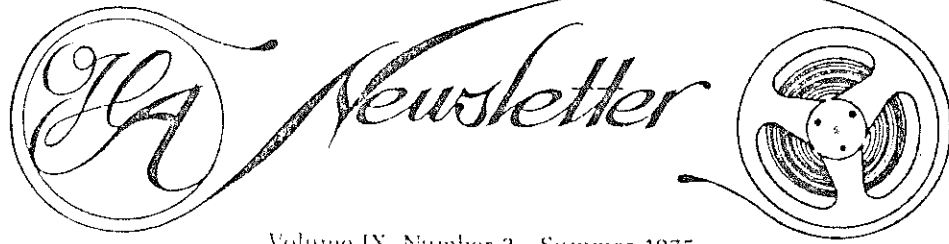


# ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION



Volume IX, Number 2 Summer 1975

## OHA SPONSORS REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

In accordance with a resolution approved at last year's colloquium, OHA is now sponsoring regional workshops, through which knowledgeable practitioners of oral history can be presented to a greater number of field workers. The first workshop took place at California State University, Fullerton, January 3 and 4. The second, centered in the Mississippi Valley, was held at Murray State University in Kentucky, May 2 and 3.

Coordinated by James W. Hammack, Jr., director of the Forrest C. Pogue Oral History Institute at Murray State, the workshop was keyed by Charles Crawford of Memphis State, OHA past president, and Waddy Moore of the State College of Arkansas, OHA council member. Although hastily convened and unfortunately (if inevitably) slotted for the same weekend as the Kentucky Derby, the workshop nevertheless attracted over 100 participants (more than double the initial projections) from eight states, thanks in part to an effective publicity and mailout campaign.

In his report to the president of OHA, Hammack cited these initial goals for the weekend: (1) to provide a forum for an exchange of ideas between persons actively involved in established oral history programs; (2) to provide knowledgeable instruction in oral history methods and techniques for persons who are planning or have recently become engaged in institutional programs or in individual oral history research projects; (3) to promote an interest in oral history research among representatives of institutions, groups, and organizations other than colleges and universities.

The first day of the workshop offered more general perspectives on the uses, problems, and promises of oral history, with particular emphasis on institutional applications, such as those in libraries, secondary schools, and universities. The second day offered a more technical focus with successive sessions on preparation and conduct of the interview, office procedures and legal considerations, and preparation and significance of the transcript. Hammack noted that the first day's

*Continued on page 2*



Lorser Feitelson (right) hosted a meeting of fellow "hard-edge" painters in his studio May 10, 1959. Present at the historic gathering were (from the left) the late critic Jules Langsner and painters Karl Benjamin, John McLaughlin, Fred Hammersley, and Feitelson. The four are candidates for a UCLA project on the Los Angeles art community.

## NEH AWARDS GRANT

### UCLA TO INTERVIEW ARTISTS

About a decade ago, a local painter-constructionist wheeled a 1938 Dodge into the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and put our sleepy little backwater town on the international culture map. Until then—mistakenly—Los Angeles still bore the stigma of Hollywood; Walt Disney seemed the pinnacle, the Duce of legions of drawing-board craftsmen.

Ironically, it was the bowdlerizing sensitivity of a handful of county supervisors that transformed the image; they peered at the intertwined couple inside Ed Kienholz's work, turned palette shades of red, and declared it obscene. Of course, it wasn't; it was revolutionary, and it immediately served notice that a vital and vibrant group of artists were experimenting with new modes of expression and form.

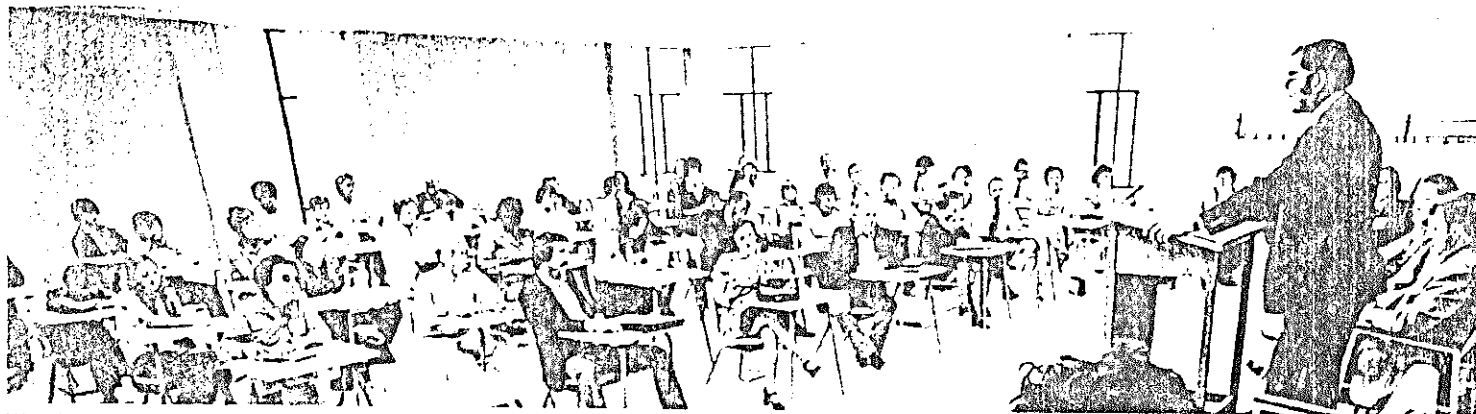
Today, the city is secure in its renown. Though not yet rival to New York's broad canvas of schools and movements, it has established its own identity, its own perspective. That identity will be explored by UCLA's Oral History Program through a grant from the National En-

