



Oral History Association

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NEWSLETTER

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Oral History Institute At UCLA Termed A Success

The UCLA Oral History Program reports that its Institute on Oral History Librarianship, funded by a federal grant under the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IIB, was held as scheduled on the UCLA campus from July 8 to July 19, 1968. It was attended by twenty participants from fourteen states representing all areas of the country.

Staff consisted of James V. Mink, director; Elizabeth I. Dixon, principal instructor; Donald J. Schippers and Adelaide Tusler, lecturers; and Frances W. Schruben of the History Department, Pierce State College, California, as visiting lecturer.

The major objective of the Institute was to provide intensive, practical training in the techniques of oral history for qualified individuals either planning to organize, or in the process of organizing, an oral history program in a library or archives situation. Two factors facilitated this: first, the experience and backgrounds of the participants, seventeen of whom were librarians or archivists with strong training in history, and three of whom were historians; and second, the workshop approach which was used as the basis for instruction.

Each participant actually conducted two one-hour interviews after a short period of intensive preparation, transcribed and edited the material himself, returned the manuscript to the interviewee for his corrections and, lastly, prepared supporting documents consisting of a biographical introduction, an interview history data sheet, and bibliographical notes.

Each successive phase of the oral history process was thus directly experienced by the participants after being introduced to the basic principles in lectures and group discussions. Intensive reading in the literature of oral history was required prior to the opening of the Institute.

The interviews, which will be incorporated into the UCLA oral history collection, were all related to the documentation of UCLA Library history and, toward that end, interviewees were selected who had been in key positions within the library system for many years. Appointment schedules, including a preliminary contact, were all arranged in advance of the Institute, and archival materials used by participants in preparing for the sessions were gathered together for easy access.

Some highlights of the workshop included a luncheon honoring Professor and Mrs. Allan Nevins, at which Professor Nevins spoke informally of his experiences with oral history; a lecture on "Oral History and Historical Method" by Visiting Professor Schruben; and various social occasions which provided opportunities for staff and participants to become acquainted and mutually discuss plans and projects.

At the conclusion of the ten-day program, an informal "bull session" was held to give staff and participants an opportunity to evaluate the success of the Institute. There was general enthusiasm for the workshop approach, though it was also felt that the program was perhaps too intensive for the scheduled period of time. The suggestion was made that a future institute might well be extended to three weeks and limited to fifteen participants, particularly if the re-

quirements for complete transcription and editing were retained.

Most of those participating stated, however, that the Institute had introduced them to the basic concepts and problems of the oral history process in an effective way, and felt that they had received sufficient training to launch programs at their respective institutions in the near future.

FINAL CALL FOR THE 1968 ORAL HISTORY COLLOQUIUM

The third National Colloquium on Oral History, sponsored this year by the Oral History Association and the University of Nebraska, will begin at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education in Lincoln on Friday night, November 22, 1968. Following dinner a panel will discuss "Interdisciplinary Views on Oral History."

Saturday morning will begin with a welcome from Clifford Hardin, Chancellor of the University of Nebraska, and remarks entitled "Up To Now" by Louis Starr of Columbia, President of the OHA. Then Walter Lord will talk about "Oral History and the Modern Historian." At 11:00 a group discussion of "The Art of Interviewing" will get underway.

After lunch William Jensen of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co. will answer queries concerning "How Long Does Tape Last?" Afternoon events include a tour of Lincoln's points of historical and cultural interest. The after-dinner speaker, William Manchester, will offer "Some Personal Meditations on Oral History."

Sunday morning will start with a report from Oscar Winther's Goals and Guidelines Committee, to be followed by the election of new officers. Group discussions later in the day will include "Oral History in the Classroom" (Charles Morrissey presiding), "Inside Oral History Offices" (Elizabeth Mason presiding), "Oral History in the Liberal Arts College" (Knox Mellon presiding), and "State and Local Projects."

Sunday evening will feature Joe Frantz's account of "Video-Taping Notable U.S. Historians" and "New Directions for Oral History" by Allen Nevins.

At 9:30 A.M. on Monday morning, November 25, the OHA considers future business. At 10:00 James B. Rhoads, Archivist of the United States, concludes the Colloquium by offering "Some Thoughts on the Oral History Movement."

Local arrangements for the meeting are being supervised by Philip Crowl, Chairman of the History Department at the University of Nebraska, and Stanley Trickett, Chairman of the History Department at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

CATALOG FOR JOHN FOSTER DULLES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT IS PUBLISHED; UNIV. OF NEVADA UPDATES ITS LIST

An 82-page descriptive catalog of the John Foster Dulles Oral History Collection has recently been published by the Princeton University Library. It lists 279 memoirs by friends, foes, and observers of John Foster Dulles. These transcripts are deposited in the Dulles Library at Princeton University, and most are open to use, including Dwight D. Eisenhower's (57 pages). Inquiries should be addressed to the Curator of Manuscripts at the Princeton University Library, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

A new bibliography of transcribed interviews completed or underway by the Oral History Project of the Center For Western North American Studies has been compiled by Mary Ellen Glass of the University of Nevada. Dated June 1, 1968, this bibliography offers information on 43 persons interviewed since the project was started three years ago.

