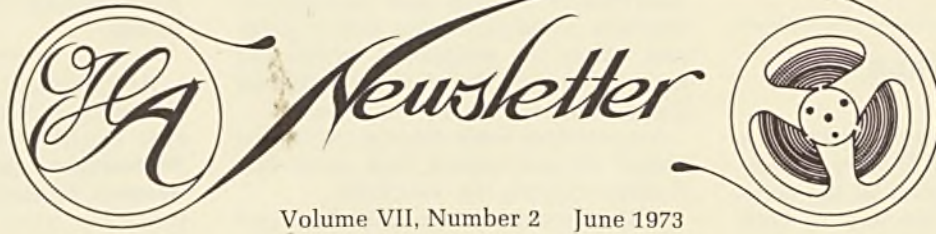


ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION



Volume VII, Number 2 June 1973



A home in Rapid City, South Dakota, that suffered the full brunt of the flood waters.



The Rapid City business district after a week of clearing operations.

SOUTH DAKOTA PROJECT PRESERVES FLOOD EXPERIENCES

by Stephen R. Ward

The flood that hit the Black Hills in western South Dakota on the night of June 10-11, 1972, was the state's greatest natural disaster. It destroyed a wide swath of residential and commercial Rapid City along Rapid Creek, normally a peaceful stream. In other small towns, such as Keystone and Blackhawk, similar creeks washed businesses, campsites and homes away with remarkable suddenness. In all, over 230 people lost their lives in these waters, and millions of dollars were lost through property destruction.

In the darkness and rain that covered the area on that night, countless stories of dramatic escapes were played out. The toll of the flood would be tallied in a matter-of-fact manner, but the human factor was only partially touched by media reporters who rushed to the scene. Because the disaster was so significant, it seemed logical that we should take the South Dakota Oral His-

tory Project into the scene of the flood.

The South Dakota Oral History Project is a joint project of the University of South Dakota and the State Historical Society under the direction of Joseph Cash, Duke Research Professor at the university. The project was funded by the state legislature in 1970 and, with increased annual funds, now has developed a collection of over 650 tapes. As with many state projects, the major emphasis is placed upon the history of the state through interviews with older citizens. The project has

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On page 5: At the halfway point in his presidency, John E. Wickman assesses the OHA's contacts with projects abroad and professional societies at home.

kept abreast of contemporary events, however, and has conducted interviews on subjects such as educational issues, a strike at the Homestake Mines, and political developments of the recent past. The interviewers hired by the project were, therefore, accustomed to the type of interviewing necessary in this special project.

A group of four interviewers met in Rapid City on June 20. All were familiar with the Black Hills and Rapid City, and one of them, Earl Hausle, a faculty member at the School of Mines in Rapid City, was also a city councilman. In preparation for the interviews, maps of the flood plain and surrounding area were obtained, as well as a file of all flood victims who had applied for federal or state aid. Rapid City was sectioned off for interview purposes, and a randomly selected list of names was developed for informants to contact.

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NEWS

OHA ASSISTS BOWKER ON DIRECTORY

The R. R. Bowker Company has given a \$750 grant to the Oral History Association for its participation in the company's forthcoming *Directory of Oral History Collections*. The Executive Council invites the cooperation of the OHA membership in the project. Members will receive a 15 percent discount when ordering copies through the Association.

COLUMBIA, UC EXTENSION OFFER OH COURSES

Credit courses in oral history will be offered by Columbia University this summer, and by the University of California Extension in the fall quarter.

The Columbia course will be limited to twenty, with preference given to scholars planning to initiate their own projects, and will offer credit applicable in either the School of Library Service or the Department of History.

The intensive four-week course will begin July 7 and will include lectures and seminars on the various phases of oral history. Enrollees will be given the option of conducting field interviews, which will be transcribed and critiqued, or studying problems of processing, cataloging, and administration.

Louis M. Starr, director of the Columbia Oral History Research Office, and Associate Director Elizabeth B. Mason will conduct the course.

At San Francisco, an introduction to oral history will be presented by Miriam Feingold of the Regional Oral History Office of the University of California, Berkeley. Scheduled for Tuesday evenings from September 18 to December 4, the course will follow a lecture-seminar format, along with readings in the literature of oral history.

Methods of historical research, interviewing, transcribing, editing, and indexing will be explored; and students will design and conduct individual and team projects.

ST. LOUIS TEACHERS' STRIKE

Tape-recorded interviews documenting the historic strike this year of St. Louis teachers have been added to the Oral History Program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

The four-week strike, January 22 to February 20, was called by a coalition of the St. Louis Teacher Association (NEA) and Local 420 of the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO) against the St. Louis Board of Education. It was the first teachers' strike in the history of the city.

The oral history project was carried

out by UMSL faculty and students who interviewed striking and non-striking teachers while the strike was in progress. After the settlement, union and association officials, administrators and board members were interviewed.

Manuscripts were contributed by the board, the association, and Local 420. A daily clipping file was kept.

All manuscripts, tape recordings and typescripts are available for use in the Urban and Industrial Manuscripts Collection, Thomas Jefferson Library, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

'AURAL' HISTORIANS PLAN ASSOCIATION

At the invitation of the Committee for an Aural History Association of British Columbia, educators, journalists, sound producers, and academic researchers met June 2 at the University of British Columbia to establish a network of communication among persons interested in aural history. "Aural history" refers to any records in sound that should be preserved, not merely oral history, though it is a major concern.