dowment for the Humanities. The Program will spend some sixteen months—and more than \$50,000—in the interviewing, transcribing, editing, and final preparation of manuscripts in bound volumes. An hour-long video tape will be produced in the course of each interview.

In all, the grant totals \$67,901, of which \$50,997 will be provided by the Endowment and the rest, as cost sharing, by UCLA.

"Los Angeles Art Community: Group Portrait," as the project has been titled, originated with conversations between Bernard Galm, director of the Oral History Program (who will be project coordinator), and Blake Nevius, chairman of the Program's Faculty Advisory Committee and a contemporary art enthusiast. Gerald Nordland, director of the UCLA Galleries and veteran critic of the local art scene, was quickly contacted, and he agreed to serve as co-project director, along with Page Ackerman, UCLA university librarian.

*Continued on page 8*



Waddy Moore addresses a session of the Mississippi Valley Oral History Workshop held May 2-3 at Murray State University, Kentucky. Cosponsored by OHA and Murray State, the gathering was the second in OHA's series of regional workshops.

## REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

*Continued from page 1*

sessions were more widely attended than those the following day.

By all indications, the workshop was a substantial success. Hammack concluded that regional workshops of the type held at Murray State "can serve at least two important purposes: (1) they can be bene-

ficial to a wide range of people who are interested in oral history, but who will probably never attend a national colloquium; (2) they can be expected to promote the growth of oral history research activities in the region."

He did, however, recommend that future workshops be scheduled at least a year in advance to afford a saner, more deliberate pace for preparation and pub-

licity. He further suggested that OHA establish an ongoing coordinating committee to assist in the instigation and nurture of future workshops, particularly in an advisory capacity.

Hammack's memorandum to the president of OHA is on file at the executive office, and will offer helpful insights into myriad details when future regional conferences are planned.

## NEWS

### BOWKER DIRECTORY AVAILABLE AT DISCOUNT

*Oral History Collections*, the most complete listing of tapes and transcripts yet compiled, has been published by R.R. Bowker and is available to OHA members at a discounted price of \$25.00, or 15 percent below list price (\$29.50). The book details information on oral history programs as well as ancillary material such as taped discussions and lectures.

Editors Alan M. Meckler and Ruth McMullin have identified 323 centers in the United States and 61 foreign oral history programs in the volume, complete with such information as address and telephone, name of director, tapes, transcriptions, accessibility, and specializations.

In addition, a name and subject index has been drawn from each center's holdings, identifying the person or subject with details as to the origin of the collection within which it appears.

The publication was undertaken with the cooperation of OHA, which urged

members to complete and return detailed questionnaires that were sent to more than 5,000 institutions. According to the editors, "The difficulties inherent in collecting data for the first edition of a reference book required our employing a cutoff date of January 1974 for accepting information. Consequently, certain interviews and recently established oral history centers have not been included in this first edition. They will certainly be included in the next edition."

To receive the OHA discount, send orders to: Ronald E. Marcello, Executive Secretary, OHA, North Texas State University, P.O. Box 13734, NTSU Station, Denton, Texas 76203. Orders will be checked against the OHA membership list before sending them to the publisher for shipping and billing.

An examination of *Oral History Collections* in terms of its value as a reference work appears on page 4.

### FUNDS EXTEND APPALACHIA PROJECT

Alice Lloyd College of Pippa Passes, Kentucky, has received \$20,000 from the Steele-Reese Foundation of New York to help finance activities of the Appalachian Oral History Project, a joint venture among Alice Lloyd, Lees Junior College, Appalachian State University, and Emory and Henry College.

The grant funded ten-week summer programs for the four schools, enabling about ten students from each to interview "resident historians"—resource persons of all ages. Now in its fourth year of operation, the Appalachian Oral History Project has collected more than 2,000 interviews.

### TEAM TEACHES SUMMER COURSES

Charles Morrissey of the Vermont Historical Society and Amelia Fry of the Earl Warren Oral History Project at UC, Berkeley, served as instructors at the Oral History Institute of the University of Vermont, June 16-27. The duo also taught a class on oral history as part of the 28th Annual Seminars on American Culture, sponsored by the New York State Historical Association, at Cooperstown, New York.

The Vermont institute offered a thorough background in the method, from initial questions of whom to interview and what to ask to final legal agreements on the use of tapes and transcripts. Each student did an interview which was critiqued by fellow participants. Foxfire use of oral history was discussed by Amy Davis, an eighth-grade teacher in Montpelier. Among three of her students demonstrating tapes and slides was Michael C. Morrissey, son of the oral historian.