IN CONNECTICUT: A NEW PROJECT AT UCONN

Morton J. Tenzer is Director of the Connecticut Oral History Project at the University of Connecticut at Storrs. The purpose of this new program, he writes, is "to collect and preserve information of historical value concerning leading personalities, events, and social, political, and economic developments in the state's recent past." John Bailey, Meade Alcorn, William Benton, Prescott Bush, and Raymond Baldwin have all agreed to grant interviews. The Project will devote itself in time to major activities in Connecticut such as the life insurance industry, the aircraft industry, higher education, the role of ethnic groups and labor unions, and the work of artists, writers, architects, and scientists.

IN TEXAS: MARCELLO REPLACES ODUM

Dale Odum is relinquishing his job as Coordinator of the Oral History Collection at North Texas State University in Denton to Ronald Marcello, a colleague in the History Department. Marcello expects to receive his doctorate this fall from Duke University; he also attended the Oral History Institute at UCLA from July 8 to 19.

CALIFORNIA: STANFORD'S ARCHIVE OF RECORDED SOUND PLANS TO TAPE INTERVIEWS

The Archive of Recorded Sound at Stanford University is observing its 10th anniversary. During the past decade its collections have expanded to include 55,000 records, 700 piano rolls, thousands of long-play discs and tapes, and a representative collection of old-time phonographs. Plans for the future include interviews with major figures in the musical world in order to preserve their recollections for historical purposes.

UCLA's FILM PROJECT IS UNDERWAY

The American Film Institute—UCLA Oral History of the Motion Picture in America, co-directed by Professor Howard Suber of the UCLA Theatre Arts Department and James V. Mink, Director of the UCLA Oral History Program, and funded by the AFI and the National Endowment on the Arts and Humanities, got under way this summer with a series of interviews.

Those currently being interviewed include Karl Struss, cinematographer; Daniel Mandell, editor; Ben Carre, art director; and Friz Freleng, Dick Huemer and Dave Fleischer, pioneer animators. Others to begin soon include Nunnally Johnson, writer; Jules Stein, of MCA; John Lee Mahin, writer; and George Cukor and Fred Zinnemann, directors.

ORAL HISTORY IN CEYLON IS PRESERVING THE MEMORIES OF MAJOR PUBLIC FIGURES

For several years a young lecturer at the University of Ceylon, Michael W. Roberts, has been conducting interviews with top politicians and civil servants in Ceylon. He reports 189 interviews to date with 139 Ceylonese leaders, and all but a dozen of these interviews were recorded on tape. "My primary objective has been to preserve memories and experiences for posterity," he says. Mrs. Roberts has transcribed a portion of this cache, with one copy of each transcript being deposited in the library at the University of Ceylon and another copy being sent to the Rhodes House Library. These are available to researchers. Roberts hopes ultimately to publish a volume of excerpts himself, and therefore has embargoed wholesale reproductions of the transcripts already completed. He reports that transcribing has been slow because financing—an initial grant from the Asia Foundation, plus help from Rhodes House—has not been adequate for covering the costs. A native-born Ceylonese, Roberts took his doctorate at Oxford and started his oral history work while a student there by interviewing 36 Britons who had served in Ceylon. His project came to light when an article on oral history in *Historical Studies In Australia and New Zealand* inspired him to write to Columbia's Oral History Research Office.

OHA WELCOMES FIRST LIFE MEMBER

Prof. Raymond F. Wood of the School of Library Service at UCLA became the first life-member of the Oral History Association this spring when he completed payment of the \$150 fee, according to OHA Treasurer Knox Mellon. Professor Wood had pledged \$50 to the cause at the Lake Arrowhead Colloquium, and subsequently he added \$100 to meet the \$150 fee specified in the OHA by-laws for a life membership.

NEW YORK: INTERVIEWS WITH ARTISTS

The Archives of American Art has been conducting an oral history program since 1959. Five hundred interviews have been made with people involved with art in America as well as artists. This year a special project to interview 100 artists in the New York area was made possible by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. The interviews are conducted in depth and the artist is encouraged to give in his own words a personal portrait covering biographical information, associations and influences, concepts and attitudes about art and his own work. To date interviews with the following artists have been completed: Josef Albers, Peter Agostini, Benny Andrews, Will Barnet, Vivian Browne, Fritz Bultman, Nicolas Carone, Enrico Donati, Perle Fine, Adolph Gottlieb, Stephen Greene, Roy Gussow, David Hare, Paul Jenkins, Lee Krasner, John Koch, Norman Lewis, Seymour Lipton, George Rickey, and Jack Youngerman.