Panels, presentations, and exhibits highlighted the daylong meeting, which also featured speakers representing programs from the University of British Columbia, the Public Archives of Canada, and Reynoldston Research and Studies.

Among the goals of the organization are the establishment of an archive, a permanent collecting and production unit, and an association of individuals and organizations to link the many aspects of the discipline.

FOLK TAPES DUPLICATED

Professor Edward D. ("Sandy") Ives of the University of Maine has allowed the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress to duplicate about 100 hours of tape he recorded in Maine and the maritime provinces of Canada between 1956 and 1970.

Alan A. Jabbour, head of the archive, reported in the *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* of January, 1973, that the collection includes long interviews with information about the singing tradition of the area and especially the traditional singers who composed many of the locally famous songs.

ACHESON PAPERS

Tape recordings and transcripts of a discussion group led by Secretary of State Dean Acheson in 1953 and 1954 are among his papers that will become part of the Harry S. Truman Library.

The discussions, which took place in Princeton, New Jersey, centered on the conduct of foreign policy and included

such participants as Paul Nitze, Averell Harriman, Dean Rusk, and Philip Jessup.

An interview on the subject of abortion with crusader Harriet Pilpel is the first experiment in oral history of the **Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America**, Cambridge. The interview was conducted by Eleanor Jackson Piel.

The **Center for History of Physics**, American Institute of Physics, has published in its May newsletter a list of initial and continuing oral history interviews for the past six months. After processing, the final transcripts and relevant documentary materials will be deposited in the Center's Niels Bohr Library.

GRANTS

ROHO TO DOCUMENT NATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTY

The history of the National Women's Party will be documented by the Regional Oral History Office of the University of California, Berkeley, thanks to a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. Memoirs of leaders in the women's rights movement will be recorded, studying their activist campaigns for woman suffrage and the fifty-year struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment now before the states for ratification.

Major figures in the series are Alice Paul, head of the National Women's Party since 1913; Mabel Vernon, a leading organizer and chairman of the National Women's Party; and Sara Bard Field, a prominent advocate of woman suffrage.

Albert Lepawsky, professor of political science at UC Berkeley, will serve as principal investigator, aided by Judith Blake Davis, advisor for the project and professor in the Graduate School of Public Policy. Malca Chall is project director. Some interviewing of California suffragists will be conducted

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Oral History Association Newsletter

Published quarterly by the Oral History Association, Inc., a nonprofit, international organization of institutions and individuals interested in advancing the practice and use of oral history.

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Bernard Galm, Editor
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BOOK REVIEW:

Elitelore

James W. Wilkie. Los Angeles: Latin American Center, University of California, 1973. 87pp. \$3.25.

Reviewed by Louis C. De Armond

Professor Wilkie's "elitelore," coined as a variant from "folklore," represents a body of lore—a baggage of "beliefs, sayings, myths, and legends about themselves (the elite) and about their country's history. . . ." As folklore is seldom set down in written form except as someone from outside the group intervenes, so elitelore is seldom put on paper by the elite themselves because they "tend to take for granted many of their own assumptions" to such a degree that they may not even be aware that they act under these operative assumptions.

Basing his assertion on insights derived from recording oral history in Mexico and, more recently, in Bolivia and other parts of Latin America, Wilkie suggests that oral history "offers methodology which is emerging to capture this elitelore." The interviewing techniques used by Wilkie tend "to deal with ideas rather than easily observed actions," thus serving to disclose the information gaps, the self-deceptions, and the myth-constructs of the elite as no other approach may be able to do.

A major problem is that of developing data comparability, given the very large number of variables that can come into play. Moreover, the interviewer may find himself being used by the person interviewed for his own ends. No matter; for, as Wilkie points out, as the information base expands, it may prove possible to discern "types of response, ways of thinking, patterns of self-justification, and methods of self-deception." Some of the methodology of the behaviorists might ultimately be applicable.

The methodological postulates developed by Wilkie can be applied to other groups. In a brief appended essay, he suggests "The Study of Popularlore" as something more akin

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to elitelore than is folklore. Quite aside from their own elite-motivations, leaders may be conditioned, Wilkie notes, by the frequent fact that "bureaucracies do not carry out or implement orders." It would seem important, therefore, to explore the unexpressed "bureaucratlore."

By extension, the oral approach can constitute a useful investigative technique in any research enterprise. I am sure Professor Wilkie would agree that this is so; he has simply applied a scale of priorities by beginning with the political elite of Latin America and, more particularly, in Mexico. If resources are limited, they must be used where the greatest return is promised. Wilkie points out that "most of Mexico's leaders of the twentieth century remain unrecorded. Clearly oral history has only barely gotten underway in Mexico." This being so, the interviewing capacity ought to be enlarged as rapidly as possible.

Whether or not investigators can identify elements idiosyncratic of a group such as the political elite remains moot until much more data are amassed. Hence the major need would seem to be acceleration of the rate at which the raw material of oral history is gathered and made available. Wilkie is quite correct in pointing out that interviews cannot be forced into a common mold, but he does also suggest the need of a checklist. Why, then, cannot this checklist be expanded to constitute a rather detailed model of elements to be covered in any interview? This, together with the use of other practices suggested by Wilkie in his "Alternative Views . . ."^{*} and combined with adequate homework before one initiates any interview, could serve to accelerate the advent of data comparability.

Academicians of any stamp and even language-competent laymen can be useful, while even brief stays in Mexico may be enough to conduct interview(s), with the time-consuming transcription following after one has left the field site.