Next year's program will be extended to three weeks to allow more interview time outside the classroom and to permit attendance at the Montreal Olympic Games. For information, write John R. Bushey, Office of Continuing Education, Grasse Mount, Burlington, Vermont 05401.

Students at Cooperstown came from all parts of the country, including California, Louisiana, Georgia, and Indiana. Many were teachers and librarians with an interest in community history. A concern with ethnic history was also evident, according to Mr. Morrissey.

#### 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.

##### Editorial Office

136 Powell Library, University of California, Los Angeles, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024

Bernard Cabot, Editor  
Joel Gardner, Associate Editor

# PEOPLE & PROJECTS

## GULLAH FLAVORS ISLAND HISTORY

by Nick Lindsay

The Edisto River flows into the Atlantic about forty miles south of Charleston, South Carolina. Edisto Island measures about eight miles by twelve and is one of a three-island group which forms the delta at the mouth of that river. The gross census figures for the island have not changed since 1775: 2,250 black, 250 white. The community is unique in language, social organization, and the paradisaal myth which gives vitality to these structures.

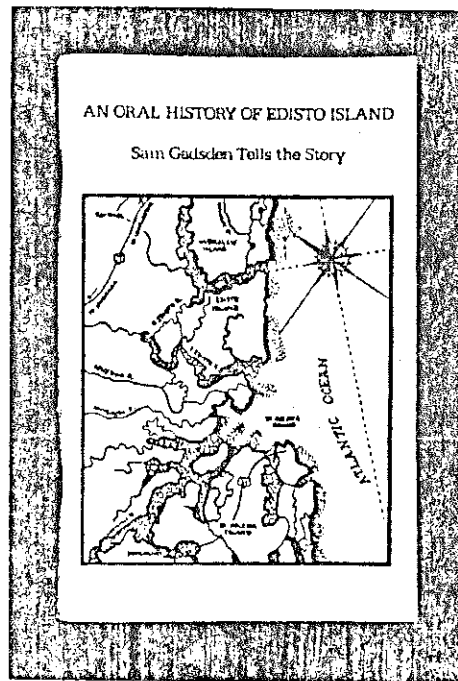
The black people were speaking deep Gullah until the advent of TV in the 1950s. Gullah is a dialect of American which includes syntax, pronunciation and vocabulary from some twenty West African tribal languages. Anthropologist George Talbot says, "Gullah speech represents the most exotic black language spoken in America." On Edisto an auto mechanic is still a "beat-on-iron"; a daughter is still a "woman-child"; "I am not even interested in knowing (about that)" is still "I ain't fa know (about that)." In Twi and Mende the word "fa" means "have intention to."

The aristocratic African community structures depend on the vitality of the paradisaal myth. Myth is condensed history, and this paradise has been experienced by living people as well as by old people whom they knew as children. It is not a never-never land of pie in the sky. Accurate retelling has kept alive both the fact that it did happen and the practical possibility of its recurrence. Elements of this paradise, besides its historical concreteness, include the time of peaceful living, the time of no money, the time when the church of rejoicing dance and evening song governs the people and they live with a good report, the time when the masters of society belonged to the people rather than the people being cattle which belonged to the master. It may perhaps be summed up in the phrase "time when peace been declare," which is technically about 1865 until 1885, after the war and before the advent of segregation and intimidation.

This kind of time has been a transient yet recurring reality from at least 1820 until the present. Many families have been here for five or more generations, can trace their origins back to African sources, and have kept extensive track of the intervening years. The validity of the African connection was maintained more easily since people were arriving from Africa even during the 1850s. There is a substantial body of community oral his-

tory which corrects and sustains the individual teller of history. He is not isolated, as is often the case with a maiden aunt who keeps up with the kin in many American families.

But in recent years, since the rising generation has been going to the northern cities to work, the transmitting of this body of oral history is endangered. The young men and women go north to Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., or New York to live their active years in a rational, individualist, urban environment. The traditional African-Christian reality of Edisto is of little use to them there; indeed, it could prove a danger and make them more vulnerable to commercial exploitation. It is not unwise in them to forget it. But at the same time, the older people of the island feel an urgency to find someone to whom to bequeath the story of the old days and the old ways, which, as they say, were better than the days and ways we see now.



Since 1960 I have been working at writing this story down. My intent is to record in clear American the story my older neighbors tell me. I try to gather it from enough people to establish the effective version in the mainstream of island oral history. I keep the account of each person separately, in order that it may bear the stamp of his personality, for each person will recognize a different face of the truth. The first step is to prepare a verbatim record of all the dialogs between myself and the historian; the second is to translate the

dialog into a single, connected account in standard American in my neighbor's voice; the third is to group the scattered account of each narrative area under main headings—for instance, "The Boil Weevil," "Reconstruction," "The Storm of 1893." Finally I check out the finished account with the person who told it.