MARINE CORPS CONTINUES TO COLLECT ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

The Marine Corps Oral History Program has expanded considerably. That part of its collection dealing with current Marine Corps operations in Vietnam and the United States contains 2,983 classified and unclassified interviews conducted in the field with Marines of all ranks and concerning nearly all aspects of Marine Corps activities. A large number of tapes were received during and after the historic siege of Khe Sanh. In more peaceful surroundings about 395 taped hours of conversation in 108 interview sessions have been obtained from 37 retired Marines, 33 of whom are retired general officers (including two former Commandants of the Corps). All but 6 of these interviews were conducted by Benis Frank, Head of the Marine Corps Oral History Unit.

ORAL HISTORY AND THE LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY: PROBLEMS OF A PENNSYLVANIA GROUP

Growing interest in oral history as a useful historical method has appeared among researchers with a variety of substantive and methodological commitments. One type of researcher, the local historian, faces a set of problems which, as a group, appear in part to be peculiar to his craft. The experiences of one Pennsylvania group, the Goschenhoppen Historians of Woxall, Pennsylvania, illustrate some of these problems.

The Goschenhoppen Historians were organized in 1964, partly in response to a feeling among some members that many local historical societies tended to emphasize the study of local political and military notables while showing only a peripheral interest in the orally-transmitted folklore and folk culture of a region. Since their founding, the Historians have stressed the preservation of both material and non-material folk-cultural data, and it was this interest that led to their work in oral history at the local level.

At least six years before the society was formed, several individuals living in the eight-township Goschenhoppen region of northern Montgomery County, Pa., began to tape-record religious folk-songs, particularly the chorales and chant melodies which a few of the Dutch Mennonites of the area still sang. In 1962, they expanded their recording to include information on farming practices, life in the home, religious beliefs and customs, occult materials, art and craft activities, and attitudes on a wide variety of subjects. Taped interviews have generally been done in depth, using a few prime informants. The society's archives contain thirty reels of tape on twelve informants. In addition, there are 600 pages of notes on twenty-five other individuals. Collecting has been done mainly from farmers and their wives, reflecting the predominant occupations of the region. There is also material from small town tradesmen, ordained churchmen, craftsmen, and musicians. Informants are among the oldest Dutch Mennonites and Dunkards living in the Old Goschenhoppen and Skippack regions of Montgomery County, Pa.

Plans include expanding this ethno-cultural collection to include material from informants of the Lutheran and Reformed denominations. In addition, some collecting has been done from residents of Elmira, Ontario, who are descendants of post-Revolutionary immigrants from the Goschenhoppen region.

There are many limitations to the society's oral history work. The Historians have had difficulty recruiting qualified interviewers, since they must have fluency in a particular dialect of the Pennsylvania German language. Another problem stems from the fact that most available personnel contribute their time to such activities as guiding tours, working at folk festivals, serving as museum guides, or aiding in the removal or restoration of buildings. Time and personnel limitations have also contributed to the state of the oral history archives of the society: most of the material remains unprocessed. Some indexing by informant, date, and subject has been done, but virtually all of the work remains untranscribed. And finally, there are too few liaison activities with neighboring universities and with other regional and local societies. This is due in part to the generally inward-looking nature of many local societies, the lack of shared goals among neighboring societies, and the ubiquitous time-allocation problem.

At the same time, the fact that a local history organization is doing the oral history research confers certain advantages to the operation and to its participants. Since most of the men working in oral history have been dedicated students of the region, they have already surmounted most of the difficult problems of learning about the area and its culture which outsiders still face. And being insiders, they generally have much less of a problem establishing rapport with informants than outsiders would have. Of course, they face their own problems of possible perceptual distortions and biases as a result of their dual roles of cultural partici-

MORE NEWS OF INTEREST . . .

Any oral historian who has dealt with a stand-offish old-timer will enjoy "The Early Settler," a short piece by Amy Witting that was published in the *New Yorker* magazine on May 18, 1968. It concerns the efforts—all of them futile—to persuade a talkative oldster in Australia, whose recollections include noteworthy episodes in the 19th century, to stop postponing the actual interview session with the tape recorder. The old gent succeeds in frustrating the young interviewer. The episode will seem familiar to many oral history interviewers who have endured the same experience.

Another article that will interest oral historians is "Consistency Of Response By Event-Recall Intervals And Characteristics of Respondents" by Ralph E. Dakin (University of Missouri, Columbia) and Donald Tennant (Kansas State University). It appears in *The Sociological Quarterly*, the journal of the Midwest Sociological Society, in Volume 9, Number 1 (Winter, 1968), pages 73-84. It concerns the degree of consistency in the answers given by 59 people who were interviewed on specific subjects in June, 1959, and then re-interviewed on the same subjects in June, 1960. The lack of consistency in some instances will distress oral historians. This article enlarges our knowledge of the manner in which respondents may vary their recollections as time passes.