A unique advantage of the oral history approach is that even if the interviewer is inexperienced or inept and the resultant interview is incomplete or distorted, the tape still possesses an essential honesty and utility and constitutes a step toward testing Professor Wilkie's theories.

^{*}"Alternative Views in History: Historical Statistics and Oral History" in *Research in Mexican History*. Edited by Richard E. Greenleaf and Michael C. Meyers. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973.

GRANTS *Continued from page 2*

in cooperation with Sherna Gluck of the Feminist History Research Project, Venice, California.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The American experience of 250 survivors of the Nazi holocaust will be recorded by the American Jewish Committee under a grant of more than \$84,000. The two-year program, entitled "A Study of American Pluralism Through Oral Histories of Holocaust Survivors," will be collected by the committee's William E. Wiener Oral History Library.

Louis G. Cowan, director of special programs at the Graduate School of Journalism of Columbia University and chairman of the Wiener Library, will direct the program.

Interviewers for the project will be fluent in Yiddish, German, and Russian, and will be familiar with many aspects of the holocaust. Subjects will be sought throughout the country.

MULTIRACIAL STUDY AT DUKE

A \$256,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation will enable Duke University to undertake a five-year program in multiracial oral history.

Based on the premise that our nation's multiracial past can be understood only through the full use of multiracial sources, the program will seek to provide new understanding of historical problems such as disenfranchisement and desegregation, while developing a training program in oral research to be instituted at other universities through the work of Duke graduates.

Most of the grant will be allocated to fellowships for ten graduate students who will develop oral sources, particularly within the black community, to provide new perspectives on twentieth-century race relations.

The program will be directed by Lawrence Goodwyn, assisted by William Chafe.

WORKSHOPS

INSTITUTE OFFERS OH TRAINING

"Oral History: Techniques and Applications" will be the theme of the second annual American Studies Institute at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin, July 30 to August 10.

John Neuenschwander, assistant professor of history at the college, is in charge of the activities. Visiting faculty will be Samuel Hand, professor of history at the University of Vermont and chairman of the OHA Publications Committee, and Charles T. Morrissey, director of the Ford Foundation Oral History Project and OHA past president.

Funded by a grant from the Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wisconsin, the institute will offer secondary school-teachers of American history, American studies, English-social studies, or

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PEOPLE & PROJECTS

“BRINGING THE PAST FULL CIRCLE...”

by Lawrence Weschler

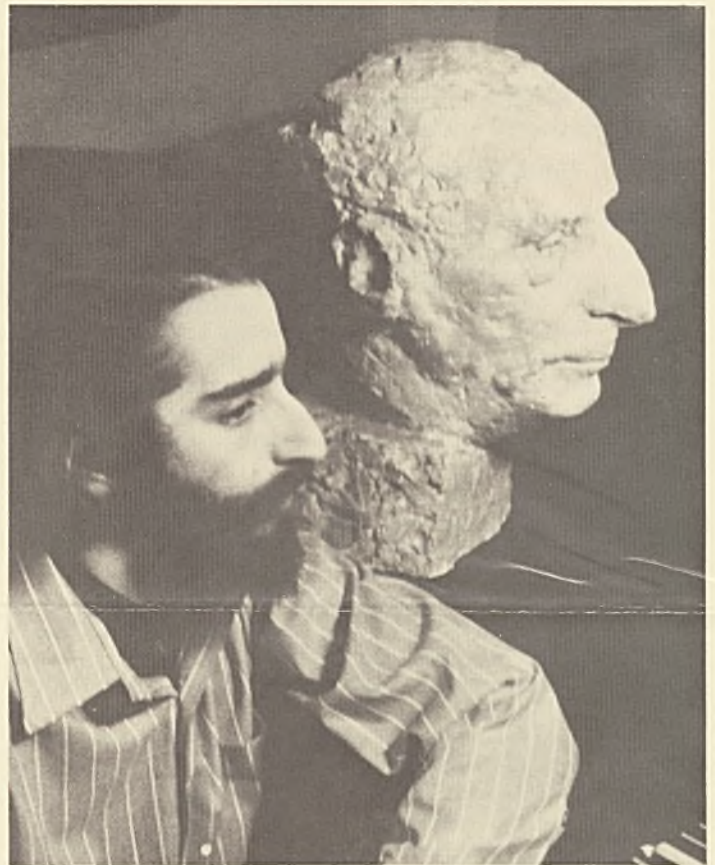
My grandfather, in the years before his death in 1964, would sometimes refer wistfully to himself as “the world’s most forgotten composer;” his melancholy joke betrayed a painful validity. Ernst Toch had indeed ranked as one of the foremost musicians in the modernist vanguard within Germany during the twenties; but his self-imposed exile in 1933 (he was a Jew) rent him from his audience, and though he finally resettled in Southern California, his reputation was gradually eclipsed, this despite the continuing power of his creativity.

I had never really gotten to know Ernst while he lived — my first twelve years, his last twelve, formed the period of his greatest productivity (yielding seven symphonies, an opera, and countless shorter works), and he no doubt had the good, if ambivalent, sense to shield himself from the chaotic disruptions of his grandchildren. Soon after our arrival for a visit, he would inevitably retreat to his study.

So I never really got to know Ernst until long after his death, during the summer of 1971, which I spent living with my grandmother, Lilly Toch, in her Santa Monica home, helping her to organize materials for the newly formed Toch Archive at UCLA. During that summer, Lilly had undertaken the rigorous discipline of an extended oral history interview for the UCLA Oral History Program. All week long she would prepare for her two-hour sessions, meticulously retracing the span of her life with Ernst. Each week, she descended into the study carrying a folder bulging with notes, and I used to tease her by taping a little sign on the study door: “In Surgery.” Lilly really was opening her heart for those interviews, reliving her entire life with Ernst, emptying herself into those tapes. The project eventually lasted almost a year, and within two weeks of the last interview, her task completed, my grandmother passed away, on April 19, 1972.