Sam Gadsden is the oldest historian I have worked with so far. He was born in 1882, and many of the events he speaks of occurred between 1770 and 1830. We have reached the printing stage with his chapter of *The Oral History of Edisto Island*. It is entitled *Sam Gadsden Tells the Story*. [A review of *Sam Gadsden Tells the Story* appears on page 6.—Ed.]

Items of interest from this history: at least one important black family on the island paid its own way from Nigeria to the Land of Opportunity and were only enslaved by an act of Dutch piracy after they arrived. A daughter of this family, Jane, was queen and ruled over one corner of the island with a merciful and effective law—though she was a slave to the end of her days. At least one community of some twenty families, though nominally under slavery, lived as free people and maintained a way of life which incorporated the best of both the African and the Christian way.

## SOCIETY INTERVIEWS EARLY GERONTOLOGISTS

The Gerontological Society, involved in research on aging, is currently active in collecting oral histories of the leaders in the field of gerontology. Early leaders in the field, representing disciplines ranging from cell biology to the psychology of human development, are being asked to record recollections of their motivations, insights, and contributions to the origins of the field of gerontology.

Ruth Hersh, Columbia University, will be conducting the interviews. The project is headed by Raymond Harris, MD, chairman of the History and Archives Committee of the Gerontological Society.

## TRANSCRIPTS DOCUMENT ART PRESERVATION

The assumptions of twentieth-century historic preservation in the United States are analyzed in forty-nine transcripts of tape-recorded interviews with prominent preservationists now in the Archives of American Art, Boston. The tapes were made by Charles Hosmer between 1969 and 1974. The transcripts can be read at the Archives' offices with written permission of the persons interviewed or their heirs.

A series of interviews with Bartlett Hayes, teacher and director of the Addison Gallery of American Art, is also available through the Archives, along with his personal records.

# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## *Oral History Collections*

Compiled and edited by Alan M. Meckler and Ruth McMullin.  
New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1975. 344 pp. Hardbound \$29.50.

*Reviewed by Richard Zumwinkle*

The emphasis in this research guide, as compared with Gary L. Shumway's *Oral History in the United States: A Directory* (Oral History Association, 1971), lies in its greatly enlarged index to interviewees and interview topics. Like other published guides to archives, manuscripts, diaries, and subject collections, the volume will serve a wide clientele of librarians, biographers, historians, and other researchers as an aid in finding primary sources.

About 325 U.S. centers, as well as 30 for Canada, 29 for the United Kingdom, and one for Ireland and Israel, are listed in the directory, which provides for each the address, director, date of founding, number of interviews, accessibility, purpose of program, publications, and descriptions of major collections. Some centers list the same data as that provided in the earlier *OHA Directory*, but fuller information has been supplied for many others. Under the heading "Accessibility," more explicit details are usually given on the existence of catalogs or indexes, restrictions on use, and availability on interlibrary loan. Relatively few centers provide lists of "Major collections," some described in great detail and some identified by title only; the length of institutional entries thus varies widely. Although the Oral History Collection at Columbia University is the oldest, largest, and most prestigious in the nation, it does seem disproportionate for it to occupy sixteen columns when the average institution takes up one-third or one-fourth of a column.

The major portion of the book (277 pages) is the Name and Subject Index. The ideal entry for an interviewee provides full name, dates, brief personal identification, topic of interview, project name, date of interview, length in hours or pages, format, conditions of access, availability on interlibrary loan, additional locations, and name of center. Unfortunately, such full entries are distinctly rare; the name may be less than full (A. Nathan, Dr. Smith), the birthdate is usually missing, and most persons lack a descriptive identification; many entries consist only of the interviewee's name and the name of the center.

Interfiled with interviewees are subjects, the topics of interviews, which may be personal names, places, institutions, and more abstract subject terms. Again, some names are incomplete: there are, for example, surname-only entries for Icaza, Rulfo, and Valdivieso, each identified as "Latin author," when "Latin-American author" presumably is intended. Subject terms can present difficulties: Howard University's collection on Black African tribal customs is indexed under "Africa, South" and "Blacks in Africa," which are somewhat misleading, and the subject of Judge John F. Aiso's interview, listed under "Japan," probably should be "Japanese in the U.S." An intriguing entry is "Oral History," which suggests that Fisk University has an oral history project on oral history itself.

Almost all of the shortcomings and imbalances, whether in name, subject, or center entries, derive from the compilers' necessary reliance on data supplied by the centers, which themselves vary widely in size, purpose, and attitudes toward public access. Promised future editions of *Oral History Collections* could substantially reduce the irregularities, insufficiencies, and errors through the exercise of closer editorial control and more exact specifications for the reports from centers. A firm requirement for minimum standards in the reporting of submitted entries should be enforced; substandard entries should be deleted from the next edition. If supplied later in acceptable

form, they can be published, together with new projects, in subsequent volumes. The pattern of publication might be in complete new editions every few years, with earlier volumes superseded, as in Lee Ash's *Subject Collections*, or in a series of more frequent supplements with a cumulating index, similar to the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections.

*Richard Zumwinkle is a member of the Reference Department and director of publications of the UCLA Library.*

## *Ghosts along the Cumberland: Deathlore in the Kentucky Hills*

by William Lynwood Montell. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975. 240 pp. Hardbound \$9.95.