An excerpt from Elwood Maunder's 300-page oral history interview with Chrysogonus H. "Chris" Kreienbaum is featured as the lead article in the July (1968) issue of *Forest History*, a quarterly journal published by the Forest History Society at Yale University. Kreienbaum, a legendary figure in West Coast Forest History, was largely responsible for saving a Washington town during the Depression. The town's near demise and subsequent revitalization as a soundly-based community is completely recounted in this interview-article.

A book consisting largely of transcribed excerpts from tape-recorded interviews with important figures in the Texas oil industry is scheduled for publication next year. Editors of this book are Mody C. Boatright and W. A. Owens, and they are drawing their material from the interviews done at the University of Texas since 1952 with persons involved in the development of the oil industry.

Oral History and the Local Society, Cont.

pants and analysts, but while these are important and subtle difficulties, they may be less important to the conduct of research than the inability to gain access to an informant, to pinpoint the critical cultural issues, and to draw him out to the point where he will talk freely about them.

Members of the society have already made use of their oral history materials. Those interested in linguistic analysis have recorded and studied sets of dialect terms and their variant forms. Some fast-disappearing "survival" forms of dialect speech have also been gathered. Material obtained from informants on room use, eating and sleeping arrangements, and objects used in the house and around the farm have aided in the reconstruction and interpretation of historic sites in the region. And data gathered on the methods of performing certain craft activities have been used to make displays at folk-festivals and presentations at community folklore seminars as authentic as possible.

Further information about the collections of the Goschenhoppen Historians and their use may be obtained from Clarence Kulp, Jr., Curator, Goschenhoppen Historians Folklife Museum, Woxall, Pa. 19739.

Jon Fackler,
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Nominating Committee Appointed for 1968 Elections

OHA members are reminded that By-law 7 of the Association's Constitution and By-laws reads as follows: "There shall be a nominating committee composed of three members appointed by the Executive Council at least sixty days prior to the date of the election. This committee shall consult the membership for suggestions, shall make nominations for officers and members of the council, and shall promulgate its report at the beginning of the annual meeting at which the election is to take place. Other nominations may also be made from the floor by any member of the Association. . . . Only individual members shall be eligible for election as officers or members of the council. . . ."

The Executive Council has appointed these three OHA members to the nominating committee: Warren Albert (American Medical Association, Archive-Library, 535 North Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 60610); Mrs. Elizabeth Mason (Oral History Research Office, Box 20, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York 10027); and James V. Mink (Oral History Program, 32 Powell Library, UCLA, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024).

This committee requests that you send your suggestions for candidates to the committee member in your locale. The offices to be filled are (1) Vice President-President-Elect, (2) Secretary, (3) Treasurer, and (4) Council Member (3-year term). The committee will make contact with those suggested to determine their willingness to serve.

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF THE OHA . . .

but would like to receive this newsletter, the Colloquium Proceedings, and other publications that go to OHA members, you may do so by becoming a non-voting member at \$5.00 per year or a voting member at \$7.50 per year. Institutional Members may pay \$25.00. Send your check to Knox Mellon, OHA Treasurer, Immaculate Heart College, 2021 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90027.

U.S. MARITIME HISTORY IS SUBJECT OF NEW ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

The United States Naval Institute in Annapolis, Maryland, has established an oral history program in order to record interviews with retired Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard officers and others who have been prominent in the maritime history of this country.

ON THE UNAUTHORIZED TAPING OF CLASSROOM LECTURES

In "Tape Recorders and Academics" in the February 1965 **Journal of Higher Education** Elizabeth Taylor (Department of History and Government, Texas Woman's University) objected to taping classroom lectures without the specific authorization of the instructor. She suggested some legal and ethical considerations "which limit the use of recording devices in an academic environment." Also she called for universities to formulate policy on the "use and misuse of tape recorders." Due to more than 100 responses to her article she contributed a sequel to the October 1965 **Higher Education**. Her conclusion: ". . . in the absence of stated official policies professors individually control the use of tape recorders in their classrooms. . . . Many considered tape recorders a threat to freedom of expression, but no one reported having undergone a traumatic experience as a consequence of having his lectures taped."

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION, INC.

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ORAL HISTORIAN WANTED BY AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

An oral historian with a background in American history, preferably with a special interest in American Jewish history, is invited to apply for the new position of Director of an oral history project to be conducted by the American Jewish Committee. The job also requires a considerable degree of administrative ability. Salary is open but will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. Write to Mrs. Lucy Dawidowicz at the American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56th St., N.Y. 10022, for further details.

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