In the weeks after her death, I read through the 850-page transcript of the interview. The story, offering an intimate cultural history of this century, was itself compelling; but for me, reading those pages at that moment was an especially haunting experience. As the dates of the sessions relentlessly approached April 1972, the dates discussed in the interviews swept quickly toward October 1964. It was like a marriage. Turning the last page, on which Lilly told of Ernst’s last note to her, I felt a warm affirmation, as though Lilly’s passing veiled a more fundamental reunion.

While reading through Lilly’s magnum opus, I began to conceive a small project of my own. I decided to attempt a series of interviews with people who knew Ernst and Lilly at various times during their lives, individuals whose names bobbed up periodically in Lilly’s manuscript. The metaphor of “holograph photography” suggested itself, the process by which a three-dimensional image is conceived through overlapping exposures at multiple angles. Maybe these supplementary interviews would serve to deepen the vast perspectives offered by Lilly’s effort. I hoped to emerge with a matrix of cross-references, each person delving on his impressions of everyone else.



Lawrence Weschler poses beside a bust of his grandfather, the late composer Ernst Toch.

Thanks to the generous funding provided by a former Toch student, I was able to commence my project. One year later, as I write, we have completed over 25 interviews, and several others are pending. I found that my interviewing sessions sometimes proved dynamic fulfillments of the relationship they were intended to probe. Often friends who felt themselves somehow unresolved in their relationship with Ernst and Lilly were able to work through some of their dilemmas during their hours with the grandson. The interview then became almost a therapy, bringing the past full circle in order to heal it.

This project was in a fundamental sense a journey of self-discovery. As an ongoing ideal, the interviewer should naturally refrain from imposing his own person or interpretations on the course of the interview. But these interviews often concerned the very genesis of my person and obliquely the context of my interpretations: the subject/object dichotomy was continually disintegrating. One afternoon, for example, a fine woman whose recollections I was taping — a longtime friend of the Tochs — suddenly requested that I turn off the recorder, a smile forming over her gentle face. Unwillingly I disengaged the machine. She leaned over and whispered in my ear: “I believe your mother was conceived in my house.”

I would like to think that my peculiar status as an interviewer dislodged certain kinds of response which a more objective approach might have missed. The transcripts of these interviews are now lodged in the Toch Archive.

Lawrence Weschler is a student at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the recipient of a UC President's Undergraduate Fellowship

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To the Members of the Oral History Association:

As I reach the halfway point of my presidency of the Oral History Association, I feel impelled to make several observations, and to issue a "status report" to each one of you. I indicated in my luncheon speech at Austin, Texas, in November, that there were two things I wanted to see happen this year for the Association: an increase in our contact with oral history programs outside the United States, and an increase in our representation before other professional associations to familiarize scholars with the use of the products of oral history research.

As you will have noted from recent issues of the *Newsletter*, there has been more contact with oral history projects abroad both on the part of the Association and by individual members. My own personal contribution to that effort was to take three weeks of my annual vacation time, and raise the money through private sources, for a lecture tour that took me to the University of Glasgow, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Leicester, and the University of Turku in Finland. At each one of these places I gave lectures to students and faculty on oral history and consulted with persons interested in oral history. I found, from this firsthand contact, an intense interest in oral history. There are all kinds of projects going on that are largely unreported, and I hope that the Association will eventually move in the direction of either doing its own international directory or rendering encouragement for the private establishment of such a directory. In all countries I visited I tendered invitations to membership in the Oral History Association.

On the matter of contact with professional societies, I am happy to report that the officers of the Oral History Association have been extremely successful in setting up appearances in which they have represented the Association at professional meetings of historians, political scientists, and public administrators. The reports of these appearances have been, and will be, in the *Newsletter*. We have continued our

scheduling on into 1974. Through this activity we have encouraged scholars to be more aware of what the members of our Association have done and are doing to assist them in their research activity.

My one final observation from the halfway point in this presidential year has to do with the enormous amount of volunteer effort and *esprit de corps* which holds the Association together. Each time I have had to call upon a former officer, present officer, or member of the Association for some task, the response has always been "when" and "how," not "if" or "maybe."

There have been many instances when I felt we were asking too much of ourselves, and each other, in keeping this Association alive and vital. Our publications program, *Newsletter*, and now the bimonthly column in *History News* all are intensifying our problems of correspondence and communications. Most of these problems could be solved with a paid secretariat.

I hope that any member of the Association who is interested in locating institutional support of the secretariat of the Association will explore this question with his institution and will feel free to send to the officers of the Association for their consideration a proposal from such institutions. Both the Organization of American Historians and the Western History Association, to mention only two groups, function on the basis of a paid secretariat with heavy contributions from supporting institutions. I see no reason why our Oral History Association cannot do the same, but it is going to require initiative, imagination, and drive on the part of those individual members who would be interested in improving how the Association functions.

I hope that each of you will make a special effort to come to the 1973 colloquium, November 1-4, Hotel Thayer, West Point, New York. I will look forward to seeing you there.