*Reviewed by Joan Perkal*

It is rare when a reader is given the opportunity to gain an insight into the fabric of the tapestry of American folklore which is both documented and scholarly, yet still can be appreciated by those who under different circumstances would prefer learning by listening to the tales told around the local campfire.

Ghost tales and legends, folk belief connected with the dead, and other death lore have been handed down from generation to generation, from village wise man to mystified listener and from any other person of an age sufficient to enchant the young and/or ignorant with the mystique surrounding these beliefs.

The job of collecting the broad spectrum of these tales and superstitions has been monumental, and Professor Montell has



*Harley L. Gilmore, owner of the haunted Hiestand graveyard near Campbellsville, recounts one of the ghost tales associated with this former burial ground.*

displayed an amazing degree of skill, not only in his coverage of these areas but in the actual method by which he has mixed the job of the writer with the duties of the scholar. In this present work, he has set forth clearly—in verbatim narration—the words, idioms and dialog consisting of 489 transcriptions. He has had the informant recite in his own way, with his own emphasis, the beliefs he holds and, what is more important, the manner by which he learned them and the significance he attached to them. It is an outpouring in actual recordation of a topic which has been, for generations, a common bond of fear and apprehension among men.

This work deals with that area of southcentral Kentucky known as the Eastern Pennyroyal or "Pennyrile," which, from our historical vantage point, is extraordinarily abundant with this particular kind of legend and belief. The alleged reappearance of one's dead ancestors, the fears connected therewith, and the anxieties and apprehensions attached to these occurrences are nowhere in our country more vividly apparent than in the Pennyrile foothills. It is from this location that Professor Montell collected for us these beliefs, death tokens and memorata. He has meticulously annotated each example with motif-and-tale type classifications, including as well a glossary and selective bibliography. A group of stunning photographs by Mike Morse depicts the haunting atmosphere of the Pennyrile region, giving rise to the thought that in spite of twentieth-century urbanization and technology, things can still go bump in the night!

It is appropriate that this work was produced by a leading folk oral historian whose own personal background and heritage is that of a native Kentuckian. In setting forth the Pennyrile beliefs of past generations, Professor Montell's book can well be viewed as a standard of excellence: a direct, articulate and cataloged approach for future study and implementation in the fields of folklore and oral history.

*Joan Perkal is on the staff  
of the Journal of Western Folklore.*



Marvin Moody and Clotie Bailey prepare a grave at Sulphur Lick. The grave often represents the beginning for supernatural appearances. Photographs by Mike Morse.

## *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*

by Theodore Rosengarten. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975.  
561 pp. Hardbound \$12.50.

*Reviewed by Lawrence B. de Graaf*

A major contribution of oral history has been preserving the experiences of groups who have left few written records. Generally this requires interviewing many different persons. Occasionally an oral historian has the fortune to find a single individual whose life is a microcosm of the history of a group. Theodore Rosengarten made such a discovery in the person of an eighty-five-year-old black sharecropper whom he calls Nate Shaw. With almost no editorial comment, Rosengarten lets this "family story-teller" take the reader from childhood through his struggles as a cotton farmer, his efforts to unionize sharecroppers, his imprisonment, to his later years as a "mule driver in a tractor world." In the process, one obtains a vivid picture of the life-style, condition, and frustrations of millions of blacks living in the rural South from the turn of the century to the 1960s.

Like most lengthy oral interviews, this work combines sections of brilliant commentary with long, sometimes repetitious recounting of trivial events. But through much of the book the brilliant commentary stands out. One sees the hopeless plight of most sharecroppers toiling only to find they "aint done nothin except givin the other fellow your labor." Blacks like Shaw might strive for advancement only to lose everything to white "rulins" that were tantamount to robbery. One feels the added frustration of living in a system in which he didn't have "no voice in nothin that the white man didn't want me to have."

Particularly interesting are the varied reactions of Shaw to this system. On one hand he expresses great pride in himself as a worker, a constant striving to be independent, and a resentment against conditions that will lead him into the Sharecropper's Union. Yet he also expresses a resignation to white domination which turns him into a submissive prisoner as a means of regaining freedom and finally finds expression in the faith that God is the ultimate dispenser of justice. Collectively, these impressions should be especially useful in offsetting stereotypes of black attitudes and actions. Shaw's bitterness toward some whites seldom comes across as a blatant hatred of all whites. He criticizes his father for his slave mentality of "take what come and live for today," yet his own alternative is not black power but a rigorous work ethic. At the end of the book is an excellent index which should enhance its usability as a source on Southern black history.

But should Nate Shaw be accepted as a valid source? This reviewer's suspicions were raised when comparing Shaw's recollections of the Sharecropper's Union "riot" of December 1932 with accounts from published sources. Many of Nate Shaw's peculiar traits—owning land, cattle, and an automobile—and most of his actions in this affair are strikingly similar to those of Cliff James, the black who according to written sources actually led the sharecroppers in 1932. But there are also significant discrepancies, not the least of which is that written accounts state that James died in 1932, while Shaw is recounting what seem to be his exploits nearly 40 years later. One can dismiss these discrepancies by noting that most of Shaw's general impressions agree with written sources and that his account is a work of art. But, in admitting that oral narratives which are vivid literary portraits are not necessarily reliable sources on specific events, are we conceding serious limitations on oral history?

