along with further research by Schippers and Tusler, into *A Bibliography on Oral History* that appeared in 1967 as Oral History Association, Miscellaneous Publications No. 1. Because of the immediate and widespread demand for the publication, a second printing with additions was issued in 1969. The supply has been exhausted for over a year now, and the new, up-to-date and more comprehensive survey of the literature of oral history will be welcome indeed.

The new revised edition will be distributed to all OHA members at no extra charge. The price for nonmembers has not been determined.

The directory also reveals that American oral history (1971) encompasses a wide range of topics. Tulane University has a project on New Orleans jazz. Wayne State University and the University of Michigan share one on the United Auto Workers. The Civil Rights Documentation Project in Washington, D.C., run by black scholars, has 1,500 hours of taped interviews with those who have been active on the civil rights front. The American Psychiatric Association has been interviewing its leaders. The Archives of American Art has reached 1,200 artists, collectors, dealers and museum personnel. There are oral history projects on every recent presidential administration, beginning with that of Herbert Hoover.

Other Americans who have been the subject of oral history projects include former Chief Justice Earl Warren (University of California, Berkeley); Adlai Stevenson and Robert A. Taft (Columbia); John Foster Dulles (Princeton); Christian A. Herter (Harvard); Charles Ives (Yale); General George C. Marshall (George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Va.); and Martin Luther King (Martin Luther King Center, Atlanta). Colonial Williamsburg has a project on its own restoration. The University of Bridgeport has one on that city's famous Socialist mayor, Jasper McLevy. Oral history projects by and about the American Indian are to be found at the universities of Arizona, Florida, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Utah, all of them underwritten by the Doris Duke Foundation. And yet this is just a meager sampling of the new and relatively untapped research material uncovered by this latest oral history census.

No member of OHA can afford to be without a copy of the new directory. Scholars, researchers, and libraries will find it an indispensable reference aid. Members can perform a real service to scholarship by bringing it to the attention of colleagues who might not otherwise be aware of its existence. Copies of the directory can now be ordered from the Oral History Association, Box 20, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York 10027. OHA members can order at the special membership rate of \$1.50 per copy. The rate for nonmembers is \$4.00 per copy. **An Order Form is Enclosed** with this issue of the Newsletter.

### Oral History Association Newsletter

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The editors invite contributions in the form of articles or news items related to any aspect of the field of oral history.



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## ORAL HISTORY ON THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

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The use of oral history interviews for documenting the history of colleges and universities appears to be gaining support. Charles T. Morrissey outlines what some academic institutions have already accomplished with oral history programs and what opportunities lie ahead, in an article entitled "Oral History on Campus: Recording Changes in Higher Education," published in the *Dartmouth College Library Bulletin* for April, 1971 (Volume XI, No. 2).

Walter Rundell, Jr., chairman of the Department of History at Iowa State University, describes oral history on his campus in "Personal Data from University Archives," an article in *The American Archivist* for April, 1971 (Volume 34, No. 2). "Speaking from the standpoint of a history professor and researcher," Rundell writes, "I trust that university archivists are always alert to significant campus events. For instance, something highly important may be happening which, because of its nature, would not be represented in routinely collected records.

A case in point was the nationwide campus unrest in the wake of the Kent State University and Jackson State College massacres last May. Many institutions of higher learning experienced

upheavals of unprecedented dimensions, but how much of this will be systematically reflected in university archives? I am happy to report that the alert archivist at Iowa State University, Stanley Yates, immediately recognized the opportunity to document the activities on our campus with a series of taped interviews. Perhaps his doctoral training in the history of the French Revolution sensitized him to the potentially explosive nature of the campus agitation. In any event he interviewed key faculty members, administrators, and leaders of the student protest, getting their firsthand reactions to the academic upheaval during those troubled days. Not all oral history projects of university archives will be that dramatic, nor do we hope them to be; but archivists must be aware of the possibilities of supplementing textual records of campus activities with verbal accounts for in many cases the latter type of documentation (with all its evidential limitations) is the only kind obtainable."

### THE BINGHAMPTON EXPERIENCE

In January of 1971, State University of New York at Binghamton initiated

an oral history study of its 25 years of existence. Since then William Langlois, a 1971 graduate of SUNY-Binghamton, has collected 50 hours of taped interviews. In the next month about 20 more hours of interviews will be added to the collection. During this period, Mr. Langlois has traveled in New York and nearby states to interview members of the early faculty, administration, staff, and students of the university. Private individuals in the surrounding areas have also been interviewed to complete the story of the development of the university. Presently, the tapes are being transcribed and prepared for inclusion in a written history of the university.

An outgrowth of the Oral History Project has been the movement towards an Archive of Oral Tradition to serve several programs other than oral history, such as: regional and local history, folklore and ethnomusicology. Initial plans are to bring together about 3,000 tapes now stored at various locations in the university, and to provide an area for transcription and work on tape transcripts. It is felt that these disciplines can complement each other and provide a large amount of coordinated material for researchers.

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