JOHN E. WICKMAN, *President*
Oral History Association

1973 COLLOQUIUM—NOVEMBER 1-4—WEST POINT, NEW YORK

The OHA colloquium will be held this year at the Hotel Thayer at West Point, New York. It will begin on the afternoon of Friday, November 2, and end after lunch on Sunday, November 4. The colloquium will be preceded, on November 1 and 2, by a workshop.

In organizing the colloquium sessions this year, John Stewart, program chairman, and the officers and Executive Council of the OHA are placing greater emphasis on the value of attracting scholars and researchers who are not directly involved in the production of recorded interviews but who are concerned with the quality of the products being created and the procedures and policies governing their use. Although there is obviously a great deal of profit to be gained by having oral historians meet to discuss among themselves matters of common concern, there is also an ever-present danger that the vision of these people might become unduly narrowed if they do not, on occasion, have the opportunity to exchange ideas and thoughts with people

who have not regularly attended meetings of the Oral History Association.

Related to the goal of including non-oral historians in the colloquium discussions is the stress to be given this year on the evaluation of interviews and interviewing programs. There are plans, for example, to set aside a room at the hotel where people can go and listen to tapes and read transcripts from various projects and then (anonymously) write down their comments.

Colloquium participants will have an opportunity to visit the nearby Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and home and, of course, tour the facilities and grounds of the U.S. Military Academy. To supplement these activities, sessions are being planned on oral history and the New Deal and interviewing programs being conducted by the military services.

A schedule of colloquium sessions, and other information about the meeting, will be mailed soon to OHA members. The cost, as in the past, will be \$100.

broad fields social studies the opportunity to become acquainted with the methods and education possibilities of oral history. Scholarships covering instruction, room, board, and book allowance will be awarded to twenty selected teachers.

STATE GROUPS SPONSOR IDAHO MEETING

History professors, librarians, and members of local historical societies in the state of Idaho met June 8 and 9 in Boise, Idaho, for a statewide conference on oral history.

Jointly sponsored by the Idaho State Bicentennial Commission and the Idaho State Historical Society, the gathering was called by Diane Alters, oral history project coordinator for the commission.

OHA President John Wickman was the principal speaker. Workshop topics included legal questions, problems of starting and financing a program, and interviewing techniques. Oral history in small towns and rural areas, its uses in libraries and classrooms, and its relation to folklore were discussed in group and panel sessions.

The Idaho State Bicentennial Commission has become an information center for oral history in the state of Idaho in addition to developing its own oral history projects and central tape library.

Nevada librarians and teachers of local history were instructed in the uses of oral history by Amelia Fry, Regional Oral History Office, UC Berkeley, as part of a two-day workshop, "Resources for Nevada History," May 17-18 at the **University of Nevada, Reno**.

The workshop, sponsored by the University of Nevada, Reno, Library Staff Association, and the Nevada State Historical Society, also included sessions on the identification of historical sources in communities and the care of ephemera.

The **Chenango County Historical Society**, a member of the Regional Conference of Historical Agencies, hosted a six-county oral history workshop April 28 in Norwich, New York.

A one-day conference on oral history was held May 5 in Edinburgh, Scotland, under the auspices of the Department of Educational Studies, the Department of History and Economic History, and the School of Scottish Studies of the **University of Edinburgh**.

Dr. Paul Thompson of the University of Essex, England, editor of the British publication, *Oral History*, presented the first paper.

A daylong statewide Conference on Oral History, April 11, sponsored by the **Maryland Historical Society**, drew sixty-nine registrants.

The conference was preceded by a reception for interviewees of the society's Oral History Collection and volunteers who conducted the interviews.

A workshop on oral history was presented under the guidance of David Rosenblatt at the annual meeting of the **Society of Ohio Archivists** May 19.

The Department of History at **Mars Hill College**, Mars Hill, North Carolina, sponsored the first Appalachian Oral History Workshop April 13-14, financed in part by a grant from the Appalachian Consortium. Among the more than fifty participants were students and educators, also Cherokee tribal officials and representatives from the Girl Scouts, National Park Service, Forest Service, and church organizations. They were introduced to oral history methods by the workshop staff and heard B. Eliot Wigginton speak on oral history as a teaching tool in secondary education — the special emphasis of the two-day meeting.

PANELS

MEDICAL HISTORIANS DISCUSS ORAL HISTORY

"Oral History in the Medical Sciences" was the topic of a May 4 symposium of the American Association for History of Medicine at its meeting in Cincinnati. Moderator was Professor James Harvey Young of Emory University; speakers were Dr. Peter D. Olch of the National Library of Medicine, Professor Saul Benison of the University of Cincinnati, Charles T. Morrissey of the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, and Joseph P. Mingioli of the National Medical Audiovisual Center of the National Library of Medicine.

Mingioli described the series of videotaped interviews, entitled "Great Men of Medicine," jointly sponsored by the National Library of Medicine/National Medical Audiovisual Center and Alpha Omega Alpha, medical honor society. Prominent physicians and scientists in contemporary medicine are the subject of the AOA-NMAC series,

directed primarily to a medical school audience. The one-hour videotaped interviews (most in color) provide an intimate view of individuals whose contributions are closely related to the student's educational program.

Health science institutions can obtain copies of the interviews by providing the Audiovisual Center with blank videotapes.

On May 4, Samuel Proctor represented the University of Florida Southeast Indian Oral History Project in a discussion, "Historic Indians of Florida and Southeastern Georgia," at the **Society for American Archaeology** meeting in San Francisco.

The **New England Archives Association** heard a panel on "The Value of Oral History" at its inaugural meeting April 7 at Bentley College, Waltham, Massachusetts. Panelists were John F. Stewart, Robert F. Brown, Mary Ann Garrigan, and Matthew J. Smith.