This need not be the case, either with Nate Shaw or with similar works. I cannot say if Rosengarten checked the testimony from the first series of tapes with written sources and

## MORE BOOKS IN REVIEW

sought to clarify these discrepancies in his second series. He certainly could have done more extensive editorial comment to make critical observations about the literal validity of this oral document that historians have long made on written sources. His already fine book, and oral history in general, would be still richer for these efforts.

Lawrence B. de Graaf is  
professor of history at  
California State University, Fullerton.

---

### *An Oral History of Edisto Island, Sam Gadsden Tells the Story*

Edited by Nick Lindsay. Goshen, Indiana:  
Pinch Penny Press. 73 pp. Softcover \$1.60.

Reviewed by Lawrence Weschler

Sam Gadsden, a spry ninety-year old black raconteur from the Carolina Islands, is a richly evocative storyteller, and in the first offering of the Edisto Island Oral History Program he spreads a generous feast. But the monograph *Sam Gadsden Tells the Story* is a curious and quirky work, and unfortunately, in some ways, the feast is a hungry one. The problem, I think, is shared in common with all oral history projects which attempt to traffic along the precarious interface of dialects.

Nick Lindsay, the editor of the present work, has opted for a deceptively simple solution in rendering Sam Gadsden's "deep Gullah" dialect in "standard American" translation. To be sure, he laments the loss of the vitality of the original; but so much of the dialect involves differences of intonation and inflection rather than grammar and vocabulary that he apparently feels the transcription from oral to written is only slightly aggravated by a further translation from Gullah to American. He apparently hopes to gain in clarity what he has sacrificed in strict fidelity.

And indeed, in certain ways, the translation does render the stories more approachable; but in others, it emasculates them. Sam Gadsden himself, in his Americanized version, says,

If you get the full Gullah, it's a song language. That's the deep Gullah. It's a song language and not a deaf language like English. The speaker of a song language doesn't mean exactly just the words alone, but when he has spoken them, he really couldn't have said it better. If you catch the song, you can tell exactly what he means.

How does one translate a song language, especially when so much of the distinctiveness is a question of intonation and inflection? It is a difficult problem, but it cannot simply be evaded through direct American translation. At the core of the cultural identity of the inhabitants of Edisto Island appears to be this Gullah dialect. It is the dialect which animates the stories; to retell them in "deaf" English is to bleed them of their very life force. Nor is our interest merely academically linguistic. Our interest is not in the Gullah tongue as such but in the stories it makes possible. (Anyway, as Walker Percy has recently reminded us, "Language is much too important to be left to the linguists.") Therefore, preservation of the Gullah voice becomes doubly important.

To be sure, there are no easy solutions. My point is just that simple translation is perhaps not the best among the possible. Preferable, for instance, might be the Gullah faced on the opposite page with the American translation. Or better yet, an intro-

ductory essay on the major features of Gullah along with a general summary of the stories might prove all that is necessary to prepare us for an otherwise unmediated confrontation with the pure Gullah; footnotes could help us negotiate the trickiest passages. I suspect that we would gradually get the hang of it and what we would learn intuitively through the effort would be as valuable as what we would learn directly from the stories themselves. The problem of intonation remains a thicket, but also could provide an occasion for creative experimentation with such representative devices as italics, capitalization, etc.

Capturing the voice on paper—this remains the most challenging and fugitive task of the oral history editor. That the presence of exotic dialects makes the challenge more difficult should not bend us from the task.

---

### *Oral History 74, Papers Presented at the First Oral History Conference.*

Edited by Joan Campbell. Bundoora, Victoria,  
Australia: La Trobe University. 1975. 116 pp.

Reviewed by Samuel Hand

These are the published proceedings of the First Australian Oral History Conference convened at La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, in March 1974. Unlike the early OHA *Proceedings* they are not intended as a verbatim transcript. "Almost all the speakers...felt on reading the transcript of their talk that it would have to be revised and altered for publication as a literary manuscript." The final product is "an edited and in some cases a 'different' version of the spoken word." Respeaking their talks resulted in a more cogent and articulate volume than would have otherwise been possible and earned this reader's gratitude.

The transcripts of five panels, three followed by discussion, are included. Topics ranged from the Cuban Missile Crisis to a history of Papua, New Guinea. The participants were predominantly academic historians and social scientists, and their passing references to recent visits to Columbia and Berkeley oral history projects, *Oral History Review* articles, Studs Terkel, and a presentation on the OHA's Eighth Annual Colloquium, attest to their conversance with oral history in the United States. The substance of their remarks attest to their relatively sophisticated methodologies.

While less given to proselytizing oral history than their American counterparts, they are nonetheless convinced of its unique value. Very much like their American colleagues, they are not at all in agreement as to what those unique values are. While the oldest and most prestigious projects involve elite interviewing, history "from the bottom up" has staunch advocates. Whether it is preferable to emphasize interviewing people in the prime of their career (as practiced by the National Library of Australia and the Royal Institute of Public Administration) or to concentrate upon preserving the memories of the more elderly is another point of contention. Subjects familiar to American oral historians such as the vagaries of the copyright laws, the potential for exploiting subjects, ethics, cataloging, the cost of and the need for typescripts of interviews, and the role of local historical societies received comment. Differences between folklorists and historians seem more muted than in the United States, but they are readily apparent. In summation the Australians perceive as issues many of the same problems debated by North American oral historians. Many of the Australian insights are well phrased and provocative.

Since publication of this slim (116-page) volume, La Trobe University has sponsored a second conference and this reviewer looks forward to a report of its proceedings.



## BRAZILIAN COURSE BREAKS NEW GROUND

by George P. Browne

RIO DE JANEIRO, AUGUST 1. The first National Course in Oral History ever held in Brazil came to an end today with a brief ceremony that included presentation of certificates to thirty participants and five auditors.

Jointly sponsored by the Fundação Getúlio Vargas, the Universidade Federal Fluminense, and the Grupo de Documentação em Ciências Sociais, the course attracted historians and social scientists from all over Brazil. During its four weeks, students received instruction in the techniques and theories underlying the production and use of oral history materials; they also conducted and processed interviews for presentation to discussion groups.

Funding was provided by the Brazilian government through CAPES (Coordenação para o Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Estudos Superiores), along with the Ford Foundation, which brought participating professors from the Catholic University and the University of San Marcos at Lima, Peru.

The broad appeal of the course was enhanced by the varied backgrounds of the faculty. Eugenia Meyer, of Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia, brought expertise in the administration of an oral history program of national dimensions; she has also interviewed extensively among Villista veterans. Jim and Edna Wilkie, of the UCLA Latin American Center, provided perspectives drawn from a decade of interviewing Latin-American political elites. As coordinator of the course, I contributed from my own studies at the Columbia Oral History Research Office and my experience in researching immigration history in Santa Catarina, Brazil.

The variety of theoretical positions taken by faculty members led to heated debates and valuable interchange with participants on matters such as ethical and legal problems, methods of selecting interviewees, and approaches to interviewing.

The geographic spread represented by participants in the course gives promise of initiating an oral history movement of national dimensions—to say nothing of the international possibilities opened by the participation of Peruvian professors.

Oral history programs are currently under way at the Fundação Getúlio Vargas and the Instituto Cândido Mendes in Rio de Janeiro, at the Federal Universities of Santa Catarina and Paraná, and at the University of Brasília. Representatives of

these institutions were joined by professors from the Federal Universities of Minas Gerais, Pernambuco, Ceará, and Pará; and the Universidade Federal Fluminense in Niterói, RJ. The Foreign Office Archive, the University of São Paulo, the Catholic Universities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and a variety of other institutions also sent representatives.

\*\*\*

CPDOC, the Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação em História Contemporânea do Brasil of the Fundação Getúlio Vargas, the host institution, will be requested to coordinate communication and exchange of information among the members of the group. It will also assume responsibility for the preplanning of the organization of a national oral history association and the planning of an oral history meeting a year hence.

### UNION COLLEGE TAPES EUROPEAN-BORN JEWS

Thirty-one interviews with European-born Jews have been completed to date by a faculty member and a librarian at Union College, Schenectady, New York.

Lucille W. Brown, assistant cataloger at the Schaffer Library of the college, and Stephen M. Berk, professor of history, initiated the project in the spring of 1973 with the purpose of accumulating a collection of cassettes documenting the personal experiences of Jews living in Europe before World War I and between the world wars.

The recordings range from one to four hours in length and concentrate on the Schenectady-Troy-Albany area of New York State. The collection will eventually be housed in Schaffer Library.

Virginia Union University has received a grant of \$14,660 from the American Baptist Churches to fund a three-year oral history project for recording interviews with blacks in Virginia. The project will be centered at the university's William J. Clark Library, and the library staff will conduct the interviews.

Bernard Galm has been named director of the UCLA Oral History Program. He has been associated with the program since 1966 and has served in various capacities, most recently as acting director.

Richard Thurston, an OHA member from Santa Barbara, is seeking to develop contact with other members who are using the oral history technique in recording family history, so that the field of study may be pursued in a more organized manner. Interested members are requested to write to him at P.O. Box 6411, Santa Barbara, California 93111.

## WORKSHOPS

### MUSEUM GROUP HEARS OHA PRESENTATIONS

The Oral History Association presented itself to members of the American Association of Museums at that organization's annual meeting in Los Angeles, June 22-26. Representing OHA were Newsletter editor Bernard Galm and his UCLA colleague, Joel Gardner, along with Enid Douglass of the Claremont Graduate School. About twenty-five AAM members stopped in during the course of the group meeting to discuss uses of oral history in museum work and the importance of OHA to all practitioners.

At an earlier workshop entitled "Developing Video, Film, and Audio Archives," Mr. Galm and Elizabeth Mason of Columbia University joined other panelists in describing experiences with audio and video tapes.