"Collecting History — The Use of Oral History" was discussed May 19 at the Detroit meeting of the **American Jewish Historical Society**. Hyman Safran of the Institute for Jewish Life introduced Samuel Proctor who addressed the topic.

John Wickman spoke on "Oral History and the Second World War" at a conference on the history of World War II, held June 15-16 at the **National Archives** in Washington, D.C.

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Oral history manuscripts are eligible for the **1974 James Mooney Award** of the **Southern Anthropological Society**. The annual prize, in the amount of \$1,000, is given to the book-length manuscript that best describes and interprets the people or culture of a distinctive New World population.

Information may be obtained from Charles Hudson, Chairman, SAS Awards Committee, Department of Anthropology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30601. Both the award manuscript and the runner-up will be accepted for publication by the University of Tennessee Press. Deadline for submissions is December 31, 1973.

CANADIAN 'DISCOVERS' PACIFIC ISLANDS

by Jim Boutillier

I first became involved in collecting oral history material, relating to the Western Pacific, when I took up an appointment at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji in 1969. My work in oral history extended over the following two and one-half years and a subsequent eleven-week field trip through Oceania.

It was obvious, even to a newcomer, that there was an immense amount of work to be done in the field of oral history in the Western Pacific, and that it had to be done quickly. I outlined the nature of the problem in a letter written in 1972 (after I had left Fiji) to one of my informants, a retired Colonial Officer living in Australia: "Oral history is particularly important in an area like the Solomon Islands where so much history lingers in the minds of men and is never written down. The death of someone like F. E. Johnson, the retired Treasurer for the Protectorate, reaffirms the need for oral history and the necessity to secure taped material now without a moment's delay. . . . We really need an organization like the Australian National University to establish an Oral History Programme for the Pacific before the present generation of Pacific veterans, the last with their roots deep in the colonial past, dies out."

My comments, of course, applied with equal validity to elderly Pacific Islanders, though with Pacific Islanders the problem is somewhat different. The European community in the Western Pacific is very small and thus the number of opportunities to talk to old-timers is limited. The island community, on the other hand, is much larger, but islanders, as a rule, do not seem to live as long as Europeans in the tropics. Moreover, working as I was in a Melanesian area, which encompasses Fiji and the Solomon Islands, I was confronted with language problems which were well nigh insuperable. There are approximately seventy languages and dialects in the Solomon Islands, with a population of approximately 160,000.



John Kari (right), headman of the villages of Baniata and Hopongo on Rendova Island, recounts to Jim Boutillier his involvement in the rescue operations of John F. Kennedy and the PT-109 crew.

There is, of course, that imprecise *lingua franca*, pidgin English, to which one can resort, but many of the elderly islanders are not fluent in pidgin and for the researcher to develop a fluency in pidgin can be a major undertaking.

My first exercise in oral history, in September 1969, was a five and one-half hour taped interview with Major Donald G. Kennedy, who had spent over fifty years in the Pacific as a schoolteacher, radio operator, district officer, linguist, coast watcher extraordinary during World War II, sheep farmer, intelligence operative, and recluse. Though he lived only forty miles from the university in Fiji, it took me nine days to travel the distance across the sea and through the jungle. That experience highlighted one of the most significant problems of oral history work in the Western Pacific, the difficulty of travel. Another problem arose when I arrived. There was no electricity, and naturally, when Kennedy's reminiscences exhausted my tape supply, there were not extra tapes to be had.

I became interested, subsequently, in the Hennings, one of the great trader-planter families of Fiji in the last quar-

ter of the nineteenth century. I travelled throughout the Fiji group interviewing members of the family and corroborating their evidence with taped material from friends and acquaintances; a process which, in turn, threw a significant amount of light on the planter community in Fiji and the old capital of Levuka.

My main interest in the past three years, however, has been the Solomon Islands. I have conducted upwards of fifty interviews, using a tape recorder and/or detailed notes, with planters, traders, missionaries, and government officials. All of my interviews in Fiji and the Solomons have been conducted in English. The quality of the sound on some of the tapes is indifferent—in view of the acoustically unsuitable conditions under which many of the interviews were held—but is adequate for transcription. Transcription of tapes relating to the Pacific is particularly difficult and time-consuming due to the number of places and activities with island names.

Dr. Boutillier is a member of the Department of History of Royal Roads Military College, Victoria, British Columbia

PANELS Continued from page 6

A session entitled "Answers Without Questions: An Evaluation and Critique of Oral History" was offered April 13 at the convention of the **Organization of American Historians**. Alice Kessler Harris was the chairperson and other

discussants were Ronald J. Grele, Dennis Tedlock, Saul Benison, and Jay Vansina.

The Western North Carolina Historical Association has established an oral history committee, William J. Weaver,

Jr., as chairman, to forward the oral history movement in western North Carolina. Mr. Weaver, assisted by his daughter Nancy, also gave a presentation on oral history to the Southeast Regional Council meeting of the **Girl Scouts of the USA**, April 26, in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

PEOPLE & PROJECTS

ORAL HISTORY 'DOWN UNDER'

by Jean Holmes

The Australian form of government is a cabinet system, and its public officials belong to a career service. The oral history technique is particularly well suited to the study of administrative history in Australia, for it can preserve the wealth of knowledge and insight of senior officials that might otherwise go unrecorded.

The Victorian branch of the Royal Institute of Public Administration, in conjunction with the Department of Political Science of the University of Melbourne, sponsored a pilot oral history project in 1972, interviewing public servants and political figures who would be retiring that year.