OHA president Samuel Proctor shared an international platform to discuss oral history at the Montreal Conference of the International Music Association in August. Held under the auspices of the International Association on Sound Archives and the Association of Recorded Sound Collections, the session also featured David Lance of the British Imperial War Museum and Léo LaClare of the Canadian Aural/Oral History Association.

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, sponsored a workshop on oral history featuring Forrest C. Pogue July 7-12. Aimed at the local teaching community, the course was instructed by Melvin Kellogg Bruss, director of the Homochitto Valley Historical Society; Orley Caudill, director of the Mississippi Oral History Program; Michael Garvey, assistant director of the program; and John Ray Skates, chairman of the Department of History.

Gould Colman of the Cornell University Libraries spoke on "Oral History as Agricultural Literature" at the Bicentennial Symposium on Agricultural Literature, September 24-26, at the National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Maryland.

## PUBLICATIONS

### QUARTERLIES REVIEW ROHO TRANSCRIPTS

Oral history transcripts from the collection of the Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley, have recently been reviewed by two journals.

ROHO's Books and Fine Printing series, which consists of 25 interviews and 2,178 pages, was reviewed in *Library Quarterly*, April 1975. Robert D. Harlan, associate professor of librarianship at Berkeley and biographer of printer John Henry Nash, briefly summarized each interview. Though he pointed out the partisan nature of some of the interviews, he concluded that "the series is an important and unique record."

The program as a whole was analyzed in the Spring 1975 issue of the *California Historical Quarterly* in a series of four accounts: a brief description of ROHO written by director Willa Baum; an evaluation of the Suffrage series by a teacher and researcher in women's history who had used transcripts from the series; a perspective on a ROHO interview by a journalist who compared her own interviews with the subject to those conducted by the program; and a verbatim transcript from the Earl Warren series.

Ms. Baum called the review articles "a much-needed aspect of oral history assessment of the product by outside scholars. With the burgeoning of oral history, it is to be hoped that more scholarly journals will begin to publish reviews of oral history transcripts in the area of the journals' subject specialties."

### PHOTOGRAPHY JOURNAL EXPOSES OH MATERIALS

A listing of oral history materials on photography has appeared in the June issue of *Image*, quarterly publication of the International Museum of Photog-

raphy at George Eastman House. The article begins with a short analysis of the role of oral documentation in photography history. Existing materials are then listed by program and interviewee, with detailed descriptions of interview topics and pertinent information as to length, cost of copies, and use.

Copies of the listing are available at \$2.50 from the compilers: PHOTOGRAPHY: source & resource, 257 South Pugh Street, State College, PA 16801.

### COLUMBIA COURTS AUTHORS

Louis M. Starr discussed the many ways in which oral history information can be retrieved in the November-December 1974 issue of the *Authors Guild Bulletin*. Aiming his remarks most specifically at writers, he cited some recent works that have drawn upon the Columbia Oral History Collection.

Confessing "the disappointment of coming upon a 'worthy book'...that might have been the richer had its author come to us," Starr noted that authors who fear tapes are provided with transcripts and those who seek oral documentation can listen to tapes. Moreover, few manuscripts are closed to researchers.

Finally, he described the work of Microfilming Corporation of America, which is reproducing on microfiche and microfilm the bulk of Columbia's interviews and is preparing a computerized in-depth index to the collection. MCA has recently extended its scope to include the collections at the University of California, Berkeley and UCLA.

"Putting the Past on Tape," a cursory survey of oral history in America, appeared in the August 1975 issue of *McCall's*. Written by Mary McLaughlin for the magazine's RIGHT NOW section, the article describes oral history programs in Kentucky, Texas, New Mexico, Alaska, and New York.

### NEW BIBLIOGRAPHY EDITION

The revised edition of the *Bibliography on Oral History*, listing publications appearing through 1974 and including some items published early in 1975, is now available. The volume contains over 300 citations to the literature on oral history—a large number of them annotated. It also includes sections listing selected catalogs of oral history collections and books based on oral history material, as well as a subject guide to the bibliographical entries. The volume may be ordered for \$3.00 from:

Ronald E. Marcello  
Executive Secretary, Oral History  
Association

North Texas State University  
P.O. Box 13734, NTSU Station

Denton, Texas 76203

Make checks payable to the ORAL  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION.

### UCLA PROJECT

*Continued from page 1*

Thirty or more interviews of an average six hours in length are envisioned. Staff will include interviewer-editors trained by the Oral History Program.

The roster of potential interviewees includes such names as June Wayne, lithographer, painter, ETV personality, and founder of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop; Lorser Feitelson, pioneer leader of the modern movement in Los Angeles who established the style classified as *abstract classicism* in the forties and Larry Bell, pioneer sculptor in glass and mirrored-glass constructions. The master list of first-priority subjects comprises not only the figures in the community who have international reputations but also lesser-known members who may in fact be more influential in terms of their impact on younger artists.

Oral History Association Newsletter  
136 Powell Library  
University of California, Los Angeles  
405 Hilgard Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90024