These included a number of officers whose careers spanned the era from the 1930s, when Australia was still a dependent member of the British Empire, to the 1970s, when it stands in the world community as a small but wealthy and independent nation. Oral history seemed the most satisfactory means of recording their articulate, though by no means literary, expressions of the role of government during this period in Australian administrative history.

For geographical simplicity, the initial project operation was confined to the southern state of Victoria. Volunteers from the Royal Institute of Public Administration were enlisted for the actual interviewing, and twelve members with varied public service backgrounds were trained under the direction of Dr. Graham Little of the Department of Political Science of the University of Melbourne.

Interview subjects were proposed by council members of the Royal Institute, who personally approached the retiring officers. Two interview sessions of two hours each were usually conducted with each subject. The accumulated tapes were then turned over to the State Public Library. The library rerecorded the interviews to insure uniformity, catalogued them, prepared typescripts when desirable, and laid down conditions of access to the material.

The interviews proved to be rich in useful information for students of administrative history, supplementing formal records by making available personal accounts of events, viewed as those involved in them saw the situation.

The pilot scheme amply supported the value of such personal accounts, and the possibility of a long-term

scheme is currently being explored. Hopefully, the outcome will also provide a permanent niche for the oral history program "down under."

Mrs. Holmes is senior lecturer in the Department of Political Science, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

HONOLULU PROGRAM TAPES HAWAII CHINESE

An oral history program concerned with the Chinese community of Hawaii has been established by the Hawaii Chinese History Center, Honolulu, Hawaii. Dr. Edward D. Beechert, coordinator of the Pacific Regional Oral History Program of the University of Hawaii, is advisor, and Irma Tam Soong is voluntary executive director.

Organized two years ago primarily to tape-record Chinese over seventy years of age, the program has since branched out to many other areas. A small documentary library has been created for researchers, and a twelve-page set of guidelines entitled, "Tape Recording the Chinese in Hawaii: The General Background Interview," was prepared last year to aid prospective interviewers. The University of Hawaii Oral History Board has been set up to include professors from the university's departments of sociology, anthropology, economics, and East Asian languages, and the Asian Studies Program.

Dr. James L. Watson of the Department of Anthropology is directing a seven-student pilot program on the history of some of Honolulu's eighty-plus Chinese societies. Another project is studying the five Hawaiian visits of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen for the effect of his oratory on the establishment of organizations, newspapers, and language schools, as well as for the influence of America on the revolutionary movement in China.

UTAH SERIES INITIATED

With special emphasis on university and local history, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, has initiated a series of oral history interviews under the auspices of its Voice Library program.

Several dozen tape-recorded interviews have already been conducted. Subjects include the history of the university and the Cache Valley area; of Bear Lake Valley, Utah, and Teton Valley, Idaho; and of historical houses in Utah.

Future areas of concentration will include social problems and industry projects. The program is administered by John J. Stewart, assisted by Mary Lynn Palmer.

GAMBIAN STUDIES TRIBAL HISTORIANS

The traditional oral historians of Africa, the griots, are the subject of an oral history project currently under way in Gambia under the supervision of Bakari Sidobe, a Gambian research officer, with the assistance of Peace Corps volunteer Dorothy Halfa.

The griot has played an integral role in the tribal life of Africa, keeping the chronology of the tribe and region, and often serving as entertainer, propagandist, and envoy. With industrialization and the resultant detribalization, the griots, who were once supported by their tribes, have sought work as entertainers in nightclubs and hotels.

In a *New York Times* article March 9, Sidobe said that the historical function of the griot could be lost within a generation. "So many of them are fast forgetting the region's history while they make a living as musicians," he said.

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SUMMARY OF RECENT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Executive Council of the Oral History Association met February 2-3 in New Orleans and, in partial session, April 2 in Los Angeles. Major matters discussed and actions taken at the two meetings included:

- a committee formed of Knox Mellon (chairman), Charles Crawford, and Charles Morrissey to study colloquium costs and report specific recommendations to the council at West Point;
- OHA's scheduled participation in the programs of other professional meetings;
- investigation of proposals by Education Resources Information Center and Microfilming Corporation of America for reproducing and distributing past issues of the proceedings and *Newsletter*;
- solicitation of foundation support so that minority group members, students, and others without travel funds may attend the West Point colloquium;
- compilation by Lila Johnson of a mailing list for publicizing OHA's activities;
- Association's present and future role in oral history workshops throughout the country;
- reports given on the West Point workshop program, membership development, *Newsletter* costs, and the 1974 colloquium;
- OHA to have a regular column in *History News*, the newsletter of the American Association for State and Local History;
- cooperation by OHA in publication of the Bowker directory of oral history collections;
- Association to join with the Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wisconsin, as a co-sponsor of a conference on how best to document the impact on America of the Vietnam war.

The **Homer Society of Natural History**, Homer, Alaska, through the efforts of the Homer Museum, has recently embarked upon a project to obtain oral histories of pioneering and long-time residents of the lower Kenai Peninsula. Frank A. Tupper is in charge of the program.

SOUTH DAKOTA FLOOD PROJECT *Continued from page 1*

Professor Hausle was assigned all government agencies and officials, while the other three, Orland Rothlisberger of Sioux Falls College and John Watterson and Stephen Ward of the University of South Dakota, interviewed the people involved in Rapid City and the surrounding area.

Before the interviews began, certain guidelines were laid down as to how they would be conducted. Each informant was to be pinpointed in terms of time and location. We wanted to know where people were and how much time they spent in a particular location throughout that night. If they moved (or were swept) from one place to another, we were interested in the elapsed time as closely as could be estimated. In addition to street numbers and names, section coordinates were used to locate positions, on the premise that these designations might

change as a result of the flood or sometime in the future. It was also imperative that a cross section of socioeconomic groups be interviewed. The flood, particularly in Rapid City, was totally democratic in its destruction. We could not interview everyone, and so a controlled sampling was called for in this survey.

The interview technique was somewhat simpler than other types of historical interviews. Informants seldom needed prompting from interviewers because their experiences were fresh and related in unusually crisp, narrative style. The interviewer's role became that of searching out precise position information, expansion of experiences, and requests for reflective comments such as "What were your thoughts during the hours you spent in a tree?" and "Where do you go from here?" Most interviews lasted one-half hour or more depending upon the individual's experiences and detail. No people who lost family in the flood were called for interviews, but interviewers were referred to these people through the personal contacts of other subjects. The resulting interviews proved to be some of the best and most human any of us had ever experienced in oral history.

In nearly four weeks of concentrated interviewing (often 4-5 interviews per day by individual interviewers), the project taped around 250 people. The most time-consuming aspect was not

the interviewing itself, but the time spent contacting people for interviews. Very few people rejected requests to be interviewed. Full publicity was used to make people aware of the project's purpose, providing easier access to informants.

The results of this project were quite gratifying. An opportunity to use oral history in a unique manner had been provided, and the South Dakota Oral History Project would have been remiss to have ignored it. The information gathered has been preserved not only for present and future historians, but also for geologists, disaster control officials, city officials, political scientists, and a host of other interested people. This month, one year after the flood, one interviewer from the South Dakota Oral History Project will be interviewing many of the same people to determine what effect the great flood of a year ago had upon their lives. These interviews, along with the original interviews, will be indexed and included in Volume II of *The South Dakota Experience: An Oral History of Its People*, which will be printed and distributed in the fall of 1973.

Stephen R. Ward is associate professor of history at the University of South Dakota and project coordinator for the South Dakota Oral History Project.

OHA MEMBERSHIP



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.

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:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

PUBLICATIONS

NEW COLUMBIA CATALOGUE

The Oral History Research Office of Columbia University has marked its 25th anniversary with the publication of a new edition of *The Oral History Collection*. A review of the 500-page volume will appear in the September *Newsletter*.

Orders for the hardbound library edition may be placed with Microfilming Corporation of America, Glen Rock,

N.J. 07452, \$12.50 postpaid. The soft-cover edition, at \$7.50, is available to individual scholars only and may be ordered directly from the office, Box 20, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York 10027.

JEWISH HISTORY MICROFILMED

The oral history collection of Hebrew University's Institute of Contemporary Jewry in Jerusalem will be made available in microform as part of The New York Times Oral History Program. The institute's collection was founded by

Professor Moshe Davis in 1959 after studying the techniques and methods of oral history with Allan Nevins at Columbia. The Jerusalem collection covers the entire spectrum of contemporary Jewish history, including the plight of Jews during World War II, the establishment of the Israeli state, and the dissolution and emergence of Jewish communities.

The first section on Jewish communities will be ready this summer. The cost of the entire collection will be about \$1,200. Inquiries should be sent to Microfilming Corporation of America.

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION PUBLICATIONS

<i>Oral History in the United States: A Directory</i> compiled by Gary L. Shumway, 1971	\$4.00 (first copy to members, \$1.50)
<i>Bibliography on Oral History</i> compiled by D. Schippers & A. Tusler, 1967	out of print
<i>Bibliography on Oral History</i> compiled by Manfred J. Wasserman, 1971	\$2.00
OHA Newsletter (back issues)	\$1.00 per issue
Proceedings of the National Colloquia	
<i>Oral History at Arrowhead</i> 1966 — Lake Arrowhead, California	\$3.00
<i>The 2nd National Colloquium on Oral History</i> 1967 — Arden House, New York	\$3.00
<i>The 3rd National Colloquium on Oral History</i> 1968 — Lincoln, Nebraska	out of print
<i>The 4th National Colloquium on Oral History</i> 1969 — Arlie House, Virginia	out of print
<i>Selections from the 5th & 6th National Colloquia on Oral History</i> 1970 — Asilomar, California; 1971 — Bloomington, Indiana	\$3.00

Please address orders to Samuel Hand, Waterman Building, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont 05401. Make checks payable to the Oral History Association.

OHA members are entitled to receive the quarterly *Newsletter* and the annual publication, *The Oral History Review*, which will include selections from the 1972 Austin Colloquium and contributed articles.

"The Malayan Democratic Political Party" has been published as Oral History Pilot Study No. 1 (January, 1973) by the **Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore**. The memoir presents the recollections of Philip Hoalim, a lawyer, as recorded by Gerald de Cruz, first director of oral history at the institute.

The need for "creative oral history" was discussed by **Gould Colman** in the Cornell University Library *Bulletin* of January/February 1973. In the article, entitled "Risk Taking As an Economic Indicator," Colman suggested that higher levels of creativity in generating made-to-order oral history source material could result in financial savings for aggressive institutions.

"Instant History" was the subject of a feature in *The Rotarian*, official publication of Rotary International, of May 1973. The article, written by **Richard Wolkomir**, described the background of oral history and many current programs. In a sidebar, Charles T. Morrissey urged Rotarians to initiate oral history projects on the community level.

Oral History Association Newsletter

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